

## ARMENIAN DIASPORA IN IRAN-RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIPS

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### **Abstract**

*The South Caucasus is at the center of current intensive world interest by the major powers. The main reason for this interest in the South Caucasus is its strategic position, its large energy resources and easy transport routes. Both the West and regional areas recognize its importance for energy security and economical development. There are three independent counties in the South Caucasus with their foreign and internal policies based on their national interest. Relationships with other countries, of these three states, bring security concerns to the area. Therefore, the relationship between Iran and Armenia can influence relationship building in these three states and can influence the political, economical and security atmosphere of this area. This paper investigated the development of Iran-Armenian relationships and the influence of this relationship on the security atmosphere of the South Caucasus region.*

**Keywords:** *Iran, Armenia, Turkey, South Caucasus, mutual relationships, dioceses, churches, Diaspora, reciprocal cooperation.*

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## Introduction

The relationship between Iran and Armenia began after the collapse of the USSR and following the establishment of the independent states in the South Caucasus region. Historians, when referring to the relationship between these states, always indicate ancient times and to how long this relationship has existed. In fact, a relationship with Armenia was illustrated during the time of Emperor Dara, prior to 512 AD by Bisutins inscription on stone<sup>1</sup>. This refers to a long existing relationship between the two countries, in all spheres. However the Armenian Diaspora in Iran served as a background for establishment of these relationships. In 1922 Iran established diplomatic relations with the three countries of the South Caucasus'. Political, economic and military relations reached a strategic level. Additionally, there was experience and co-operation in the resolution process of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem between Iran and Armenia.

### Reciprocal relationships between Iran and Armenia interest

Both sides illustrated a reciprocal interest in maintaining and expanding these relationships. Despite the fact that Iran rushed to form relationships with other South Caucasus states, it has a strongest relationship with Armenia. There are no misunderstandings in their relationship. If they see any kind of misunderstanding, they try to solve it. That is why the Armenian side considers

a relationship with Iranian side to be strategic<sup>2</sup>. It is clear that the expanding political, economical and business, and communicational ties with Iran are part of the Armenian foreign policy doctrine<sup>3</sup>. As Iran and Armenian are neighbors, they try to build strong relationships with each-other. If we consider that Armenian has bad relationships with its other neighbors, then a relationship with Iran is preferable. Political interest plays an important role in reciprocal relationships. After collapse of the USSR, Iran began to notice the political vacuum in the South Caucasus' and the impact of this vacuum in the region. The reciprocal relationship between Iran and the South Caucasus states depends on the strategic position of these states in the world arena. Firstly, Iran, with its bad relationship with Israel and Western powers, does not wish them to have any impact in the South Caucasus'. Iran tries to reduce Turkey's impact in the region by strengthening its ties with Armenia instead of expanding future relationships between Azerbaijan and Turkey. That is why, Iran, in order to strengthen its influence, realized an Iran-Armenia-Greek alliance in the region<sup>4</sup>.

Building up closer relationships with Armenia seen as important against ideological and political pressure coming from the North. Armenia has a

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<sup>1</sup> Armenia. Tehran, 1388, p.14

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<sup>2</sup> Baqdasaryan Artur. Iran i qrayet vajnyuyu l nezamenimuyu rol v reshenii regionalnikh problem (Iran plays an important and changeable role in the solving of regional problems), [www.panarmenian.net/news/rus/?nid=27813](http://www.panarmenian.net/news/rus/?nid=27813) (accessed November 15,2009)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Vaezi Mahmood. *Mediation in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, The experience of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Tehran, 1388, p.60

political interest in expanding the relationship with Iran. Firstly, Armenia has no other support in region. Also there is another point, Iran is a Muslim country and could soften the strong relations of the entire Muslim world towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Armenians are also interested in preventing of good relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey in the region. However, an Armenian scientist insisted on the Armenian-Russian-Iran triangle and their corporation in the region<sup>5</sup>.

After 2008 the Georgian crisis, Armenia began to seek stronger ties with Iran. After Turkey's "peace and stability in the Caucasus" platform, Armenian politicians became nervous about Turkey's position in the region. Iran's insistence on this platform is one of the contradictions against Turkey's balance in the region.<sup>6</sup> On the world stage, strong the Iranian ties mean supporting the Armenian position in the South Caucasus region. Expanding reciprocal relationships between Iran and Armenia is considered a positive move with regard to security. After collapse of the USSR, emerging new independent states in the South Caucasus region created a safely position for Iran. (Before Iran was neighbor with USSR and after collapse of USSR with two independent states). An important role of Russia, as a

determining geo-strategic position in the South Caucasus', in the face of neighborhood status with Iran, was lost. That is why; a new geo-strategic plan of Russia in newly emerging independent states of the South Caucasus' played an important role in Iranian policy over the region. However, a war in Nagorno-Karabakh brings to the scene the importance of security problems of Iran. Iranian officials consider that losing Russia as a neighbor is positive for Iran, but in other way's it attracts Western powers to the region which is seen as negative for Iranian geo-strategically policy over the region<sup>7</sup>.

Expanding relationships, Azerbaijan with Turkey, and integration to the West strengthens closer relationships of Iran with Armenia. Iranian politicians clearly confess that if Turkey and Azerbaijan develop closer ties and if NATO and the US increase its influence in Caspian region, then Iran must increase its relationship with Armenia<sup>8</sup>.

Western politicians also consider that interest from the West to the South Caucasus' creates more obstacles for Iran. That is why relationships between Iran and Armenia have increased. But also Western politicians confess that it also recognized Azeri ethnics in Iran and the strengthening independence of the Azerbaijan Republic in the region.

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<sup>5</sup> *Poka ne budet alternative Madridskim prinsipam... (if there is no alternatives to the Madrid principles)*, [http://www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=\\_Ru&NewsID=13906&SectionID=0&RegionID=0&Date=08/12/2009&PagePosition=1](http://www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=_Ru&NewsID=13906&SectionID=0&RegionID=0&Date=08/12/2009&PagePosition=1) (accessed November 18,2009)

<sup>6</sup> *Yujnokavkazskaya platforma bez Irana ne viqodna Armenii, schitayet eksperti.* (it is not ignificance to Armenia without Iran role in the South Caucasus platform), [ww.iran.ru/rus/print\\_news.php?news\\_id=53596](http://ww.iran.ru/rus/print_news.php?news_id=53596) (accessed November 25,2009)

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<sup>7</sup> Vaezi Mahmood, *Mediation in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, The experience of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Tehran, 1388

<sup>8</sup> Harsidj Hossey. Toosargani Modjtaba. *Iran-Ermenistan medeni elaqelerine siyasi baxish. Yeni realliqarin tehlili, (political view to the cultural-political relationships of Iran-Armenia)* p.50-70. Central Asia and the Caucasus journal, N-64, winter 2009

Strengthening independence of the Azerbaijan Republic can awake ethnic separatism in Iran<sup>9</sup>. The former minister foreign affairs of Iran M. Vaezi considered any kind of ethnic issues raised problems for Iran. Also strengthening the Azerbaijan Republic in the future could take territory from Iran. Iran cannot agree to have this situation around its territory. Thus, Iran tries to realize a balance between Azerbaijan and Armenia<sup>10</sup>. Let me indicate that in the first years of Azerbaijan Independency, the period of AXC (Azerbaijan National Front) the Azerbaijan side included in its program the independence of South Azerbaijan. The Iranian side became nervous about this policy of AXC<sup>11</sup>. The Iranian side, as the first step, tried to answer this policy with the strengthening of relationships with the Armenian side. Armenian politicians consider that most of this Iranian policy-relationship with Armenia refers to the neutralization policy of Azerbaijan-protecting its native territory.<sup>12</sup> Armenian politicians see the situation as normal considering that Azerbaijan and Iran are both Shia Muslims. In the

opinion of Armenian politicians, because of several objective causes, Iran is not interested in closer relationships with Azerbaijan.<sup>13</sup> In 1993 Haydar Aliyev came to power and statements about the independence of South Azerbaijan disappeared. This line in Azerbaijan policy is estimated well by the Iranian government. Heydar Aliyev declared that friendships and cooperation would be the main policy towards Iran. But, in spite of that analysis, Iranian politicians worry about the strengthening power of Azerbaijan with Turkey and Turkish languages states. This relationship is estimated as panturanism. According to Iranian politicians Armenia is the obstacle against the spreading of panturanism, especially as Armenia separates Turkey from Azerbaijan<sup>14</sup>. Azerbaijan has closer relationships with Turkey and Middle Asian states and these relationships have been accepted jealously by Armenia. According to Armenian politicians panturanism of Azerbaijan can make closer Iran and Armenia ties in the region. Officials in Armenia are sure that Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan is seen as a reaction towards panturanism and currently Iran supports the status quo between Azerbaijan and Armenia because of that<sup>15</sup>. Several analyses have shown that Iran tries to be closer to the West

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<sup>9</sup> Geoffrey Gresh. *Codding the Caucasus: Iran, s strategic relationship with Azerbaijan and Armenia*, [http://www.ces-az.org/jurnal\\_1/CoddingtheCaucasus20byGeoffreyGresh.pdf](http://www.ces-az.org/jurnal_1/CoddingtheCaucasus20byGeoffreyGresh.pdf) (accessed November 1,2009)

<sup>10</sup> Vaezi Mahmood. *Mediation in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, The experience of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Tehran, 1388

<sup>11</sup> Markedonov Sergey. *Iran na Bolshom Kavkaze: v poiskax svoey platformi. (Iran in the South Caucasus in the searching of own platform)*, [www.iran.ru/rus/print\\_news.php?news\\_id=53693](http://www.iran.ru/rus/print_news.php?news_id=53693) (access November 10,2009)

<sup>12</sup> Asatryan Qranik. *Ermenistan ve Cenubi Qafqazda tehlikesizlik meseleleri( security problems in Armenia and South Caucasus)*, [www.arannews.ir/ViewDetail/Print/?lang=fa&ID=n yfp635tpl](http://www.arannews.ir/ViewDetail/Print/?lang=fa&ID=n yfp635tpl) (accessed September 25,2009)

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<sup>13</sup> Kazinyan Aris. *Iran-Armenia. Period Rafsancani (1987-1997)*. [www.analitika.at.ua/news/2009-06-30-10092](http://www.analitika.at.ua/news/2009-06-30-10092) (accessed November 20,2009)

<sup>14</sup> Armenia. Tehran, 1388, p.28

<sup>15</sup> Yerkanyan Artyom. *Iran ne pozvolit Armenii idti na ustupki Azerbaydjanu( iran will not give permission to Armenia to concession Azerbaijan)*, [www.analitika.at.ua/news/2008-11-01-3865](http://www.analitika.at.ua/news/2008-11-01-3865) (accessed December 2,2009)

and Russia uses Armenian opportunity<sup>16</sup>. Actually this point has been indicated by Armenian politicians but is not true. It is used to swell the geo-strategic importance of Armenia. Relationships between Iran and Armenia give a guarantee for the economical strengthening of this relationship. Both countries have interests in their economical ties. Armenia is a new market for Iran. Iran market has its products on Armenia market and also invests capital in Armenia. Armenia is a neighbor with Iran. Armenian transit routes are also interesting for Iran.

