

The Armenian Question and its Global Impact

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Although peace agreements have stopped devastating world wars and nations gained their right to independence in Eastern Europe and the Middle East due to the collapse of Empires in the 19th and 20th centuries, unresolved conflicts between nations and people continue and enmity persists due to the denial by one actor of the reality of actions performed in the past, and the inability to confront its own history. The consequences of such attitudes are manifest in the case of the ‘Armenian Question.’

Paradigms in political science tell us that such attitudes exist, not only between the perpetrator and the victim, but also among various regional and global actors. This is evident in the ambivalence regarding the ‘Armenian Question.’

The reality is that the Ottoman Empire performed a planned and orchestrated act of genocide against the Armenians living

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in the indigenous part (Western Armenia) of the erstwhile Ottoman Empire in 1915. This mass killing transformed relations between the state of Turkey and the Armenians, with the latter fleeing the country and settling in different parts of the world. Moreover, Turkey's expansionist policy against Eastern Armenia caused conflict and triggered the inclusion of Azerbaijan into the conflict situation, starting in 1920. This gradually resulted in new forms of wars in 1991 and 2021, respectively.

In this regard, the 'Armenian Question' is defined by the Armenians as an unresolved national case, which has its historical and contemporary implications, with demands of preserving the full rights of the Armenians in the Greater Middle East and South Caucasus shaping Armenia's domestic and foreign policy.

The first part of this essay, presents the essential historical conditions that resulted in the 'Armenian Question' during the Ottoman Empire and afterwards. along with its regional and the global impact. The second part will analyse the ongoing conditions Armenia faces, and their regional and global implications. The third section, reveals the essentiality of the 'Armenian Question,' not only for Armenia and Armenians *per se*, but also for all the regional and global actors currently under threat of Turkish expansionism.

THE INSTRUMENTAL USE OF ISLAM AND NATIONALISM FOR POLITICAL GAINS

The two main pillars of Turkish political philosophy continue to be formed by Islam and Nationalism. In both cases, the Turkish ideologues, and the high political and military elite, have put forward the essentiality of the Turkish race and the Turkic people living beyond their borders, such as in the Middle East (Syria-Lebanon) and in the countries in Central

Asia.¹ Although, lately, regional countries in the Middle East and the South Caucasus are becoming more aware of Turkey's military interventions and the open messages that are coming from Ankara of its expansionist policy, the two central pillars of Turkey's internal and external policy have been evident, certainly since the mid-19th Century, when the 'New Ottoman' secret group was formed among the elite, with the intention of waging *Jihad* (Holy War) against the infidels and capturing the countries bordering the Byzantium.²

Further, the 'New Ottoman' had been translating the great powers' policy from the perspective of a clash of religions between Christianity and Islam, blaming Russia at first.³ Similarly, at the domestic level, the Ottoman Empire was working to restore the sacred Islamic Law (*Sharia*) by limiting the rights of non-Muslims and imposing *jizya*, taxes on all non-Muslims living within the borders of the Ottoman Empire.⁴ Moreover, amid pressure from the Western countries and Russia, the continual complaints of non-Muslims regarding the harsh conditions due to the state policy of religious discrimination, and through the effective work of constitutionalist liberals (including Armenian liberals among them) in the Ottoman Empire, some new reform had been

1 Ruben Safrastyan, *Ottoman Empire: The Genesis of the Program of Genocide (1876-1920)*, Zangak-97, Yerevan, 2011, p.62.

2 Ibid., p.74.

3 Ahmet Gurel, *Turkish-Armenian Relations in Foreign Sources (1071-2006)*, Izmir, Umay Yayinlari, 2006, pp.63-65, Translated from Turkish to English.

4 Vahakn Dadrian, *Warrant for Genocide:Key Elements of Turko-Armenian Conflict*, Transaction Publishers, New Jersey, 1999, p.9, and A. Norian, *Episodes from the Activities of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation*, Hairenik Publication, Boston, 1917, p.17, Translated from Armenian to English.

accepted in the education system for secular schools.⁵ The ‘New Ottoman’ had been forced to accept these reforms, but with the exception that all students must confess to being Ottomans. The Ottoman elite had realized the pressure on them regarding the implementation of *Sharia*, and they countered by focusing on nationalist policies, which meant the Turkification of the Ottoman empire.⁶ Thus, the Turkish elite and policy makers were using both Islam and Nationalism to their own advantage, misleading the people on both the rules of Islam and the concept of Nationalism. They had used Islam to invade the countries in the Balkans and forcibly convert the local population to Islam, and had used Nationalism not as a means to patriotism, but to Turkify non-Turks, again by force.⁷ In both these cases, non-Muslims and non-Turks were put under severe pressure and mistreated, starting from the mid-19th century. To the current day, the same treatment is meted out to the Kurds, after the evacuation of Armenians, Greeks, and Assyrians from Turkey. For the Turks, the country belongs only to them.

Reforms have thus been an important issue, both for the Ottoman elite and its relationship with the superpowers, especially the European countries and Russia. The focus on Armenians started in parallel when the ‘New Ottomans’ decided that, in order to escape the pressure of imposed reforms by the West and Russia, they must declare Pan-Islamic *jihad* against

5 Raymond Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, I.B & Co Ltd., London, New York, 2011, p.67. and Ruben Safrastyan, op. cit. p.46.

6 Vahakn Dadrian, op. cit., p.98.; Ruben Safrastyan, op. cit. p.62, and Jon Kirakosyan, *The Young Turks in Front of Historical Judgment*, Armenia Publication, Yerevan, p.207, Translated from Armenian to English.

7 Ruben Safrastyan, op. cit. p.90 and Aram Andonian, *The Great Crime*, Bahag Publications, Boston, 1921, p.179, Translated from Armenian to English. Note: One of the most essential primary sources of the Armenian Genocide archives.

non-Muslims and massacre the Bulgarians and the Armenians.⁸ The Armenian Press, during that time, wrote of the growing Muslim fanaticism in Western Armenia (the six Armenian vilayets or provinces) and of the barbaric behaviour of the Turks against the Armenians in Van (now a mostly Kurdish-populated and erstwhile Armenian-populated city in the eastern part of Turkey).⁹ The 'Armenian Question' cropped up in International Relations starting from the Berlin Conference, where Russia and the West imposed reforms, specially in Western Armenia (the six Armenian Vilayets). The Ottoman elite then initiated the plan to eliminate the Armenians from Turkey by violent methods, and also to prevent the reforms that they thought could lead the Armenians to seek independence in 19th Century. The Ottomans were also able to prolong the process of implementing the reforms in order to win time and eventually halt the reforms agreed upon with Russia and the European countries.

THE ARMENIAN AWAKENING

The liberation movements of the independent states formed in the Balkans nurtured the notion among Armenians to raise their own voices, after decades of manipulation by the Ottoman rulers, and especially during Sultan Abdul Hamid II's reign. The two key Armenian leaders were Mikael Nalbandian and Hagop Melik Hagopian (Raffi). The former promoted the idea of liberating the self and the people from the imposed tyranny to achieve freedom, and the latter stressed liberation and freedom through struggle, including armed struggle, if needed. These two intellectuals were the force behind of the Armenian national movement that came into existence at the end of the 19th Century.

8 Ruben Safrastyan, *op. cit.*, pp.104-105.

9 *Ibid.*, p.91.

Many are of the opinion that the Armenians have been deprived of their own nation for more than 600 years. Furthermore, prominent writer and visionary, Shahan Natalie revealed in his book, *The Turks and We*, the Turkish official notion of establishing Turkism by uniting with Azerbaijan over the corpse of Armenia, and the urgency of destroying Armenia, considered to be a barrier between Turkey of Anadolu (Anatolia) and Turkey of the Caucasus. Turks openly used the slogan ‘Death to Armenians and Armenia’ in the wake of invading Armenia in order to move to the east, further invading Russia and reaching to the Chinese Wall under the name of the Turkish Empire and pan-Turanism.¹⁰

It is worth mentioning that the impact of the Armenian intellectuals on common Armenians was tremendous, creating awareness that the Armenians were seen by the Ottoman authorities as a second-class community and that their essential rights had been ignored for centuries. Thus, the Armenian national movements started secretly being formed in the Ottoman Empire. The Armenakan Party was established in Van in 1884 with a mission to liberate Armenia (the six Vilayets) from the Ottomans. Its ideology was based on principles of nationalism and the strategy was to create brigades and find ways to obtain arms and money.¹¹ Next, the Social Democrat Hunchakian Party was formed in 1887 in Geneva, Switzerland, with a Marxist revolutionary model, and with the aim of taking stronger action through rebellion and resistance.¹² At last, in the year 1890, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation was formed in Tiflis/ Tbilisi, Georgia, with a Social-Nationalist ideology and a strategy of continuing the previous movements

10 Shahan Natalie, *Turks and We*, Bookinist, Yerevan, 1928, pp. 4, 43-44 and 52.

11 “Armenakan Party”, Armenian Democratic Liberal Party publication, Yerevan, 2017, p.35, Translated from Armenian to English.

12 Vahakn Dadrian, op. cit., p.69.

with a more organised structure and larger capacity.¹³ The Armenian political awakening was reflected in demonstrations in Kum Kapu in 1890, and in the capture of the Ottoman Bank in Constantinople in 1896, events that alarmed the Ottoman authorities.

THE ELIMINATION OF THE ARMENIANS

The long-planned strategy to eliminate the Armenians from the Ottoman Empire was put forward systematically from 1894 to 1923, and is known in history and in political terminology as the Armenian Genocide. To understand the real motivation of the Ottomans' decision of eliminating the Armenians in that period, it is essential to mention their fear of losing a huge Asian part of the Ottoman Empire, as well as the reality of having lost the Balkan region prior to the First World War. The Ottomans were perfectly aware of the abilities of the Armenians to establish a nation of their own.¹⁴ In a way, it can be said that the Armenians in that period had all the political, economic, cultural, and social mechanisms to construct a free nation for themselves. Moreover, Armenian historian Sarkis Hatsbanian, in his lecture dedicated to the Armenian Genocide, mentions the immense financial, economic and ministerial role of the Armenians not only in the the Ottoman Empire,¹⁵ but also as key traders reaching out to Europe, Russia, China, and India, starting from the 1850s.