Armenia has transit routes through Georgia. Thus, Iran can use this transit route through Georgia to the Black Sea. Actually, a poor transport infrastructure in Armenia prevents Iran's aim. There are also political motivations for economical cooperation. First of all, Iran has great resources and strong economical potential. Being a neighbor with Iran, Armenia has a good opportunity to access it. Bad relationships with other neighbor states, but a good relationship with Iran gives a good opportunity for Armenians economical revival. Furthermore, Iran tries to create a cool position for this cooperation and this is a stimulus for Armenia. Via the Persian Gulf, Armenia has a transit route to middle Asia and

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<sup>16</sup> *Tolko Armeniya mojet poslužit mostom mejdu zapadom I Iranom – R.Kirokosyan (Only Armenia will be bridge between Iran and western countries)*, [http://www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=\\_Ru&NewsID=8621&SectionID=0&RegionID=0&Date=02/10/2009&PagePosition=1](http://www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=_Ru&NewsID=8621&SectionID=0&RegionID=0&Date=02/10/2009&PagePosition=1) (accessed November 20,2009) ; and *Asatryan Qranik, Erm'nistan ve Cenubi Qafqazda tehlikesizlik meseleleri (security problems in Armenia and South Caucasus)*, [www.arannews.ir/ViewDetail/Print/?lang=fa&ID=n yfp635tpl](http://www.arannews.ir/ViewDetail/Print/?lang=fa&ID=n yfp635tpl) (accessed November 20, 2009)

China. On the other hand, Iran can take this opportunity through the Black Sea to Europe. Also, mutual cooperation strengthens Armenia in the region.

Iran and Armenia also have relationships in the art and cultural areas. They have the ideology that cultural cooperation can help them to be closer to each-other<sup>17</sup>. Additionally, the Armenian Diaspora in Iran helps to realize this cooperation more closely. Also the Armenian Diaspora in Iran supports Armenia completely in all areas.

### **Armenian Diaspora in Iran**

A different period in history, Iran does its best to please Armenia. Nevertheless, the Armenian Diaspora in Iran has covered 500 years<sup>18</sup>. Currently Armenians in Iran have settled in three big cities, Tehran, Tabriz, and Isfahan. The history of the Armenian Diaspora in Tabriz is older than other cities. It is known that Tabriz was a trade and commercial city and Armenia was famous for trade. Because of this point Armenians settled in this city. Recorded the history of the Armenia Diaspora in Isfahan begins in 1606. At that time I Shah Abbas ordered to Armenians settle in Isfahan<sup>19</sup>. The history of the Armenian Diaspora in

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<sup>17</sup> Harsidj Hosseyn. Toosargani Modjtaba. Iran- Ermenistan medeni elaqelerine siyasi baxish. Yeni reallıqlarin tehlili, ( political view to the cultural-political relationships of Iran-Armenia) p.50-70. Central Asia and the Caucasus journal, N-64, winter 2009 and Havian Andranik, The Armenian Iranians. Tehran, 1381, p.13

<sup>18</sup> V Irane k armyanskoy obshine otnosyatsys s bolshim uvajeniyem. (there is respect for Armenian society in Iran),

[www.iran.ru/rus/print\\_news.php?news\\_id=53637](http://www.iran.ru/rus/print_news.php?news_id=53637)

<sup>19</sup> Tehran times, "Vank cathedral, graud and glorious in the heart of Iran", (accessed August16,2009)

Tehran began in the 18<sup>th</sup> century during the period of Kerim Khan Zengin and Aga Muhammed Shah Qajar. According to Armenian sources the first Armenian Church began to activate in 1795<sup>20</sup>. Additionally, Armenians in small groups spread to the territories of Iran. Different numbers regarding Armenians in Iran are shown. However, before the revolution 300,000 Armenians lived in Iran. But after the revolution their number decreased to about 200,000. In other sources, the numbers showed as 150,000 or 120,000 or even 100,000<sup>21</sup>. In reality, Armenians number is less than these numbers shown. According to Armenian research the number is approximately 60-65,000<sup>22</sup>. In 2004 an “International religious report” shows that every year about 15-20,000 Christians leave Iran.<sup>23</sup> Taking into consideration the fact that Armenians are the main Christian’s in Iran, it is easy to think that Armenians began to leave Iran in recent years.

The Iranian press reported that 8000 Armenians live in Isfahan and in recent years they began to move to Europe<sup>24</sup>. Low growth among Armenian and

immigration of Armenians to Europe, Canada and US lessen the Armenian Diaspora in Iran and in this situation Armenians will disappear from Iran<sup>25</sup>. Despite this the Armenian Diaspora is surrounded with the complete support of Iran in all areas. This support is even illustrated in the Constitution of Iran’s Islamic Republic. The Constitution of Iran’s Islamic Republic gave minority status to Armenians in Iran. According to the Constitution article 13, Armenians can live in their own place with their own religious. Furthermore, according to article 64 of the Constitution, 2 Armenian members can exist in the Iranian parliament. One Armenian member can represent the north –Tehran and one member can represent south-Isfahan.<sup>26</sup> Currently, Robert Beyleryan represents the south and Gevorg Vartan represents the north. Actually, a number of Armenians does not influence the number of deputies in parliament. If we take 60-65,000 Armenians into consideration, 1 Armenian deputy represents 30,000 Armenians. This percentage is much more than that percentage in the Iranian parliament for Iranians. 1 Iranian deputy represents 150,000 Iranians in parliament.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Melkonyan Lina. *Armenian church of Iran*, Tehran, 1380, p.96 and *The Armenian diocese of Tehran*, [www.Armprelasy.com/fars/t-a.html](http://www.Armprelasy.com/fars/t-a.html) (accessed December 5,2009)

<sup>21</sup> Mikaelyan Qrant. *Ofis li Armenia? K voprosu o chislennosti armyanskoy diaspori*. (Armenian diaspora), [www.mitg.org/print/?l=rus&dir=2&news=2503](http://www.mitg.org/print/?l=rus&dir=2&news=2503) (accessed September 15,2009) and *Armenia and Karabagh, The struggle for unity*. London, 1991, p.55

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> *International religious freedom report 2004*, [www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2004/35497.htm](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2004/35497.htm) (accessed September 20,2009)

<sup>24</sup> Sharq, Culfada ermenilerin 400 illik movcudluqu (Armenian existence about 400 years in Culfa), 26.01.2006 (accessed March 8,2008)

<sup>25</sup> Arakelyan Varujan. *Emiqrasiya armyan iz Irana sushestvenno oslablyayet obshinu*, (The Armenian emigration from Iran really relaxing the society) [www.analitika.at.ua/news/2009-06-23-9783](http://www.analitika.at.ua/news/2009-06-23-9783) (accessed July 26,2009) and *Opasnost ischeznavaniya armyanskoy obshini Irana ne qrozit*, [www.iran.ru/rus/print\\_news.php?news\\_id=55958](http://www.iran.ru/rus/print_news.php?news_id=55958) (accessed September 25,2009)

<sup>26</sup> Krivosheyev Sergey. *Ekzogennaya yevangelizasiya Irana*, [www.analitika.at.ua/news/2009-07-25-11241](http://www.analitika.at.ua/news/2009-07-25-11241) (accessed October 14,2009)

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

Thus, Armenians have priority over Iranians in Iran. Iran has given more priority to ethnic Armenians than any other ethnic groups in all spheres of the life. Despite that, Iran as a Muslim country and the Muslim religion play an important role in the life of people, Iran gave priority in religious ceremonies to Armenians and this condition is more appropriate than Muslims. For instance, Iran has 60 million people and according to statistics for every 10,000 Iranians has a mosque. But for every 750 Armenians, they have a church. If we count, Iranian has 16 times less opportunity than Armenians' priority over religion<sup>28</sup>. Currently, the number of Iranians is going to increase. Today it is approximately 70 million people. On the contrary, the Armenians number is going to decrease. Thus, today, Iran has 300 churches<sup>29</sup>. Currently, 1 church is available for 200-250 Armenians in Iran. It is known that, the church plays an important role in Armenian Christian life. Thus, today the Armenian Church has independent activities in Iranian Armenians life. Today, Iranian/Armenians refer to Gregorian branch and it is connected by three dioceses. 1) the Armenian diocese of all eastern Azerbaijan and western Azerbaijan. Centre is settled in Tabriz. 2) Isfahan and south Iranian province diocese 3) Tehran and North Iran province diocese. All these three dioceses are independent and depend on Cilikia

house in Livan.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, Armenian Catholics also have catholic churches in Iran. Iran gave permission to Armenia to open religious, social, rest and entertainment places. These places are operated by the Armenian churches. The Dioceses received independent authority and can operate all the aspects of Armenians life in Iran. Dioceses are known as independent organizations by Iran. All these activities are realized by the community. This community can be elected by Armenian participants for a 4 years period.

Armenian schools were opened by the Iranian government and also salary repayment is realized by the Iranian government. But control of those schools is realized by the Armenian churches. Additional expenses are paid by the churches or by rich Armenians. The curriculum is in the Persian language. But Armenians also have permission to use Armenian languages and Gregorian branch or Christian religious. Even here kindergartens are available.<sup>31</sup> Personal staff for Armenian schools is organized by Armenian churches. It is known that in 1961 Tehran dioceses opened evening schools for helping to learn the Armenian language. For a while it closed, but in 1981 it reopened. The learning period for the Armenian language is 3 years. Also it is known that Azad Islam University prepares students from Armenian languages and literature.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> *Arameneye Iran (Iranian Armenians)*, [www.gevorkvartanmp.ir/Fak/home-g.htm](http://www.gevorkvartanmp.ir/Fak/home-g.htm) (accessed October 20,2009) and *Armenian iranians*, [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenians\\_in\\_Iran](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenians_in_Iran) (accessed September 16,2009)

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<sup>30</sup> Melkonyan Lina. *Armenian church of Iran*, Tehran, 1380

<sup>31</sup> *The Armenian diocese of Tehran*, [www.Armprelasy.com/fars/t-a.html](http://www.Armprelasy.com/fars/t-a.html) (accessed October 30,2009)

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

Currently, 28 Armenian schools are available in Tehran and 7000 people study in these schools. Moreover around Tehran dioceses, 25 Armenian organizations and clubs are available. In these organizations and clubs only Armenians can participate and discuss issues on culture, sport, entertainment and charitable causes. There are some famous clubs, such as; “Ararat”, “Siban”, “Caharmahal”, “Nairi”, “Raffi” and etc. In these clubs and organizations Armenians can participate as though in their native land. However, women do not need to wear a scarf. And men can drink alcohol.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, “Iran/Armenians social-cultural society”, “Armenian women’s society”, “serderabad club”, “Vaspuakan”-Armenian poets, writer, architecture and doctors society, “Women friends of churches”, “Armenian craftsman society of Iran” are busy.<sup>34</sup> Currently, 11 churches are available in Tehran and 16 around Tehran.<sup>35</sup>

There are printing centers in the dioceses. In these dioceses several journals, newspapers and books about Armenian history in Armenian languages are printed. Last year many printing houses opened.<sup>36</sup> Now, “Alik” newspaper, “Peyman”, “Ararat”, “Abagah”, “Araks”,

<sup>33</sup> *Iran, s religious minorities waning despite own MPs*, [www.uga.edu/bahai/News/021600.html](http://www.uga.edu/bahai/News/021600.html) (accessed February 15,2009)

<sup>34</sup> The Armenian diocese of Tehran, [www.Armprelasy.com/fars/t-a.html](http://www.Armprelasy.com/fars/t-a.html) (accessed September 30,2009)

<sup>35</sup> *Arameneye Iran( Armenian’s iran)*, [www.gevorkvartanmp.ir/Fak/home-g.htm](http://www.gevorkvartanmp.ir/Fak/home-g.htm) (accessed June 20,2009)

<sup>36</sup> Havian Andranik. *The Armenian Iranians, Tehran*, 1381, p.55-69

“Luis” journals in the Armenian languages are printed.<sup>37</sup>

The Iranian government helps to Armenians with these printed materials. Additionally, the Iranian government helps to repair Armenian schools, entertainment centers and churches.<sup>38</sup> In churches in Tehran, Isfahan, Abadan, Urmiye and Ehvaz, Armenians built monuments about 1915 “Armenian genocide” and every year on 25 April Armenians spend their measure.<sup>39</sup> On the whole, Armenians indicate that the Iranian government helps in all aspects.<sup>40</sup>

### **Political attitudes between Iran and Armenia**

After collapse of the USSR, Iran pursues the events in the South Caucasus’. That is why when independent republics emerged in the region, Iran was ready to become closer to Armenia from the

<sup>37</sup> *The Armenian diocese of Tehran*, [www.Armprelasy.com/fars/t-a.html](http://www.Armprelasy.com/fars/t-a.html) (accessed February 15,2009)

<sup>38</sup> *Vlasti Irana pomoqayut izdaniyu armyanskoy pressi( Iranian government helps in the realization of Armenian pressing in Iran)*,[www.yerkramas.org/news/2008-12-03-2404](http://www.yerkramas.org/news/2008-12-03-2404) (accessed November 20,2009)

<sup>39</sup> *Sovmestnoye press-konferensuya v Natsionalnom sobranii, (Internal press conference in National meeting)*

[www.parlament.am/chairman.php?id=announcements&NewsID=2007&month=9&](http://www.parlament.am/chairman.php?id=announcements&NewsID=2007&month=9&) and [www.armeniangenocide.org/memorial.90.current\\_category.66/memorials\\_details.html#](http://www.armeniangenocide.org/memorial.90.current_category.66/memorials_details.html#)

<sup>40</sup> *V Irane k armyanskoy obshine odnosyatsys s bolshim uvajeniyem. (In Iran there are respect for Armenian society)* [www.iran.ru/rus/print\\_news.php?news\\_id=5363](http://www.iran.ru/rus/print_news.php?news_id=5363) (accessed January 12,2009)

beginning of 1991.<sup>41</sup> Politicians on both sides consider that relationships were established in a new sphere from the beginning of 1991.<sup>42</sup>

For the realization of reciprocal relationships, both sides stepped up the serious activity. The first time, it was illustrated by a telephone speech. In 1992 former Foreign Minister of Armenia Raffia Ovenasyan visited Tehran. During this visit Raffi Ovenasyan met with the President of Iran's Islamic Republic, the Foreign Minister and with the chairman of Parliament. They discussed how to expand relationships between these countries and signed an agreement on economical, cultural, sport, tourism, energy and trade issues.<sup>43</sup>

In March 1992 the Foreign Minister of Iran, Vilayeti, visited Azerbaijan and Armenia. During the Armenia visit Vilayeti continued discussions begun in Iran.

In 1992 the first president of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrasyan visited Tehran and discussed expanding relationships between both sides. That time the Azerbaijan President also visited Tehran. The Azerbaijan side tried to solve the

Karabakh problem with the help of Iran. During the visit of L.Ter-Petrosyan he signed a new agreement completed and signed by the Foreign Ministers of Iran and Armenia. In 1992 Embassies were opened in Iran and Armenia.<sup>44</sup>

These relationships were considered so important for Armenians, even despite their religion differences. Firstly, Armenia found support in the policy against Azerbaijan territorial integrity.<sup>45</sup>

A reciprocal relationship increased dynamically. Visits began to be very often and fast. In 1996 the visit of Habibi, Vice President of Iran, was considered a historical trip in the expanding relationship between these countries. During this visit 12 agreements were signed on the different aspects of these countries.<sup>46</sup>

In the same year the Speaker of the Armenian Parliament Babken Arakelyan visited Iran and met with the Iranian government and parliament members. The Iranian government declared there was no prevention for a friendly relationship. During this visit it was declared that they created a friendship

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<sup>41</sup> Iftixari Aresh. Irano-armyanskiye otnosheniya (Iran-Armenian relationships), [www.ethnoglobus.com/?page=full&gid=626](http://www.ethnoglobus.com/?page=full&gid=626) (accessed September 16, 2009)

<sup>42</sup> Ahmadinejad: "Iran, Armenia to continue regional corporation" [www.groong.usc.edu/news/msg265398.html](http://www.groong.usc.edu/news/msg265398.html) (accessed November 18, 2009) and Haqiqian A, Otnosheniya "Mejdu nashimi stranami na ochen khoroshem urovne." (relationships between our nations in a very good level), [www.noev.kovcheg.1db.ru/article.asp&n=95&a=5](http://www.noev.kovcheg.1db.ru/article.asp&n=95&a=5) (September 20, 2009)

<sup>43</sup> *Armenia. Tehran, 1388*, p.166-167

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<sup>44</sup> "Iftixari Aresh. Irano-armyanskiye otnosheniya" (Iran-Armenian relationships), [www.ethnoglobus.com/?page=full&gid=626](http://www.ethnoglobus.com/?page=full&gid=626) (accessed September 20, 2009) and *Armenia, Tehran, 1388*, p.167

<sup>45</sup> Markedonov S. "Irano-amerikanskaya pereqrzuka usilit pozitsii Yerevana na Yujnom Kavkaze" (The Iranian-American conflict will increase the position of Erevan in South Caucasus', [www.analitika.at.ua/news/2009-07-14-10629](http://www.analitika.at.ua/news/2009-07-14-10629) (accessed February 20, 2009) and Kazinyan Aris, *Iran-Armenia: period Rafsandjani* (1989-1997), [www.analitika.at.ua/news/2009-06-30-10092](http://www.analitika.at.ua/news/2009-06-30-10092) (accessed September 20, 2009)

<sup>46</sup> *Armenia. Tehran, 1388*, p.168

group between their countries, especially in economic aspects.<sup>47</sup>

In 1996 the US put in force sanctions against Iran and relationships between Iran –Armenia became frozen. The Armenian government considered waiting future events. However, from 1997 Russia has come closer to Iran. Thus Armenia began to expand their frozen relationship.<sup>48</sup>

The US tried to make harder sanctions against Armenia. But despite this, Armenian-Iran relationships have not been damaged. The US and Western countries are not interested.

In 1995 Greece joined this Iranian Armenian relationship and made a triangle. Despite that these countries declared that this is just economical cooperation, it is seen that this is geo-political cooperation. Additionally, the secretary of the Foreign Minister of these countries created an executor committee.<sup>49</sup> But the triangle cooperation failed and just the Iran-Armenia relationships stayed alive.

In 1997 Muhammed Hatemi expanded relationships between Iran and Armenia. In 2002 the Foreign Minister of Iran visited Armenia. During this visit

security and defense processes were discussed.<sup>50</sup>

During the period of Hatemi increased attention was given to the cultural, political and humanitarian aspects of life. An Economical commission was established and it was agreed to spend one time each year in Iran or Armenia.

Let us point out that Iran has priority in relationships between Iran and Armenia. Iran has potential in economy, military, political and demographic and geo-political areas. Western interest is going to increase in the South Caucasus'. However, Iran along with Armenian policy tries to be closer to the South Caucasus'. Even during the expanding period of relationships between Azerbaijan and NATO-US, Iran maintained expanding relationships between Iran and Armenia. In 2002 Armenian president R. Koceryan visited Iran and met with politicians from Iran. In 2004 Iranian President M. Hatemi visited Armenia. During this visit the Iranian President criticized US and NATO approach to the South Caucasus'. Again, Iran illustrated that is interested in a relationship with Armenia. Both sides even signed "foundation reciprocal relationships and principle of reciprocal cooperation". After this visit relationships were established at strategy intercession level.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid

<sup>48</sup> Kazinyan Aris. *Iran-Armenia. Period Xatemi* (1997-2005), [www.golos.am/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=47669&Itemid=...2009/10/25](http://www.golos.am/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=47669&Itemid=...2009/10/25) (accessed September 23,2009)

<sup>49</sup> Hagigian: Iran News, 31.05.2008 "Iran, Armenia share deep sense of understanding." (accessed May 15, 2008)

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<sup>50</sup> Geoffrey Gresh. *Codding the Caucasus: Iran,s strategic relationship with Azerbaijan and Armenia*, [http://www.ces-az.org/jurnal\\_1/CoddingtheCaucasus20byGeoffreyGresh.pdf](http://www.ces-az.org/jurnal_1/CoddingtheCaucasus20byGeoffreyGresh.pdf) (accessed March 12,2009)

<sup>51</sup> Voronov S.S. "Irano-armyanskoye otnosheniya v kontekste vizita v Tehran ministra inostrannix del Armenii V.Oskanyana" (Iran-Armenian relations on

In 2005, during the presidential election in Iran, the Foreign Minister of Armenia declared that both countries have no difference in their policies over the region. Also he declared that despite Turkey, Iran did not think that Armenia has any aggression policy over Azerbaijan.<sup>52</sup>

In 2005 after election of M. Ahmedinejat as President, the representative of the Caspian issue, with the near Iran President M. Safari visited Armenia. This happened in July, before M. Ahmedinejat had taken over his responsibility as President. M. Safari declared that the relationship with Armenia would continue. A letter of from President M. Ahmadinejat was given to the President of Armenia.<sup>53</sup>

At this visit it was stated that there would be a 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. This meeting, between both sides, took place in 2006. It must be pointed out that the period 2005-2006 was fruitful. They, both governments, accepted many economical agreements on January 31<sup>st</sup> and February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006. Later the Foreign Minister of Iran M. Mutteki visited Erevan. New opportunities were discussed, including reciprocal relationships between both countries, with the President of Armenia and the Secretary of the Security Council and the Foreign Minister of Armenia. During the meeting of the Secretary of the Security Council M. Mutteki and S.Sarkisyan, it was pointed out that the

relationship of Armenia with other countries would not impact on the relationship between Iran and Armenia.<sup>54</sup>

Nevertheless, Iran was worried about the relationship between Armenia and the Western countries, during the period of sanction against Iran. In 2005 all the newspapers wrote about of the closer relationship between the US and Armenia. Iran worried that the US would strengthen near the border of Iran-South Caucasus. It is thought that, maybe during his visit, M. Mutteki pointed out this worry.