13 Mikael Varantian, *The History of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation*, Hamazkayin Publication, Beirut, 2013, p.69, Translated from Armenian to English.

14 Mevlan Zade Rifat, *The Dark Sides of the Ottoman Empire and Ittihad's Armenocide plans*, Faximil Publication, Yerevan, 1999, p.101, Translated from Armenian to English.

15 Sarkis Hatsbanian, "Why Genocide", Narekatsi Art Institute, January 18, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9Ah5qK-_Ao, Translated from Armenian to English.

Planned acts of genocide were performed between 1894 and 1896 and between 1915 and 1923. The largest campaign of genocide took place when the Ottoman Empire entered the First World War and sided with Germany. Further, the Young Turks came to power with a revolution and with a constitution purportedly to give equal rights to all citizens of the Ottoman Empire, but their hidden agenda was based on Turkish Nationalism, with a strategy of the Turkification of the Ottoman Empire. The ideologue of the Turkification doctrine was Ziya Gokalp, a key figure in the Young Turks movement and subsequently one of the creators of the Turkish Republic. He mentioned in his famous book, *The Fundamentals of Turkification*, that there are two key elements for the process to succeed. First, the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire should be maintained by all means; and second, Turkomanism and Turanism must be established.¹⁶ Based on his writings, it can be said that the Nationalist Turks had the notion of advancing to the regions of the Middle East, South Caucasus, Iran and Central Asia, including the Altay Mountains.¹⁷

This had two critical implications: all non-Turks within the Ottoman Empire and Turkey must accept Turkification and accept a nation only for the Turks, or they must be eliminated from the country constituted on Turkish Nationalism.

The Young Turks party elite formed a secret committee called Teskilat-i Mahsusa¹⁸ (The Special Organization) in 1911

16 Ziya Gokalp, *The Fundamentals of Turkification*, Otuken Nesriyat, Istanbul, 2014, pp.40-41, Translated from Turkish to English.

17 Ibid., pp.42-43.

18 Mevlan Zade Rifat, op. cit., p. 120; Raymond Kevorkian, op. cit., p.244; Ruben Safrastyan, *Mustafa Kemal: The Struggle against Republic of Armenia (1919-1921)*, Yerevan Publishing House, Yerevan, 2019, p.32, Translated from Armenian to English; and Hasan Gemal, *The Armenian Genocide*, Hrant Dink Foundation Publication, Yerevan, 2014, p.67, Translated from Armenian to English.

to plan the strategy, the key participants, and the methods for elimination of the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire. And this was going to take place amidst the First World War in a large scale. Particularly, the plan was set to massacre the Armenians in their homeland (Six Vilayets) and get rid of the 'Armenian Question'. The official Turkish excuse for this decision was to avoid the Russian military intervention in the expected war against the Ottoman Empire,¹⁹ but the Young Turks prior to the announcement of the First World War, had allied with Germany and received the credentials from the German Ambassador.²⁰ The Ottoman Empire would establish the Turanic Empire, including Armenia, Caucasus, Iran, and the people residing inside the Ottoman Empire. Any people who resisted, were to be eliminated. The expected Russian invasion was, thus, not the initial motive of the Young Turks in their programme to eliminate the Armenians from their homeland. The concern was not the internal security of the Ottoman Empire, but a clear strategy to build a homeland exclusively for the Turks by massacring not only Armenians, but also the Nestorian Christians and the Arabs,²¹ under the dictates of a distinctive ideology and set doctrine.

The plan for moving east to Caucasus and establishing Turan for the Turkic people continued even after the end of the First World War, when Kemal Ataturk, a member of the Young Turks and one of the key figures of the Teskilat-i Mahsusa, planned to eliminate the remaining Armenians and Greeks in Turkey, and to invade the Republic of Armenia.²² Although the new regime in Turkey had come in a secular form, it was the

19 Mevlan Zade Rifat, op. cit., p.89; and Ruben Safrastyan, op. cit., p.51.

20 Mevlan Zade Rifat, op. cit., pp. 18-36.

21 Arnold J. Toynbee, *The Murderous Tyranny of the Turks*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1917, p.16.

22 Ruben Safrastyan, op. cit. p. 136.

continuation of the ideology and the doctrine of the previous regimes based on ‘Turkey for Turks,’ and using Islam as a method to unite all the Turkic people under one Turkish flag.²³ In 1920, in order to achieve his objective of totally eliminating the Republic of Armenia and the ‘Armenian Question,’ Kemal Ataturk worked on invading the newly independent Armenian state in the Caucasus, based on a map that he had shaped in 1907. The excuse for invading Armenia was the fear of the creation of an independent Armenia in the six *vilayets*. In fact, Kemal Ataturk’s real intention had, from the beginning, been to penetrate the Caucasus by conquering the Republic of Armenia, and uniting with Azerbaijan to establish unity with the Turkic country in the Caucasus.²⁴ This was a long-held dream of all previous Turkish governments, starting from the mid-19th Century. In that period, Kemal Ataturk had been able to attack the Republic of Armenia and conquer lands in its eastern parts, but was not able to reach his goal of unification with Azerbaijan, due to Armenian army’s victorious Battle at Sardarapat, which stopped the Turkish Army from invading the Republic of Armenia. Eventually, both Armenia and Azerbaijan became constituent units of the Soviet Union. Hence, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and with the formation of the Republic of Turkey, the Turkification of Turkey and the move towards the east to establish Turan, became an unchained policy and desire for Turkish elites and policy makers.

THE SCALE OF THE GENOCIDE

Eliminating Armenians from their homeland was the objective of the Ottomans, both during the era of Sultan Abdul

23 Jon Kirakosyan, op. cit., p.207.

24 Ruben Safrastyan, op. cit., p.87..

Hamid II and the Young Turks. The systematic plan was set in motion by the leaders of the Young Turks, particularly following the directions of Talat Pasha, the Interior Minister of Ottoman Turkey. Sultan Abdul Hamid is known for altering the demographic patterns within the empire by implementing methods of deportation and massacre of non-Muslims, particularly the massacre of Armenians of the principality of Cilicia in 1984-1986, infamously known as the Adana massacre.²⁵ The second phase of systematic massacres, known as the Armenian Genocide, occurred between 1915 and 1923, during the First World War and after Mustafa Kemal formed Turkey. The plan had been put to work under the guise of 'deportation' of the Armenians from the Eastern region due to the purported threat of possible cooperation between the Armenians and the Russians, in case of a Russian invasion of the Ottoman Empire.²⁶

Prior to the large scale 'deportation', prominent Armenian figures in Istanbul had been arrested and deported to Angora in one night, and killed.²⁷ The second deportation targeted the remaining Armenians. The routes during the first phase of deportation in 1915 was from Erzurum and other cities, towns, and villages in the Eastern provinces to Aleppo.²⁸ The second phase, in 1916, from Aleppo to the Syrian deserts (Meskene and Der El Zor), in marching caravans.²⁹ During Mustafa Kemal's rule, the program of eliminating the Armenians not only continued, but dovetailed with a state policy to wipe out Armenia politically and physically from the map.³⁰

25 Raymond Kevorkian, op. cit., p.74.

26 Ronald Grigor Suny, *A History of the Armenian Genocide*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2015, pp. 247-250.

27 Ibid., p.277.

28 Raymond Kevorkian, op. cit., p. 631.

29 Ibid., p.627.

30 Ibid., p.803

It is worth mentioning that the Armenians were predominantly located in their historical homeland in the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire such as Erzurum, Van, Bitlis, Dikranakerd, Harput and Sepastia, and in cities such as Trabzon, Istanbul and Izmir.³¹ The Young Turks' plan of exterminating the Armenians from their homeland resulted in the physical annihilation of 1.5 million Armenians, and seizure of the cultural, economic and financial belongings of the Armenians by the government of Turkey of that time. This was a crime against humanity, compounded by the denial of the Armenian Genocide by successive Turkish governments.

THE DENIAL OF GENOCIDE

In the last decade many prominent intellectuals in Turkey have started to openly discuss the facts surrounding the Armenian Genocide. Among the intellectuals, Hrant Dink (Armenian), as well as Taner Akcam, Hasan Cemal and Cengiz Aktar. Taner Akcam, a prominent historian who published several books on the subject, emphasised the necessity of Turkey to open its borders with Armenia, to stop the vain rejection of the Armenian Genocide, to face historical reality, and to normalize relations with Armenia.³² Cengiz Aktar, one of the initiators of the Apology Campaign in 2008, asserted that the Armenian Genocide, “a destruction of the Armenian population on its ancestral land is a sheer fact... it was a decision to erase Armenians from Anatolia... the rationale behind it was to engineer a homogeneous population composed of Muslims.”³³ Further, Hasan Cemal (the grandchild of one of

31 “Maps of the Armenian Genocide”, *The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Foundation*, Yerevan, 2021, http://www.genocidemuseum.am/en/g/mapping_armenian_genocide2.php.

32 Hambersom Aghbashian, *Turkish Intellectuals who have recognised the reality of the Armenian Genocide*, Los Angeles, 2015, p.26.

33 *Ibid.*, p.28.

the top military leaders of the Ottoman Empire, assassinated by the Armenian revolutionaries during *Operation Nemesis*), in his book dedicated to the Armenian Genocide, also blames military personnel for the uninterrupted racism and religious fanaticism taking new shape in Turkey under Recep Tayyip Erdogan's rule.³⁴ Cemal described the motive of cutting a population from its roots as a sin.³⁵ Hrant Dink, the most remarkable Armenian figure in Turkey, assassinated in Istanbul by a Turkish nationalist in front of his publication's building on January 19, 2007, emphasized the destruction of the taboo regarding the Armenian Genocide and explicitly clarified the annihilation of the Armenians and the Armenian culture from the lands belonging to Armenians.³⁶

The emergence of such intellectuals in Turkey over the last two decades is undoubtedly a positive step, in terms of informing Turkish society about the crimes committed against the Armenians, and ceding rights to the Armenian community who remained in Turkey since. However, none of these intellectuals have articulated the demand for the restoration of full rights to the Armenians, including the recovery of their lands and their properties. Most of the intellectuals faced a harsh response from the authorities and the nationalists, branded as 'traitors' and subject to punishment under the Article 301 for 'Insulting Turkishness.' The principal motive of these intellectuals was to democratize Turkey, and under by raising the issue of the Armenian Genocide, to clear the wounds of the Turkish history, so that Turkey could become