After independence Armenia increased its relationships with other countries, but until now Iran still plays an important role. From the time of Independence until 2006 Armenia signed 90 agreements with Iran. In 2006 July 5-6 the Armenian President visited Iran and declared once more that a relationship with Iran is the main part of Armenian foreign policy. According to Iranian President Ahmedinejat this was an important step.<sup>55</sup>

In 2006 December 16-17 during the visit of the Foreign Minister of Armenia V. Oskanyan it was discussed with Iran that Armenia would be the transit route country for energy sources of Iran.<sup>56</sup> In the account, it shows relationships with West and Eastern Azerbaijan, Mazandaran, Ardebil of Iran with Sunik, Ararat, Armavir province of Armenia.<sup>57</sup> In 2007 activity in the

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the context of visit of Armenian Foreign Minister V.Oskanyan)

<sup>52</sup> Iran News, (30.05.2005) Oskanyan: Iran a positive force in region. (accessed August 30,2008)

<sup>53</sup> Iran News,(21.07.2005) Iran, Armenia discusses ties. (accessed June 15, 2009)

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<sup>54</sup> Iran News,(16.02.2009) Donya-ye eqtesad, (accessed November 20, 2008)

<sup>55</sup> Tehran Times, (06.07.2006) (accessed June 15,2008)

<sup>56</sup> Donya-ye eqtesad, (18.12.2006) (accessed October 12,2009)

<sup>57</sup> V 2006 qodu armyano-iranskiye otnosheniya

policy of Armenia increased. Opposition began to rise. The Iranian government began to worry that Armenia would become under influence from Western powers. The Armenian side also worried when the Iranian government became closer to Turkey. All of these points were illustrated during the visit of M. Ahmedinejat in 2007 October 22-23 to Erevan.

It was agreed that a consulate of Armenia would open in Tabriz and an Iranian consulate would open in Qafan. Iran again declared that was interested in passing energy resources through Armenia to Europe.<sup>58</sup>

The President of Iran changed his programmed visit to Erevan and left Erevan without visiting the monument of “Armenian genocide”. A representative from the Ahmedinejat administration said that the President left Armenia because of the European discussion on the nuclear issue of Iran in Rome. But Armenian politicians considered the reaction of the President of Iran was because of Turkey. The President of Armenia did not want to anger Turkey. The President of Iran, who attended Erevan University, considered

the 1915 events as “humiliation of human rights”.<sup>59</sup>

Iran however, did not recognize the holocaust and at that time V. Oskanyan, Foreign Minister of Armenia declared that they recognize all genocides and holocaust. But the Armenian government had become irritated with Iranian government policy regarding the recognition of “Armenian Genocide”. Moreover, Okaying declared that: “We have always refrained from evaluation on this issue. We view our relations with Iran only within a bilateral framework/ such issues have never been discussed in our bilateral relations”.<sup>60</sup>

It is known that recognition of “Armenian genocide” is a major part of Armenian foreign policy. But despite it, Armenian was silent against Iranian government policy and maintains relationships with Iran.

Despite Iranian non recognition of “Armenian genocide” both sides still tried to expand their relationships. Thus, in 2007 and 2008, they signed very important documents between their countries. In 2008 November the Secretary of the National Security Council of Armenia, Artur Baqdasaryan, visited Iran and this is estimated as

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razvivalis po vosxodyashey – MID Armenii. (in 2006 the Armenian Iran relations improved- Ministry of Internal Affairs)

[www.newsarmenia.ru/arml/20070109/41624638.html](http://www.newsarmenia.ru/arml/20070109/41624638.html) (accessed September 1,2009)

<sup>58</sup> Oskanyan V. Armyano-iranskiye otnosheniya v 2007 qodu razvivalis dinamichno. (Oskanyan: Armenian Iranian relations improved in 2007 dynamically)

[www.panarmenian.net/news/ru/?nid=24510](http://www.panarmenian.net/news/ru/?nid=24510) (accessed January 15,2008)

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<sup>59</sup> Iran,s Ahmadinejad criticized at home, [www.groong.usc.edu/news/msg207835.html](http://www.groong.usc.edu/news/msg207835.html) ( accessed September 20,2008) and Bagdasaryan A.N, Vizit prezidenta IRI M.Axmadinejad v Armeniyu ( Visite of M.Ahmadinejat to Armenia), [www.iimes.ru/rus/stat/2007/26-10-07a.htm](http://www.iimes.ru/rus/stat/2007/26-10-07a.htm) (accessed December 12,2008)

<sup>60</sup> Sassounian Harut. Armenian foreign minister reacts poorly to Iran,s denial of holocaust, [www.armeniapeolia.org/index.php?title=Armenia\\_Foreign\\_Minister\\_React\\_Poorly\\_to\\_Iran%e2%80%993\\_Denial\\_of\\_Holocoust](http://www.armeniapeolia.org/index.php?title=Armenia_Foreign_Minister_React_Poorly_to_Iran%e2%80%993_Denial_of_Holocoust) ( accessed January 25,2008)

strategic relationships between countries.<sup>61</sup> In 2008 August during the crisis in Georgia, Armenia reached a very bad economical situation. From three sides Armenia was isolated Armenia and Iran tried to help as best he could.<sup>62</sup>

After the events in Georgia in 2008, the continuation processes in the South Caucasus' showed again the Armenian Iran close relationships. Especially, after the recommendation from the Turkish Prime Minister R.T.Erdogan, the "Peace and stability in Caucasus Platform", it showed their close relationships against this platform and Armenia and Iran came together. The Armenian officials and the ideologists did not doubt that, to carrying out such an offer could weaken the positions of Iran and Armenia in the Caucasus's. To carry out this platform, the solution of Nagorno-Karabakh problem, recognizing the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, it was thinking about cooperation within the South Caucasus Republics and showed that, Armenia did not want to agree with this kind of situation. The Armenian politicians demanded to join Iran to prevent the influences of Turkey to the region.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Artur Baqdasaryan: Iran iqrayet vajnyu I nezamenimuyu rol v reshenii regionalnix problem (Iran plays an important role in the region), [www.panarmenian.net/news/print?nid=27813](http://www.panarmenian.net/news/print?nid=27813) (accessed February 15, 2009)

<sup>62</sup> Podderjka Irana minimizirovala usherb Armenii v xode qruzinsko-rossiyskoy voyni: spiker parlamenta Armenii, (Speaker of Armenian Parliament: the Iranian support of Armenia minimized Armenian damage in Georgian-Russian war) [www.regnum.ru/news/1136987.html](http://www.regnum.ru/news/1136987.html) (accessed March 30, 2009)

<sup>63</sup> Sbalansirovannaya pozitsiya Irana v

Turkish administration initiatives showed that there was no place for Iran. This worried Iran, which has the close relations with the republics of the South Caucasus'. To those initiatives, if there will be a support of the South Caucasus republics and Russia, Iran may stay away from the important processes in the South Caucasus' games. For this reason, at the end of 2008, Iran increased political interest in the South Caucasus region; this was also supported by the Armenians. The Iranian officials pointed out that, it is important that, the South Caucasus regions problems should be settled by the states of that region not by the foreign states; here Iran was pointed out as one of the region states. And at the same time they offered new proposals for the Turkish initiatives like, 3+3. It means, three South Caucasus states and in addition Russia, Iran and Turkey.<sup>64</sup>

The Iranian Foreign Minister who had suggested the settlement of the disputes in South Caucasus, visited Berlin, Moscow and Baku, and met with the head of these states. The Foreign Minister of Armenia was invited to Tehran. After this visit the Iranian Foreign Ministers officially declared that, to settle the disputes in the Caucasus' Iran also had its initiatives. It was mentioned that, the plan would be told

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Karabakhskom voprose iqrayet polojitelnyu rol, [www.iran.ru/rus/news\\_iran.php?act=news\\_by\\_id&n=1&news\\_id=54255](http://www.iran.ru/rus/news_iran.php?act=news_by_id&n=1&news_id=54255) (accessed August 23, 2009)

<sup>64</sup> Qlava MID Irana prizivayet reshat regionalniye problemi bez vmeshatelstva zapada, (the head of Ministry of Foreign Affairs suggests to solve regional problem without the West)

[www.panarmenian.net/news/rus/?nid=27538](http://www.panarmenian.net/news/rus/?nid=27538) (accessed February 16, 2008) Iran vishel iz teni: bezopasnost na Kavkaze mejdu turciyey I Iranom, [www.regnum.ru/news/1055905.html](http://www.regnum.ru/news/1055905.html) (accessed November 30, 2009)

after its improvement and after the regional states proposals about the security of the region.<sup>65</sup>

However, the Iran side did not mention this plan. It may be because the changing situations in the South Caucasus' did not allow Iran to mention it. The new way of processes in the region began with the football diplomacy between Turkey and Armenia.