34 Hasan Gemal, op. cit., pp. 249-250.

35 Ibid., p.144.

36 Hrant Dink, "We have our eyes on these lands, because our roots are from here", *Hurriyet*, September 25, 2005, <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/bu-topraklarda-gozumuz-var-kokumuz-burada-352797?fbclid=IwAR2a3tcm0jPZDXc3NCCK37x7vIL5vIDkPI17AT1XfHvIyy1wt1yIS-4ynZQ>.

a full member of the European Union (EU). However, such partial or cosmetic approaches cannot bring the two sides to peace talks. Relations cannot be normalised as long as the full rights of the Armenians are not reinstated, and their lands not returned to the original owners.

Turkish authorities and governments have repeatedly denied the facts the atrocities committed against the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey were planned acts of genocide against the Armenians and other non-Muslims and non-Turks. The arguments brought forward by the Turks are mostly vague, arrogant, and outdated, reiterating the falsehoods previously spoken by the leaders of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. For instance, former Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu asserted that whatever was done in the past was right, and if there the necessity arose, would be done again.³⁷ With regard to the Armenian Genocide, Davutoglu argued that the pain does not belong only to the Armenians, the sorrow was for all the races who were killed during the War. By fusing the Armenian genocide with war deaths, Davutoglu denied the planned Genocide against the Armenians, dismissing these actions as events within a situation of global war in which the Ottoman authority had no responsibility.³⁸ Further, the blame of the genocidal action is put on foreign powers, especially Russia, for influencing the people to revolt against the Ottoman authorities.³⁹ He repeated the populist and hollow rhetoric that such shameful acts had

37 Hagop Chakrian, *The Armenian Genocide, Turkish Genocide denial, falsification and the manifestations of anti-Armenian hatred*, Asoghik Publication, Yerevan, 2017, p.142, Translated from Armenian to English.

38 Ibid., 375.

39 Nikolay Hovhannisian, *The Armenian Genocide under the scope of the Arabic Hystography*, National Academy of Sciences of Armenian Institute of Oriental Studies, Yerevan, 2004, p.139, Translated from Armenian to English.

no place in Turkish history. The Turkish elite and the military personnel have incessantly repeated these clichés wherever the issue of the Armenian Genocide comes up, without accepting reality or attempting a logical answer or explanation.

In his book, *Strategic Depth*, which continues to be the doctrine underlying Turkey's foreign policy, Ahmet Davutoglu not only excludes the existence of the Armenian factor in the Ottoman Empire, but also sees the South Caucasus from the prism of Turkish-Russian relations, ignoring the existence of the three South Caucasian Republics.⁴⁰ Davutoglu's approach demonstrates that evading the rights and demands of small nations and their citizens remains integral to the consciousness of Turkish officials. Moreover, considering the South Caucasus merely a territory that Russia or Turkey will control is nothing more than an assault on the rights of self-determination and a declaration of the intention to subjugate the internationally recognised Republics.

In addition, Davutoglu often draws on historic episodes, where he describes the Islamization agenda of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, meant to maintain the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, as being a multi-racial and multi-religious empire. Such statements not only reflect the abusive mechanism through which the Turkish elite govern the country at the expense of indigenous citizens, but also the mistreatment by the Ottomans of the Muslim Arabs of the Levant, as well as of the birthplace of Islam, Saudi Arabia.⁴¹

Moreover, the expansionist agenda continues to shape Turkey's foreign policy, as Davutaoglu asserts Turkey's

40 Ahmet Davutoglu, *Strategic Depth*, Kure Publishing, Istanbul, 2010, p.55, Translated from Turkish to English.

41 Talal Al-Torifi, "Turkish propaganda ignores Ottoman violations of Two Holy Mosques", *Arab News*, July 22, 2020, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1708406>.

presence in Europe, Asia, the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East and the Mediterranean.⁴² This vision reflects Turkey's contemporary and imperialist agenda, as well as the intention of functioning militarily in the Middle East and the South Caucasus, with systematic tactics intended to recapture Ottoman era territories and build the Turan Empire. It is worth mentioning that the current mentality of the Turkish officials hasn't changed for centuries and the core element in Turkey's foreign policy is to invade and capture lands in order to establish the Turanic Empire. During a military parade in Azerbaijan, the Turkish President Erdogan declared, "Today, may the souls of Nuri Pasha, Enver Pasha, and the brave soldiers of the Caucasus Islam Army, be happy." Thus, in the mindset of the current Turkish elites, Ottoman Enver's vision of invading the East and creating Turanic Turkey is still alive. Accordingly, the irresponsible stance of the previous and current Turkish authorities continues to reject the possibility of arriving at a just solution to the 'Armenian Question.' In addition, prominent leaders broadcast in front of the world, their readiness to repeat such atrocities, if necessary.

THE ARMENIAN REPRESENTATION AND ITS DEMAND

The survivors of the Armenian Genocide in the deserts of Syria, received a positive welcome by local Arabs, regardless of the Ottoman decree to take no notice of those of them who reached Syria, and to show no support for them.⁴³

The strategy of the elimination of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire by the means of the Armenian Genocide failed partially in the Arab land, due to the empathy shown towards the Armenians, not only the local population *per se*,

42 Ahmet Davutoglu, *op. cit.*, p.92.

43 Nora Arisian, *The Armenians in the Syrian Thought*, Al Fourat Publication, Beirut, 2002, p.91, Translated from Arabic into English.

but also by the official statements to the Arabs from Al-Husayn Ibn Ali, the Sherif of Mecca, declaring:

What is requested of you is to protect and to take good care of everyone from the Jacobite Armenian community living in your territories and frontiers and among your tribes; to help them in all of their affairs and defend them as you would defend yourselves, your properties and children, and provide everything they might need... because they are the Protected People of the Muslims... about whom the Prophet Muhammad said: *Whosoever takes from them even a rope, I will be his adversary on the day of Judgment*”⁴⁴

This statement shows that the Muslim Arabs were officially against the extermination of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire as a Christian race. At the same time, the Arabs had been organizing the resistance against the Ottoman Empire,⁴⁵ and the Armenians were seen as allies in their struggle against the cruelty of the Turkish armies and administration against all non-Turk and non-Muslim factions within the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁶

The Sherif of Mecca’s statement, moreover, shows that the cruelty of the Turks in massacring the Armenians was against Islam. In other words, the Turks who planned and executed the Armenian Genocide were against Islamic law and the faith itself, and speaking in the name of Islam was a demonstration of their dishonesty. It deserves mention that the Sharif of

44 “The Armenian Genocide”, June, 2015, <https://genocideducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/EXTERMINATION.pdf>.

45 Aram Gasparyan, *The Arab Nationalists and the Young Turks: From Cooperation to Confrontation (1908-1914)*, Gitutium Publishing House, Nasra, 2016, p. 129, Translated from Armenian to English.

46 Tala Al-Torifi, “Turkey repeating Ottoman Empire’s crimes against Arabs”, *Arab News*, July 21, 2020, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1707976>.

Mecca's statement has been the foundational principle of Armenian-Arab relations, not only within the Ottoman Empire but also after the formation of the independent Arab states. This principle has established the friendly and brotherly relations between Armenian Christians and Arab Muslims; and has demonstrated the ability of Christians and Muslims to live peacefully together, whether under Ottoman rule or in independent states. This unique relation between the Christian Armenians and the Muslims Arabs has set as an example of mutual coexistence and peaceful living between different races of different religious affiliations.

The Armenian survivors were re-located in the Middle East after the First World War and especially in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine, where they formed an Armenian Diaspora, with full rights to establish churches, schools, political parties, and cultural and benevolent organisations, and to citizenship.

The 'Armenian Question' has now been transformed to another level in unprecedented circumstances. While the majority of the Armenians were struggling for their rights in the Ottoman Empire; their demands for recognition have now reached the global level through the Armenian Diaspora in more than 40 countries, with representative political and benevolent organization in the Middle East, Europe, Northern and Southern America. Armenian political parties such as the Social Democrat Hunchakian Party, the Hunchakian Party, the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, have primarily been the advocating lobby for a just solution to the 'Armenian Question' globally. These groups have collectively secured official recognition of the Armenian Genocide by more than 30 countries.

The Armenian political parties have continued to recruit ideologues even in the Diaspora under the new environment

that prevails in different geographical locations. Sarkis Zeitlian coined the new concept of an ‘Armenian Orientation’, under which Armenian identity is revealed and preserved in the Diaspora, and the principles of Armenian existence in the host countries are explored.⁴⁷ Zeitlian is one of the key figures in Armenian politics, who has set a political and social agenda for Armenians to function in the absence of a free and independent Armenian nation.

During the 19th Century, Armenian ideologues were stressing the liberation of Armenians from the mistreatment and tyranny of the Ottoman leadership. After the outbreak of the First World War, Armenian intellectuals, political parties and benevolent organisations have emphasized the restoration of Armenian rights, elimination of the consequences of the Armenian Genocide, as well as compensation by Turkey to be paid to the heirs of the Genocide. Further, the return of Armenian Church properties in Turkey, and the return of occupied territories to the Republic of Armenia, are increasingly emphasised. Efforts to keep ‘Armenianism’ alive with national, cultural, educational and political programmes and campaigns are also undertaken.⁴⁸ In his *Armenian Orientation* doctrine, moreover, Zeitlian revealed the mechanisms which the Armenian Revolutionary Party should adopt with different countries and international agencies, which defend of human rights and condemn genocidal acts, and some of which are themselves victims of genocide.⁴⁹ Thus, Zeitlian’s doctrine has been noteworthy in terms of maintaining the organised Armenian communities commitment to the ‘Armenian

47 Sarkis Zeitlian, *The Warrior Ideologue*, Hamazkayin Vahesetian Publication, Bourj Hamoud, 1993, p.55, Translated from Armenian to English.

48 Ibid., p.57.

49 Ibid., p.494.

Question’, and the preservation and projection of the associated ideology and demands among young Armenians.