The Turkish administration, which actively plays an important role in the regional politics, mentioned that they were supporting the normalizing period with Armenia and they made serious steps in this process. On 6 April 2008 the Turkish President Abdullah Gul visited Erevan to watch the football game between Turkey and Armenia. After this match, there was a meeting between the officials of the Turkish Foreign Affairs and officials of the Armenian Foreign Affairs about the normalizing of Armenian and Turkish relations and opening the Armenian Turkish borders. We have to mention that, this negotiation was supported by the USA and Europe which were faced by the pressure of the Armenian Diasporas. As a first step towards this, negotiations began on 22 April 2009 in Zurich. With the mediation of Sweden they signed a memorandum. This memorandum's main aim was to normalize Turkish Armenian relations. These negotiations and discussions continued on 10 October 2009 in Zurich,

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<sup>65</sup> Iran v blijaysheye vremya vistupit s inisiativoy po uregulirovaniyu konfliktov na Kavkaze, [www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=\\_Ru&NewsID=6565&SectionID=0&Re...2008/10/31](http://www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=_Ru&NewsID=6565&SectionID=0&Re...2008/10/31) (accessed October 31, 2008)

with the participation of the USA, Swedish, Russian and French Foreign Affairs Ministers. The Turkish and Armenian Foreign Affairs Ministers signed the protocol about the normalization of relations between the two states and opening borders to each other. The signing of these protocols was not accepted by complete also not by Georgia, Azerbaijan, or Russia.

However, the Armenian officials and the politicians were interested in opening the borders with Turkey in accordance to their benefit. They have no doubt that, the opening borders with Turkey may help Armenia to emerge from a difficult situation and if this border is opened it may also cause problems to the Armenia Iran border and, also to the Iran Armenian relations. It is true that, before the signed protocols between Turkey and Armenia the Armenian President S. Sarkisyan visited Tehran on April 13-14, 2009, and at this visit they discussed correlations between the two states and they signed 8 different documents about the improvement of relations between Armenia and Iran. Both Presidents declared that future relations will improve day by day. And on 20-21 June of 2009 the Armenian Parliament's speaker Ovik Abramyan visited Iran and discussed issues about the improvement of relations.<sup>66</sup>

With this, the opening of borders between Armenia and Turkey is on the main

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<sup>66</sup> Armeniya I Iran podpisali 8 dokumentov( Iran and Armenia signed 8 documents), [www.yerkramas.org/news/2009-04-14-4908](http://www.yerkramas.org/news/2009-04-14-4908) (accessed April 4, 2009) and [www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=\\_Ru&NewsID=12416&Section...21.06.2009](http://www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=_Ru&NewsID=12416&Section...21.06.2009) (accessed June 21, 2009)

agenda. Armenians are in no doubt that, the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border is the most important issue for Armenia because they will have close relations with Turkey and Europe. This will reduce its dependency on Iran, which they are thinking are strategically alliances, and will also reduce the Iranian connection with the South Caucasus'. The Iranian officials did not show it openly but the Iranian Ambassador to Armenia, Seyid Ali Sagaian in his interview pointed out that the Iranian administration is supporting the normalizations of Turkish-Armenian relations. He added that, Iran has good relations with its neighbor states, with Azerbaijan, Turkey, Armenia and Russia and, to keep stability in the region they are ready to cooperate with those states.<sup>67</sup>

But Iranian anxieties in Armenian circles are increasing. Firstly, these circles are in no doubt that, the borders of Armenia and Turkey will open. Then, the opened Turkish and Armenian borders may cause to weaken the relations between Iran and Armenia.<sup>68</sup>

According to them, when this occurs, it will be seen that Iran will not be in the Armenian alliance any more. According to Armenian politicians if Armenia and

Turkey open the borders Armenia-Iran relations may be critical.<sup>69</sup>

But, some Armenian politicians think that, Iran-Armenia relations are not created by political issues, but by economic issues and that opening borders with Turkey may not create a problem. According to one other Armenian politician, to improve the relationship with Iran-Armenia<sup>7</sup> is dependent on the USA and the EU.<sup>70</sup>

We can reach a conclusion from these speeches that, the future of Iran-Armenia relations will depend on the Turkish-Armenian, Armenian-USA, and Armenian-EU relations. Also we cannot forget about Armenia-Russian relations. It is known that, Russia has great power and influences the direction of Armenian state politics.

### **Iran – Armenia economic**

The economic relations between Armenia and Iran began immediately after the establishment of the Armenian Republic. The beginning of these economic relations, immediately after the declaration of the Armenian republic, played an important role for Armenia. From one side, the problematic situation with Azerbaijan and Turkey and the bad

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<sup>67</sup> Iran privetstvuyet normalizatsii otnosheniy Armenii I Tursii, (Iran supporty the normalization period of Turkey with Armenia) [www.analitika.at.ua/news/iran\\_privetstvuet\\_normalizatsiyu\\_otnoshenij...2009/10/27](http://www.analitika.at.ua/news/iran_privetstvuet_normalizatsiyu_otnoshenij...2009/10/27) (accessed October 27, 2009)

<sup>68</sup> Otkritiye armyano-turetskoy qranitsi oslabit armyano-iranskoqo otnosheniya( opening border between Turkey and Armenia weaken Iran-Armenia relationships),[www.kavkaz-news/info/portal/cnid\\_31037/alias\\_Caucasus-linfo/lang\\_en/tabid\\_24-27/10/2009](http://www.kavkaz-news/info/portal/cnid_31037/alias_Caucasus-linfo/lang_en/tabid_24-27/10/2009) (accessed November 27,2009)

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<sup>69</sup> ARFD: Irano-turetskoye sblijeniye ne predstavlyayet realnoy ugrozi dlya Armenii (closer relationships between Iran-Turkey do not jeopardy to Armenia),[www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=\\_Ru&NewsID=17237&SectionID.](http://www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=_Ru&NewsID=17237&SectionID.) 2009/11/08 (accessed November 8,2009)

<sup>70</sup> "Budusheye armyano-iranskix otnosheniy zavisit ot Moskvi" (Future relationships between Iran and Armenid depend on Moscow), [www.panarmenian.net/news/rus/?nid=31997](http://www.panarmenian.net/news/rus/?nid=31997) (accessed October 18,2009)

economic situation in Armenia, from the other side the collapse of the socialist economic regime were increased by the economic cooperation of Armenia with Iran. As pointed out above, in the first half of 1992 the Armenian Foreign Affairs Minister, then the Armenian president's visit to Iran and the signed documents, created the base for the economic cooperation between the two states.

The agreed economic relations with Iran solved some economic problems for Armenia. It is not accidental that, Armenian circles are calling the relations between Iran and Armenia as "a way to life".<sup>71</sup>

Especially, Iran's creating a suitable ground for the expansion of the two-sided economical attitudes gave impetus to the commodity circulation. A result of this brought Iran, in 1992, to be the second economical partnership after Russia.<sup>72</sup>

In the past years many documents were signed about the different fields of improvement in the economy. These documents included: the cooperation in economic and trade areas, in the banking area, cooperation on drawing plans for the bridge on the Araz River, custom services cooperation, post and telecommunications, to carry over the air

and land, education, exchange of food-stuffs etc.<sup>73</sup>

To be profitable in these fields there were established many committees and commissions between the two countries. For example, the financing of the gas pipelines committee, transport cooperation committee, committee of industry, bank committee, energy committee and so on.<sup>74</sup> According to agreed agreements, there is also much cooperation in areas other than the economy. Now, in the Armenian market we can see goods which are produced in Iran such as, raw materials, glass materials and so on.<sup>75</sup>

There are also agreements between the two countries over agriculture. There are good agricultural relations between the Iranian north regions and especially with the Mazandaran region. Now, Armenia is importing harvests products of cattle-breeding and garden products from Mazandaran. The officials of Mazandaran province wanted to draw, in Armenia, a diary products factory which was to cost 15 million American dollars. But Iran agreed to buy approximately 8 thousand tons of meat products.<sup>76</sup>

The signed agreements between the two countries which was related to a stimulation of investments between the two countries, the canceling the taxes, customer and trade cooperation was brought to the good co relations. The

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<sup>71</sup> Kazinyan Aris. "Iran-Armeniya.Period Rafsandjani" (1989-1997) [www.analitika.at.ua/news/2009-06-30-10092](http://www.analitika.at.ua/news/2009-06-30-10092) (accessed June 30,2009)

<sup>72</sup> Therme Clenount. *The Irano-armenian alliance*, [www.ifri.org/files/Noyen\\_Orient/Iran\\_alliancerusso\\_armenienne\\_Therme.pdf](http://www.ifri.org/files/Noyen_Orient/Iran_alliancerusso_armenienne_Therme.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> Armenia. Tehran, 1388, p.170

<sup>74</sup> Ibid

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, p. 171

<sup>76</sup> Tehran times, (28.05.2005) *Iran, Armenia develop agricultural cooperation*. (accessed April 28,2009) and Tehran times, *Iran to import 8000 t/y meet from Armenia*, (accessed October 12, 2006)

speech of the Foreign Affairs Minister of Iran in December 2008 showed that, the Iran side supports every plan about improving the broadening of the collaboration and the industrial projects.<sup>77</sup>

There are two reasons for Iran to cooperate with Armenia: a) the cooperation in transportation, and b) fuel-energy cooperation. These areas were like a rule and in every meeting they were discussing these issues.

### **a. Transportation**

In the Soviet period there were no relations between Iran and Armenia. But these connections/ relations would be able to be implemented from Nakhchivan. The closed situation of borders between Azerbaijan and Armenia during these relations was impossible. With the active participation of Iran a temporary bridge was created over the Araz River, in 1992, to the Armenian Mehri province.<sup>78</sup>

This bridge was to help the transfers for a wider situation. That is why, in 1994, they started to draw plans for the permanent bridge over the Araz River and in 1996 the bridge in use. With the opening of this bridge the Armenian routes were unified with Iran's routes and Armenia had the chance to open routes to the Persian Bay and to the neighbor states of Iran.<sup>79</sup> It is necessary to mention that,

now freight carried between Armenia and Iran is mostly done over land and that is why automobile transportation is such a huge influence between these countries.

The Iranian side also helps with building of Armenian roads, repair of the roads, and building the tunnels for Armenia. However, it is understandable that, the trade done over land is more expensive and the transit chances are very limited. That is why; Iran and Armenia have discussed how to draw the railway line: a) Transports will increase and the price will be low, b) both sides will have the right to transit. Because, if Armenia seriously carries out this issue, Iran wants to transfer its goods by this new railway to Georgia and the Black Sea and with this Armenia will get extra income.

From 2006 the idea about the Iran-Armenia railway arose and in 2007 the two states signed a memorandum about this issue. According to that memorandum, the parties should research about the benefits of this railway.<sup>80</sup>

In the Armenian elections of 2008, the newly elected President S. Sarkisyan, in his speech to the Armenian nation argued that the Iran-Armenian railway will be the most important issue and it will take the first place.<sup>81</sup> After the situation between Georgia and Russia, in 2008, the

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<sup>77</sup> Manuchehr Mottaki: *Iran-Armeniya yavlyayutsya nastoyashimi druziyami*, (Iran and Armenia are real friends)

[www.panarmenian.net/news/ru/?nid=28017](http://www.panarmenian.net/news/ru/?nid=28017)  
(accessed August 18, 2009)

<sup>78</sup> Armenia. Tehran, 1388, p.167

<sup>79</sup> Iran news, (06.07.2005) Armenia calls for taking advantage of Iranian southern port, (accessed July

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15, 2009)

<sup>80</sup> Luchshe uje cherez Armeniyu, (Already good from Armenia) [www.yerkramas.org/news/2009-03-09](http://www.yerkramas.org/news/2009-03-09)  
(accessed March 9, 2009)

<sup>81</sup> Jeleznaya dorozhka Iran-Armeniya oboydyotsya po menshey mere \$ 1 mlrd: RJD (Railroad will be cost 1 billion \$ for Iran-Armenia), [www.regnum.ru/news/1080212.html?forprint](http://www.regnum.ru/news/1080212.html?forprint)  
(accessed January 4, 2009)

borders between Russia and Georgia were closed. As a result of this, Armenia, as a trade alliance, closed the relationships about the railway. This situation increased attention to the Iran-Armenian railway.

After having the idea about the railway, they started to research it. They came to a conclusion; the project could be done possibly by three transportations. Respectively, the length of these routes is 397 km, 443 km, and 449 km. On the Iranian side approximately 80 km of railways should be created.<sup>82</sup>

Armenian experts gave detailed attention to the first route. We have to mention that, all this transport would pass through mountainous conditions and for every route the big tunnels would have to be built. Now, the experts are thinking about the distance of 500 km and how to pass these mountainous ways, and this may make conditions hard.

From June 2008 the Armenian railway was given to the Russian South Caucasus company. At this time, there may be a question like, if the Armenian railways were given to the Russian company who will draw plans for the Iran Armenian railways? However, the Russian officials declared that they are interested in drawing the Iranian-Armenian railways and it was discussed in 2008 between Russia and Armenian presidents meeting in Sochi. A group of workers was

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<sup>82</sup> V Armenii zavershayetsya podgotovka k stroitelstvu jeleznoy dorozki Iran-Armenia, (in Armenia there are starting to construct a railway between Iran-Armenia) [www.yerkramas.org/news/2008-10-20-1339](http://www.yerkramas.org/news/2008-10-20-1339) (accessed October 20,2008)

established to work on this project, by the Russian, Armenian and Iranian ministry of transportation.<sup>83</sup>

The issues in Georgia in 2008, increased the Turkish impetus in the South Caucasus' and it increased the negotiations and impetus of the Iran-Armenian railways project, the Iran-Armenian railway line may be seen as an alternative line to the Baku-Tibilisi-Ceyhan line and it also may increase the Iran-Armenian position in the region.<sup>84</sup>

In April 2009, at the time of the visit of the Armenian President to Iran, by the ministers of transportation of these countries, a new memorandum was signed about the Iranian-Armenian railway project.<sup>85</sup>

In other words, both state leaders again showed that they are supporting the Iranian-Armenian railway project. With this, in spite of the huge negotiations, this project is not yet under construction. In June 2009, the established had not met. A meeting was held at the end of the June. Of course, it has its own reasons. Firstly, this project is too expensive. They declared the price of this project, first time it was 1 milliard dollars, then 1-1.2 milliard dollars, then it increased to 1.2-1.5 milliard dollars, then to 2 milliard dollars, and then it came to 2-2.5 milliard

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<sup>83</sup> Rossiya soyedinit Armenii i Iran jeleznoy dorozkoj (Russia will connect Armenia with Iran by railway) [www.regnum.ru/news/1080763.html?forprint](http://www.regnum.ru/news/1080763.html?forprint) (accessed March 10,2009)

<sup>84</sup> Markedonov S. Irano-Amerikanskaya perezaqruzka usilit pozitsii Yerevena na Yujnom Kavkaze, [www.analitika.at.ua/news/2009-07-14-10629](http://www.analitika.at.ua/news/2009-07-14-10629) (Irano-American relations will increase the position of Erevan in South Caucasus) (accessed July 14, 2009)

<sup>85</sup> Ibid

dollars.<sup>86</sup> But it is not even the last price. If there is further research about the definite price of the project it may increase even double. It is true that, the Asia bank and the international bank, have not taken a concrete decision about this project. There are different prognoses about the starting date of the project. The better prognosis takes a minimum of 5 years.

From the other side, the projects economic benefit is still in doubt. Because of the low economic circle between Iran and Armenia, the benefits of this project are not sure. This project may just be beneficial if there is a connection to the international railway which is passes through Armenia. But many experts think that an alternative to the Iranian-Armenian railway may be the Qezvin-Rast-Astara railway. Because, without paying more Iran may with this transport, to the South, get more benefits.<sup>87</sup> But this may decrease the importance of the Iranian-Armenian railway.

The Armenian government declared that they are in hope of starting to construct the Iranian-Armenian railway at the end of 2009. But, at the end of 2009, the transportation minister of Armenia, Qurgen Sarkisyan, declared that, they will start on the technical and economical groundwork of this railway. From his words, we can understand that after the

technical and economical groundwork is ready then we can start to talk about the graphics of the railway.<sup>88</sup>

There was cooperation between Iran and Armenia also on air passenger transportation and the Iranian airlines are flying to Erivan some days each week.

## **b. Fuel-energy**

After the declaration of Armenia it met with serious energy problems. During the Soviet period Armenian energy needs were provided mostly by the Armenian Metamora atom station. But, after 1989, the station's activities were stopped, and Armenia again was faced with energy problems. To resolve this problem Armenia again addressed for help from Iran. After the cease-fire in Nagorno-Karabakh and around, there started to be drawn the first electric line and it was used in 1995.<sup>89</sup> This line started to transfer electric energy from Iran to Armenia. At the end of 1995 the Metamora atom electric station was used again. This helped Armenia with its energy problems. However, year's later Armenia cooperated in the energy area Iran. With the help of Iran, there was drawn a second line. The Armenian ministers of energy signed a new memorandum about drawing the third energy line. So, according to this agreement, this line had the capacity of

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<sup>86</sup> Doroqi Iran-Armenia, (Iran-Armenia routes) [www.panarmenian.net/news/ru/?=33336](http://www.panarmenian.net/news/ru/?=33336) (accessed January 16,2009)

<sup>87</sup> Aziatskiy bank predstavit sredstvana stroitelstva jeleznoy doroqi Iran-Armenia.(Asian bank will provide finance for the Iran-Armenian routes) [www.iran.ru/rus/print\\_news.php?news\\_id=59973](http://www.iran.ru/rus/print_news.php?news_id=59973) (accessed June 15,2009)

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<sup>88</sup> Armeniya seryozno nastroyeno postroit NPZ I jeleznyu doroqu s Iranom, (Armenia seriously wants to draw oil factory and railway with Iran) [www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=\\_Ru&NewsID=7792&SectionID=0&RegionID=0&Date=12/31/2008&PagePosition=1](http://www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=_Ru&NewsID=7792&SectionID=0&RegionID=0&Date=12/31/2008&PagePosition=1) (accessed March 15,2009)

<sup>89</sup> Kazinyan Aris. Iran-Armeniya. Period Rafsandjani (1989-1997), [www.analitika.at.ua/news/2009-06-30-10092](http://www.analitika.at.ua/news/2009-06-30-10092) (accessed June 30,2009)

400 kilowatts of electric energy and it needed 90 million dollar to draw this line. And also, according to this agreement the building of this fifth Razdan heat electric energy station, Iran should finance the line.<sup>90</sup> But I should note that, from the beginning of 2006 the Razdan heat electric station's fifth block was given to Russia.<sup>91</sup> Drawing the third energy line between the two countries has still not started. According to the Iranian ambassador to Armenia, the Iranian side is ready to draw this energy line. But the Armenian side still did not make serious steps.<sup>92</sup> The agreement which was made in 2005 between Armenia and Iran, said Iran should draw four wind electric station blocks. Those wind stations were drawn by the Iranian side in the summer of 2006 these started to be used.<sup>93</sup> In 2006 Iran and Armenia agreed to draw a water electric station over the Araz River. They agreed to draw a line of 42 km of combined boundaries. This station should produce 800 kw/h of electric energy in one year and it would be the biggest

electric energy station in the South Caucasus.<sup>94</sup>

On March 2009 they agreed to build the energy station over the Araz River which Iran would finance for 280 million dollar for Armenia and then after the completion of the station Armenia would return this debt with the electric energy. 1.5-2 month later the Armenia Energy Minister declared that we can start to draw the water electric station.<sup>95</sup> In April 2009 the Armenian President S. Sarkisyan, on a visit to Iran, the leaders discussed the water energy station issue and with the participation of two leaders they signed regarding financing the energy station over the Araz river.<sup>96</sup> However, construction of the station had not started in 2009. According to Armenian officials, the construction was late because of the arising internal issues in Iran. According to these officials, the construction may start in 2010.<sup>97</sup> Armenia also shows great interest with Iran regarding oil products. There is an

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<sup>90</sup> Iran news, (06.11.05) "Iran, Armenia sign MoU on electricity cooperation," (November 6, 2008)

<sup>91</sup> Minenergetiki RA ne podtverdilo informatsii o peredache Rosii Qazoprovoda, (the ministry of energy did not give information about the transferring the gas pipeline to Russia) www.iran.ru (31.03.06) (accessed May 12,2008) (panarmenian) and Iran-Armenia gas pipeline may not be sold. Tehran Times,(09.04.2006) (accessed August 19, 2008)

<sup>92</sup> Armen Movsesyan: U Irana net osnovaniy utverjdat, chto Armenia doljna viplatit shtraf, (Iran do not have any reason to tell that Armenia should pay a compensation) www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=\_Ru&NewsID=17736&SectionID=0&RegionID=0&Date=11/14/2009&PagePosition=1 (accessed July 16, 2009)

<sup>93</sup> Tehran Times, (19.08.2006) "Kocharian visits wind power plants built by Iran in Armenia," (accessed April 9, 2008)

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<sup>94</sup> Sroki stroitelstva Meqrinskoy QES na Armyansko-Iranskoy qranitse zatyayivayutsya iz-za situatsii v Irane, (there could not started to draw Merqin QES in Armenia-Iran borders because of the situations in Iran) www.iran.ru/rus/print\_news.php?news\_id=58770 (accessed July 16,2009)

<sup>95</sup> Iran videlit \$ 280 mln na stroitelstvo QES v Armeniyu, (Iran will gave for the QES construction 280\$ to Armenia) www.regnum.ru/news/113794.html (accessed August 16,2009)