Within the framework of the ‘Armenianism’ doctrine, the Armenian political parties evolved the ability to initiate interactions with other countries and people, demanding their rights from the sides that committed genocide and from the international bodies. Besides, although this doctrine was articulated at the end of the 1970’s, it is still considered contemporary and has the potential to accomplish new dimensions in International Relations, within which countries could come together to widen the spectrum of their relations to establish blocs against Turkey. Arabic-Islamic countries, for instance, have recently established a coalition against Turkey’s policy, involving Saudi Arabia and UAE; China is also worried by Turkey’s open support to Xinjiang militants and their participation in terrorist blocs in Syria. Further, India is concerned about Pakistan’s alliance with Turkey, the latter’s soft power policy in Kashmir.⁵⁰

The ‘Armenian Question’ has the capacity not only to unite the countries or peoples who have been victims of genocide in the Ottoman Empire and other parts of the world, but also to form an alliance with countries who currently see the expansionist

50 Abhinav Pandya, “Erdogan pursuing Islamic agenda against India”, *The Sunday Guardian*, September 5, 2020, <https://www.sundayguardianlive.com/news/erdogan-pursuing-islamist-agenda-india>; Ararat Kostanian and Bhavdeep Modi, “How India & Armenia can counter Turkey-Pakistan nexus in South Caucasus” *The Daily Guardian*, March 22, 2021, <https://thedailyguardian.com/how-india-armenia-can-counter-turkey-pakistan-nexus-in-south-caucasus/>; and Ararat Kostanian, “Erdogan’s Expansionism and Pakistan’s jihadism in the Caucasus: Understanding the dynamics of Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict”, *USANAS Foundation*, April 11, 2021, <https://usanasfoundation.com/erdogans-expansionism-and-pakistans-jihadism-in-the-caucasus-undertaking-the-dynamics-of-armenia-azerbaijan-conflict>.

pan-Turanic agenda as a threat to their national security, or to their territorial integrity, such as India and China. Turkey has been running pan-Turanic propaganda in Kashmir and has allied with Pakistan not only in South Asia, but also in the South Caucasus, during the second war in Nakhorno Karabakh (September to November 2020) against Artsakh and Armenia. Pakistan has not recognised Armenia as a state and continues to develop its relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey on the military level as well.⁵¹ On the other hand, Turkey has been openly supporting the Uyghurs⁵² in Xinjiang as a Turkic entity, and its pan-Turanic agenda is meant to create a new version of the Ottoman Empire by force, stretching from Turkey to Central Asia, Afghanistan, India and Xinjiang.⁵³ Although these countries are in friendly relations with Armenia and the Armenian diaspora, stopping Turkey's ambitious expansionist agenda, establishing friendly relations, enhancing trade, and building financial ties and the anti-Turkey coalition, will not suffice to deal with the current Turkey, which has more economic and military abilities and *jihadist* groups located and supported by Ankara.

It must not be forgotten that the superpowers' diplomatic pressures on the Ottoman Empire since the end of the 19th Century failed to stop Turkey from orchestrating the genocides against non-Muslims and non-Turks. Interestingly, the same tendencies appear to be arising again.

51 "What's behind the growing Azerbaijan-pakistan-turkey friendship?", *TRT World*, January 14, 2021, <https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/what-s-behind-the-growing-azerbaijan-pakistan-turkey-friendship-43259>.

52 "Uyghurs are satisfied from Erdogan's explanations", *Hurriyet*, July 12, 2009, <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dunya/uygurular-erdoganin-aciklamasin-dan-memnun-12055384>.

53 S. Sapah-Giulian, *The Responsibilities*, Doniguin & Sons, Beirut, 1974, p.148, Translated from Armenian to English.

France has not only recognised the Armenian Genocide but, in January, 2012,⁵⁴ also implemented a law, making it a crime to publicly deny the Armenian Genocide in France. The President Joe Biden of the United States of America confirmed the reality of the Armenian Genocide in his annual speech in 2021, though this is yet to be translated into official policy, and such a statement will only put Turkey under pressure for a limited time. There is, as yet, no imposition of direct responsibility to provide a fair solution to the ‘Armenian Question,’ and no evidence of a change in Turkey’s expansionist agenda, which has endured since the 19th Century. A new form of alliances is much needed among the countries and the people with a clear agenda to implement not only economic sanctions against Turkey, but to develop trade among allied alternatives, and also form military alliances. Such alliances must engage in constant joint military exercises to keep Turkey in a state of crisis, and to interdict any plans Ankara may have to invade Cyprus, Syria, Iraq, Nagorno Karabakh, or Libya.

The ‘Armenian Question’ continues to be the keystone in Armenia’s foreign policy and in the Armenian diaspora, regardless of changes in world affairs and in the balance of power among the superpowers, past and present. On the other hand, the Turkish expansionist agenda, formulated on the basis of pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism hasn’t changed either, and continues to threaten nations stretching from the Middle East to Central Asia. Turkey has been openly announcing its ambitions and often disseminates maps and plans for its proposed Turkish Empire (Turan), to be realized by the year 2050.⁵⁵

54 “French Senate passes Armenian genocide law”, *BBC News*, January 23, 2012, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-16677986>.

55 Yeghia Tashjian, “More Than Just a Map: Stratfor’s Map of Turkey’s sphere of Influence 2050”, *The Armenian Weekly*, March 3, 2021, <https://armenianweekly.com/2021/03/03/more-than-just-a-map-stratfors-map-of-turkeys-sphere-of-influence-2050/>.