<sup>96</sup> Armenia I Iran podpisali 8 dokumentov(Armenia and Iran signed 8 documents), www.yerkramas.org/news/2009-04-14-4908 (accessed July 16,2009)

<sup>97</sup> Sroki stroitelstva Meqrinskoy QES na Armyansko-Iranskoy qranitse zatyayivayutsya iz-za situatsii v Irane, (there could not started to draw Merqin QES in Armenia-Iran borders because of the situations in Iran) www.iran.ru/rus/print\_news.php?news\_id=58770 (accessed July 16,2009)

agreement between Iran and Armenia on two big projects. The first one is the construction of a pipeline from the oil refinery plant in Tabriz to Yerasx city in Armenia. The second one is the building of the oil factory on the boundaries of Iran with Armenia and this factory will work with Iranian oil. The idea about building a petrol pipeline from Tabriz to Yerasx was discussed in 2005. In the first agreement the Iranian side must build the fuel oil terminal together with the belt pipe and also should gather oil products in that terminal.<sup>98</sup> After the situation in Georgia in 2008, the discussion about the surroundings of the drawing of the oil products pipe became more real. Because, the cutting of a direct connection, Armenia with Russia, forced Armenia to change its attention to Iran. Iran said that they were ready to collaborate with Armenia in the solution of this problem too. Although, the Iranian produced petrol is not enough for its internal needs, and they are importing petrol from outside. The length of pipe line from Tabriz to Yerasxa is 300 km, but the diameter should be 250 mm. It is supposed that it will be finished in 2 years time and 200-240 million dollars will be spent for construction of this line.<sup>99</sup> The Armenian officials stated that construction of this pipeline would begin in the spring of 2009.<sup>100</sup> But construction

<sup>98</sup> Tehran Times, (11.07.2005) "Iran to build a terminal on border with Armenia," (accessed June 1,2008)

<sup>99</sup> Iz Irana v Armeniyu budet postroyen tpubuprovod dlya qotovix nefteproduktov, www.regnum.ru/news/fd-abroad/iran/1102911.html (accessed July 18,2009)

<sup>100</sup> Parallelno s qazoprovodom Armeniyu I Iran syajet nefteprovod, (with the parallel to the gas line there will a oil line also) www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=\_Ru&NewsID

had not even started at the end of 2009 and no reason was given for the delay. At the end of 2009 the Armenian minister of energy, A Marsosyan, declared that they are planning to build this pipeline in 2010. He said that, we need 250 million dollar for construction of this pipeline and 10% of this will be financed by "Gazprom". According to the Armenian minister, other needs for the construction will be financed by Iran.<sup>101</sup> The idea about the oil plan refinery on the boundary of Iran with Armenia, primary strength which is 7 million ton, was given by the Russian President during his visit to Armenia at the beginning of 2007. First figures showed that this oil plant would cost 3 milliard dollars and it was accepted cheerfully by the Armenian administration and community which were in bad situation. From the Russian side, for construction of this oil plant Gasport-oil should take part and the constructed plant will be worked in accordance with Iranian oil.<sup>102</sup>

There was an established commission which consisted of Russia, Iran and Armenian specialists to discuss this issue; the possibility of the project was researched. Some time later, it became

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=7639&SectionID=0&Re.....2008/12/22 (accessed December 22,2008)

<sup>101</sup> Namecheno stroitelstvo Irano-armyanskoqo nefteproduktprovoda Tebriz-Yerasx, www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=\_Ru&NewsID=17543&SectionID=0&RegionID=0&Date=11/102009&PagePosition (accessed October 11,2009)

<sup>102</sup> Rossiya zayavila o neviqodnosti stroitelstva NPZ na qranitse Armenii i Irana, (Russia declared that the Oil factory in Armenia-Iran border will be not profitable) www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=\_Ru&NewsID=6402&SectionID=0&Re...2008/10/20 (accessed October 20, 2008)

clear that, the plant construction was not possible. That is why they were searching new territory for this oil plant. However, in October 2008 at the Russian-Armenian commission on economical cooperation meeting, the Russian head of this commission, I. Levitin, announced that in general it is not profitable, on the economical side, to build this oil plant. This news was met with surprise by the Armenians. Because their hopes were very high. The Russian co-chairmen explained his thoughts by saying that, there are no selling bases for products which are produced in this plant.<sup>103</sup>

This news was also approved by the Prime Minister of Armenia, T. Sarkisyan, at the end of 2008. So, from his words we can come to the conclusion that, if the oil pipeline between Armenia and Iran is constructed, so, there is no need for an oil plant.<sup>104</sup> In previous years Iran – Armenian fuel-energy relations depended on the gas pipeline which was started. Cooperation in the gas area had been discussed in 1992. In the same year they signed an international agreement by both countries presidents. There was an issue about giving Iranian gas to Armenia. Armenia, which was in a war situation with Azerbaijan, could not take any actions over this issue. But in 1995, between Erevan and Tehran a new

agreement about gas was signed. In that agreement both sides accepted that they were ready to cooperate over gas issues and the first primary route of the gas line was defined.<sup>105</sup> But this protocol also could not find its execution and for this reason it is impossible to exclude Russian influence too. Because, Russia which controls the Armenian fuel-energy market and also production, could not completely control in the area of Armenian cooperation with Iran. Generally, serious steps for the drawing of gas pipelines from Iran to Armenia started in 2004. During the visit of Iranian President M. Xatami, in that year, to Armenia, many issues were discussed and especially the selling of Iranian gases to Armenia and also for the drawing of a gas pipeline from Iran to Armenia. At that visit, the sides signed 7 different documents, two of them related to gas cooperation. One of the signed documents was about the Iranian-Armenian gas pipeline, the parts drawing of the Armenian side's pipeline, and the other was the financing of the Iran-Armenian gas pipelines. With the agreement of both sides they took a decision, that construction of the gas pipeline credits would be given by Iranian banks and 15% of gas pipeline which ought to be 140 km. It was coordinated that, in the first periods each day there ought to be 3 cubic meters of gas and in a year, approximately, 1.1 milliard cubic meters of gas would be given to Armenia.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>103</sup> Sharik lopnul: Kak Armenia sobralas stroit NPZ na granitses Iranom?, [www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=\\_Ru&NewsID=6421&SectionID=0&Re....2008/10/21](http://www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=_Ru&NewsID=6421&SectionID=0&Re....2008/10/21) (accessed October 21, 2008)

<sup>104</sup> Armeniya seryozno nastroyeno postroit NPZ I jeleznyu dorogu s Iranom, (Armenia seriously wants to construct oil factory and railway with Iran) [www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=\\_Ru&NewsID=7792&SectionID=0&RegionID=0&Date=12/31/2008&PagePosition=1](http://www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=_Ru&NewsID=7792&SectionID=0&RegionID=0&Date=12/31/2008&PagePosition=1) (accessed December 31, 2008)

<sup>105</sup> Kazinyan Aris. Iran-Armeniya.Period Rafsandjani (1989-1997), [www.analitika.at.ua/news/2009-06-30-10092](http://www.analitika.at.ua/news/2009-06-30-10092) (accessed July 30,2009)

<sup>106</sup> Armenia. Tehran, 1388, p.173,175,176 and Qaza ne budet: Yerevan I Teqeran poka ne doqovorilis o postavkax,(The gas will not be: Erevan and Tehran

But, after some years, the Iranian gas annual dig should be increased to 2.3 milliard cubic meters. For 1 cubic meter of gas Armenia ought to be paying with 3 kwt of electric energy. With mutual agreement the construction of the gas pipeline must end in 2006, Iranian gas must be given to Armenia at the end of that year or at the beginning of 2007. But the same processes which happened surrounding this gas pipeline was the reason which lengthened the construction of the gas pipeline and the period of the Iranian gas which should be given to Armenia. Firstly, the issue about supervision of Armenian side's gas pipeline cropped up. The Armenian side, of course, wanted to control all its sides' pipeline. But it was clear that, the Armenian fuel-energy area wanted to be taken under the control of Russia in future and also Russia wanted to control the Iran–Armenian gas pipeline. It shows that, the Armenian administration was not happy with this kind of offer and wanted to keep the pipelines on the Armenian side under the control of “High flue-line” national company. The Armenian power energy minister, A. Maseyan, specially informed that the Armenian side of gas pipeline will not sell to “Gazprom”.<sup>107</sup>

After the visit of Armenian President P. Kochoryan to Moscow, at the beginning of November 2006, it was announced that, the Armenian minister of energy reneged in his speech and control of the

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did not agreed yet)  
[www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=\\_Ru&NewsID=6263&SectionID=0&Re.....2008/10/13](http://www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=_Ru&NewsID=6263&SectionID=0&Re.....2008/10/13) (accessed October 13,2 009)

<sup>107</sup> Tehran Times, (06.04.2006) Iran-Armenia pipeline may not be sold, (accessed August9, 2008)

gas pipeline's on the Armenian side was given to “Gazprom”. In reality, the Armenian side of the pipeline was given under control of this “ArmPosgazprom”, but the control of this company was under <Gazprom>.<sup>108</sup>

It was not enough for Russia just to control the pipelines on the Armenian side. At the same time, these demanded to reduce the diameter of the gas pipeline from Armenia.<sup>109</sup> In conclusion the pipelines diameter became 76 cm. With this, Russia did not allow Armenia to become as a gas transit country. Because, it was impossible even for Armenia to supply its gas demands with this kind of pipeline.

However, the other gas pipelines also were not started in 2006. The Armenian Prime Minister visited Tehran in December of 2006 and after this visit it was announced that, the gas pipeline would be given in use in March 2007.<sup>110</sup>

So, in March 2007 during the Iranian President M.Ahmedinejad's visit to Armenia, the gas pipeline was put into use. But, gas was not sent to the pipeline. The Armenian officials declared that, Armenia does not need Iranian gas now, when there is a need, and then the gas

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<sup>108</sup> Iran news, (09.11.2006) Gazprom buys control of Iran Armenia pipeline, (accessed October 12,2008)

<sup>109</sup> Budusheye armyansko-iranskix otnosheniy zavisit ot Moskvi( furute of Iran-Armenia relationships depend on Moscow), [www.panarmenian.net/news/rus/print/?nid=31997](http://www.panarmenian.net/news/rus/print/?nid=31997) (accessed July 15,2008)

<sup>110</sup> Iran znal o smerti Turkmenbashi za dva dnya do ofitsialnoqo soobsheniya?( Iran know about death of Turkmenbashi before two days of declaration), [www.regnum.ru/news/761706.html](http://www.regnum.ru/news/761706.html) (accessed July 25,2009)

will be supplied in the pipeline from Iran.<sup>111</sup>

This did not happen even in 2008, in spite of mutual declarations about giving gas to the pipeline, Armenia needed this gas though. Iranian gas was given to Armenia on 14 of May 2009. It is supposed that, during the visit of Armenian President S. Sorkisyan in April 2009 to Iran, reasons were discussed for cutting Iran-Armenian gas pipelines and the Armenian side accepted to resume the Iranian gas. But, information at the end of 2009 shows that, there is still dissatisfaction between the two countries in the gas area. So, the Iranian national gas expert company's leader R. Salnani pointed out that, Armenia started to import Iranian gas later than it should, and at the same time it is not importing the agreed amount, which is 3 million cubic meters of gas. Armenia is buying just 1-1.2 million cubic meters gas per day. He is saying that, for breaking an agreement Armenia should pay compensation to Iran.<sup>112</sup>

According to Armenian energy minister, the gas which it is demanding from Iran is paid by electric energy. Armenian Energy Ministry was adding that after the drawing of the third electric pipeline, they will be getting the amount of gas which was pointed at in protocols and it

<sup>111</sup> Armeniya ne nujdayetsya v Iranskom qazet (Armenia has no need in Iranian gas), [www.regnum.ru/news/842517.html](http://www.regnum.ru/news/842517.html) (accessed January 15,2009)

<sup>112</sup> Iran oshtrafuyet Armeniyu za narusheniye doqovoryonostey po priemu qaza, (Iran will demand penalty from Armenia for the not obeying the agreement) [www.iran.ru/rus/print\\_news.php?news\\_id=59972](http://www.iran.ru/rus/print_news.php?news_id=59972) (accessed July 15,2009)

will be paid for. But, the construction of the third electric energy line has not started yet. As mentioned above, according to S. Saqian, the Iranian ambassador to Armenia, his country is ready for the drawing of the third electric pipeline. But, the Armenian side did not made any serious steps in this direction.<sup>113</sup>

It is necessary to say that the generalizing of relations between Armenia and Iran, in spite of there are positive opportunities, trade between the two countries is not that high. For example, in 1994 trade between Armenia and Iran was 40.3 million dollars, in 1995 it was 61.7 million dollars, in 1996 it was 85 million dollars, in 1997 it was 82.5 million dollars, in 2000 180 million dollars,<sup>114</sup> in 2005 105 million dollars,<sup>115</sup> in 2007 it was 200 million dollars<sup>116</sup> and in 2008 it became 227 million dollars.<sup>117</sup>

According to experts and politicians they think that the weak trade between the two countries is surprising, because

<sup>113</sup> Armen Movsesyan: U Irana net osnovaniy utverjdat chto Armeniya doljna viplatit shtraf (Iran do not have right to demand compensation from Armenia) [www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=\\_Ru&NewsID=17736&SectionID=0&RegionID=0&Date=11/14/2009&PagePosition=1](http://www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=_Ru&NewsID=17736&SectionID=0&RegionID=0&Date=11/14/2009&PagePosition=1) (accessed November 14,2009)

<sup>114</sup> Iftixari A, [www.etnoglobus.com/?page=ful&id=626](http://www.etnoglobus.com/?page=ful&id=626) (accessed July 25, 2009)

<sup>115</sup> Danieyan Emin. Armeniya nalajivayet svyaz s nepopulyarnim Iranom, <http://russian.eurasianet.org/departaments/insight/articles/eav073106aru.shtml> (accessed July 31, 2006)

<sup>116</sup> Therme Clenout. The Irano-armenian alliance, [www.ifri.org/files/Noyen\\_Orient/Iran\\_alliancerusso\\_armenienne\\_Therme.pdf](http://www.ifri.org/files/Noyen_Orient/Iran_alliancerusso_armenienne_Therme.pdf) (accessed July 28, 2009)

<sup>117</sup> Seminar on the outlook for Armenian-Iranian relations, [www.masisweekly.com/vol29/issue19/pg10.pdf](http://www.masisweekly.com/vol29/issue19/pg10.pdf) (accessed June 30, 2009)

there are acceptable conditions. However, Armenian specialists also accept that trade circle between the two countries is low.<sup>118</sup>

For debate, we have to mention that, in spite of closed borders between Turkey and Armenia there is around 280 million dollar trade between these countries.<sup>119</sup> In general, the main trade supporters of Armenia are still Europe and Russia. But it is accepted that, after the opening of the borders between Turkey-Iran and Armenia the trade circle between these countries will be increased many times.

### **c. Collaboration in Military Area**

The military collaboration between Armenia and Iran is not that great. There are reasons for this. It is known that, Armenia is the Russian ally in the region and in this countries territory there is located the 102<sup>nd</sup> Russian military base. So, the Armenian borders with Iran and Turkey are also protected with the participation of Armenian soldiers and Russian soldiers. The Russian base, which includes 5000 special soldiers, has in its responsibility S-300 zenith rocket complex and MIQ-29 fighter airplanes.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Dolya Irana b eksporte Armenii ostayotsya sravnitelno skromnoy – director Armyanskoqo aqentstva razvitiya, [www.iran.ru/rus/print\\_news.php?news\\_id=55160](http://www.iran.ru/rus/print_news.php?news_id=55160) (accessed June 28,2009)

<sup>119</sup> Vozmojniye ssenarii prokolnoy drujbi. Armeniya-Tursiya-Azerbaydjan, [www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=\\_Ru&NewsID=16720&SectionID=0&Re...2009/10/24](http://www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=_Ru&NewsID=16720&SectionID=0&Re...2009/10/24) (accessed October 24,2009)

<sup>120</sup> Rossiyskaya baza ostayotsya v Armenii. (Russia keeps it bases in Armenia) [www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=\\_Ru&NewsID=6300&SectionID=0&Re....2008/10/14](http://www.armtoday.info/default.asp?Lang=_Ru&NewsID=6300&SectionID=0&Re....2008/10/14) (accessed October 14, 2008)

The needs of the Armenian army were also paid for by Russia, and in many cases without any interests. For example, it is known that, in 1996, Russia gave to Armenia weapons and defense technologies which cost 1 milliard dollars. In 2009, from the 102<sup>nd</sup> military base, was gave to Armenia nearly the 800 milliard dollars of weapons and defense technologies.<sup>121</sup>

Russia also helps Armenia to prepare the military cadres. Since the establishment of the Armenian republic until today, Russia helped to prepare nearly 1000 Armenian weather attack officers, pilots, tank crew men, etc, and they were educated in Russia.<sup>122</sup> This collaboration still continues. At the same time, we should note that Armenia is also a member of the Collective Security Agreement. And this organization has taken some responsibilities to protect the Armenian Security. So, for this reason there is no need for Armenia to cooperate with Iran in the military area. The agreements in this area are the continuation of much more political agreement, to carry out the safety of the thought exchange problems in the region.

The Iranian Minister of Defense's first visit to Armenia was in 2001 and they

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<sup>121</sup> Rusiyanın Ermənistana ötürdüyü 800 milyon dollarlıq yeni silahların siyahısı üzə çıxdı(List of 800 billion military equipment that Russai sent to Armenia has appeared), [www.mediaforum.az/print.php?lang=az&article\\_id=20090108032400605&page=00](http://www.mediaforum.az/print.php?lang=az&article_id=20090108032400605&page=00) (accessed August 1,2009)

<sup>122</sup> Reinforcement in Caucasus: Russia boosting military presence, [www.groong.com](http://www.groong.com) (accessed January 28, 2006)

signed a memorandum.<sup>123</sup> The first official visit of Minister of Defense, S. Sargsyan, to Tehran was established in February 2005. During that visit, issues were discussed about the improving of strategic partnership relations and some direct related issues for both countries.<sup>124</sup>

In November 2007, the Iranian new Minister of Defense M. M. Naccar officially visited Erevan. During this visit, a memorandum was signed by the two countries about some forms of partnership in technological areas. They agreed to create a relationship between the Armenian Defense Ministry's Zinap organization and the Iranian Defense Ministry's ETCA organization and with the help of this organizations to buy foods for the Armenian army.<sup>125</sup> Moreover, they agreed to give the fuel and (sutku) to the Armenian army.<sup>126</sup>

The signed memorandum included also the exchange of military staff between the two countries. In the summer of 2002,

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<sup>123</sup> Geoffrey Gresh. Codding the Caucasus: Iran, strategic relationship with Azerbaijan and Armenia, [http://www.cesaz.org/jurnal\\_1/CoddingtheCaucasus20byGeoffreyGresh.pdf](http://www.cesaz.org/jurnal_1/CoddingtheCaucasus20byGeoffreyGresh.pdf) (accessed February 20, 2009)

<sup>124</sup> Irano-armyanskix otnosheniya v kontekste vizita v Teqeran ministra inostrannix del Armenii V/Oskanyana, (the Iran Armenian relations in context of the visit of Armenia Ministr of Foreign Affairs V. Oskanyan to Tehran) (25.12.2006) [www.iran.ru/print\\_news\\_php.armen.htm](http://www.iran.ru/print_news_php.armen.htm) (accessed December 5, 2008)

<sup>125</sup> RA defence minister consider possible military-technical cooperation with Iran, [www.groong.usc.edu/news/msg210100.html](http://www.groong.usc.edu/news/msg210100.html) (accessed March 12, 2009)

<sup>126</sup> Armenia, Iran have no particular military cooperation programs, [www.groong.usc.edu/news/msg210076.html](http://www.groong.usc.edu/news/msg210076.html) (accessed February 20, 2009)

sometime after the elections in Iran, when M. Ahmedinejad was reelected, the Armenian ambassador to Iran, S. Sagaian, met with the Armenian Minister of Defense and gave the Iranian Minister of Defense's invitation to him.<sup>127</sup> In spite of the writings in the Armenian press about the visit it did not succeed until the end of 2009.

## Conclusion

There are other co operations between Armenia and Iran, such as in education, tourism, culture, etc, and there was established the chance to improve these co operations. In accordance with the above thoughts we can come to the conclusion that, these two countries are mutually interested in these cooperation and relationships. This cooperation may be stimulated by the countries' geopolitics. In reality, this country's future is dependent on to which side will go to their geopolitical interests and influences. Especially, the big powers influence Armenia and the Armenian – Turkish relations direction and it will also show influence on Armenian and Iran's future relations.

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<sup>127</sup> V Teqerane proydyot vstrecha qlav oboronnix vedomstv Armenii I Irana, (the meeting of the head of deffence of Armenia will be in Tehran) [www.panarmenian.net/news/rus/?nid=33942](http://www.panarmenian.net/news/rus/?nid=33942) (accessed August 15, 2009)

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