During the attack on Nakorno Karabakh (September 2020), voices were heard from Azerbaijan declaring, “After Karabakh our next target is Kashmir. Turkey, Azerbaijan and Pakistan are three countries but one nation.”⁵⁶ However, while Turkey is gradually moving to the East militarily and announcing its intentions to create a Turan Army, the anti-Turkish coalition is trying to block Turkey’s moves through diplomatic and economic initiatives. For instance, Greece has been able to diplomatically withstand Turkey’s ambitions in the Aegean Sea; at the same time, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirate have boycotted Turkish products; and Russia has been targeting Turkey’s *jihadi* groups in Syria and Libya.

In order to block and force Turkey back, first of all, the existing nationalist ideologies of Greece, Armenia, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Russia, India and China should form an institutionalised bloc similar to the one the liberal world shaped, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is worth mentioning that Armenia has friendly relations with all these countries and, in this sense, could be the meeting place for the formation of such a nationalist bloc, since Armenia faces continuous Turkish and Azerbaijani invasion. A global and cooperative institutional strategy is needed to confront the Turkish threat.

Further, since the extermination of the Armenians from the Ottoman Empire, Armenians in the Middle East and around the world, have been able to generate two organisations for their struggle against Turkey: political and legal institutions such as the *Armenian National Committee*, and the *Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia*. The former focused on a diplomatic agenda to establish relations with

56 Yeghia Tashjian, “Prospects for Future Armenian-Indian Security Cooperation”, *The Armenian Weekly*, November 8, 2020, <https://armenianweekly.com/2020/11/08/prospects-for-future-armenian-indian-security-cooperation/>.

major countries, transnational institutions, political parties and key global figures, to push for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and to put pressure on Turkey to face the truth and to return Armenian lands back to the Armenian people. The latter formation came into the arena in the 1970's to target Turkish officials around the world (similar to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation's *Operation Nemesis* of 1920-22, which carried out the assassination of the Ottoman perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide).⁵⁷ The group has also executed a chain of explosions inside Turkey.

These manifestations the Armenian struggle are examples of both the strategies of soft and hard power. For example, it was a positive achievement when the Armenian, Greek and Assyrian communities formed a joint working agenda against Turkey in Australia, and demanded that the federal government recognise the Armenian Genocide. On the other hand, the *Armenian Secret Army for The Liberation of Armenia* shot thirty-one Turkish diplomats in several capitals in 1984. Hagop Hagopian, one of the founders of the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia, was himself able to enter Turkey and organize more than twenty operations (explosions at Airports and shootings). Armenians have diplomatically secured the recognition of the Armenian Genocide from about 30 countries, assassinated Turkish officials in foreign countries and caused explosion in Ankara and Orly airports.

Despite these activities, they have failed to force Turkey to recognise the Armenian Genocide, largely due to the absence of an institutionalised international bloc to limit Turkey's ambitions with harsher economic sanctions and to hold the threat of a possible attack on Turkey if Ankara continues to invade other territories and countries.

57 Shahan Natalie, op.cit., pp. 12-13.

CONCLUSION

Armenia and the Armenians in the Diaspora have demonstrated their ability to continue their struggle and raise it to a global level. Nevertheless, the 'Armenian Question' has remained unresolved for more than 100 years and remains in the arena of the Greater Middle East and the South Caucasus (Nakorno Karabakh), a national struggle for re-establishing the ancestral nation of the Armenians, which existed long before the invasion of the Turks. In a wider perspective, the resolution of this question is a prerequisite to halt Turkish expansion to the East by blocking the unification of Turkey with Azerbaijan, which is seen as a major alliance on the road to establishing Turan. The Armenians in the Republic and in the Diaspora, have uninterruptedly kept the 'Armenian Question' alive through the Armenianism of the descendants of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, through educational, political, and religious centers. At the same time in global arena they have raised the issue of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and the demands for a just solution.

Armenians have also been able to organise armed rebellions and strikes, when diplomacy showed no signs of tangible achievement. Turkey as it stands is unchangeable, with the same imperialist ambitions and rhetoric, its unwillingness to face the truth and to cleanse its bloody past. Indeed, under Erdogan's rule, Turkey has declared a strategy to re-establish the Turkish Caliphate by entering a war, along with Azerbaijan, invading Nakorno Karabakh, and plans to reach Kashmir in a military alliance with Pakistan. It also seeks military agreements with Kazakhstan and supports the Uygurs of China.

The conflict between Armenia and Turkey, both historically and presently, can be called a clash of 'nationalisms.' The Armenian nationalism has clear identity factors (race,

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language, culture, religion) and lies within the territory known internationally as the Armenian Highlands; Turkish nationalism is based on language and Islam, and these have been instrumentalized for decades to conquer lands and justify the torture of non-Turkish and non-Muslim people.

It is evident that Turkey is eyeing a vast territory, from the Mediterranean Sea to Xinjiang in China. Priority must now be given to creating and advancing an anti-Turkey bloc at a global level, stressing military alliances, in order to suspend Turkey's advances, particularly in the Middle East and South Caucasus.