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Track-Two Diplomacy in Turkish Foreign Policy: The Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission Example*

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Abstract

Traditionally speaking, diplomacy is the management of cordial relations between accredited representatives of the *states* through negotiations. However, vast changes that have been taken place in the international system since the collapse of the Soviet Union necessitated a revision in the definition of the term diplomacy. The term "Track-Two Diplomacy" is simply a result of those revision claims. Track-Two Diplomacy should be defined as a process of discussions performed by non-officials of conflicting parties with the purpose of clarifying underlying disputes and exploring peaceful methods of dispute settlement. In this article the efficiency of Track-Two Diplomacy is analyzed through the example of the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission, a Track-Two mechanism operated between the years 2001-2004.

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While diplomacy is defined in different ways, most definitions of diplomacy coincide with one another about being state-centric. For instance, the Oxford Dictionary defines the term as follows: “the profession, activity and skill of managing international relations, typically by a country’s representatives abroad”¹. According to Ernest Satow, diplomacy should be defined as the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between governments of independent states². Traditionally speaking, diplomacy is the management of cordial relations between accredited representatives of the *states* through negotiations. Track-One Diplomacy embodies those official government channels for dialogue and exchanges³.

However, vast changes that have been taking place in the international system since the collapse of the Soviet Union necessitated a revision in the definition of the term ‘diplomacy’. Greater economic interdependence and inter-penetration between states, increased public concern and involvement in international affairs, the internationalization trend of social issues, the huge innovations in information technology, and the diversification of actors in international relations have made fundamental definitional revisions a prime necessity⁴.

Thence, new and more flexible definitions of diplomacy have been generated in conformity with a “much fuzzier world of

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- 1 http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/american_english/diplomacy, (Access Date: 4 April 2013).
 - 2 Ernest Satow, *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice, Vol: 1*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 1.
 - 3 Herman Joseph S. Kraft, “Track Three Diplomacy and Human Rights in Southeast Asia: the Asia Pacific Coalition for East Timor”, *Global Networks*, Vol: 2, No: 1 (2002), p. 51.
 - 4 Kraft, “Track Three Diplomacy...”, p. 50. John Davies and Edy Kaufman, “Second Track / Citizens’ Diplomacy: An Overview”, *Second Track / Citizens’ Diplomacy: Concepts and Techniques for Conflict Transformation*, eds. John Davies and Edy Kaufman, Oxford, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003, p. 4.

postmodern transnational relations”⁵. For example, Jan Melissen extended the scope of diplomacy by defining it as “the mechanism of representation, communication and negotiation through which states and *other international actors* conduct their business [italics added]”⁶. Melissen’s definition gives emphasis to the role played by non-state actors to diplomacy and constitutes the starting point of our “Track-Two” argument.

What is Track-Two Diplomacy?

Since the early 1980s, academic awareness on the concept of unofficial diplomacy has increased substantially. In this context, as early as in 1981, Davidson and Montville were the first to introduce the term “two track diplomacy” in their well-known essay “Foreign Policy According to Freud”⁷. As Montville notes, Track-Two Diplomacy is “the unofficial, constructive interaction between adversaries in political conflicts”⁸. It is a process of discussions performed by non-officials of conflicting parties in order to clarify underlying disputes and to explore peaceful methods of dispute settlement. The non-officials involved in that process typically include scholars, senior journalists, former government officials and former military officials. Government officials should also participate in such negotiations alongside the non-officials, merely in an informal way⁹.

Track-Two Diplomacy or Citizens’ Diplomacy method¹⁰ is directly related to political philosophy. Political philosophy should be

5 Jan Melissen, “The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice”, *The New Public Diplomacy – Soft Power in International Relations*, ed. Jan Melissen, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 5.

6 Kraft “Track Three Diplomacy...”, pp. 50-51.

7 William D. Davidson and Joseph V. Montville, “Foreign Policy According to Freud”, *Foreign Policy*, No: 45, (Winter 1981-82), p. 153.

8 Joseph V. Montville, “Track Two Diplomacy: the Work of Healing History”, *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, (Summer-Fall 2006), p. 15.

9 Hussein Agha, Shai Feldman, Ahmed Khalidi and Schiff Zeev. *Track-II Diplomacy – Lessons from the Middle East*, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2003, p. 1.

10 Davies and Kaufman, “Second Track...”, p. 1.

defined as the scientific study of human behavior applied to political action. As Herbert C. Kelman points out, although basic reasons behind the international conflicts are conflicts of interests in realist terms, psychological factors also cause an escalation and perpetuation of conflicts by creating mostly identity-based barriers. In this way, overcoming psychological barriers by Track-Two Diplomacy constitutes the first step of the conflict resolution. Thanks to the elimination of the psychological barriers, the chance of success of Track-One Diplomacy (or Formal Diplomacy, First-Tier Diplomacy) increases. This means, Track-Two Diplomacy is not an alternative but a complementary method to official state-based diplomacy¹¹. This form of diplomacy is often needed either to establish the basis for further Track-One activities or to put into practice a former Track-One agreement. As Papa, Mapendere and Dillon note, there are limits to peace negotiation at the head of state level. Building peace among citizenry is needed for the success of diplomacy at Track-One level¹².

In its original meaning, Track-Two includes a broad spectrum of unofficial contacts, ranging from the most apolitical cultural exchanges to psychologically focused political problem-solving meetings¹³. As Schiff notes, over time, specification of unofficial diplomacy theory is performed by leading academicians of international relations. Innovation of new terms such as multi-track diplomacy, track-three diplomacy, track-one-and-a-half diplomacy, quasi track-one diplomacy¹⁴, track-four and track-five diplomacy¹⁵ are clear examples of this specification.

11 Davidson and Montville, "Foreign Policy...", p. 146, 153.

12 Michael J. Papa, Jeffrey Mapendere and Patrick J. Dillon "Waging Peace through Improvisational Action: Track-Two Diplomacy in the Sudan-Uganda Conflict", *Southern Communication Journal*, Vol: 75, No: 4 (September-October 2010), p. 353.

13 Davidson and Montville, "Foreign Policy...", p. 156.

14 Amira Schiff, "Quasi Track-One' Diplomacy: An Analysis of the Geneva Process in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", *International Studies Perspectives*, No: 11 (2010), p. 95.

15 John W. McDonald, "Further Exploration of Track Two Diplomacy", 1991, <http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/example/mcdo3682.htm>, (Access Date: 4 April 2013).

Track-Two Diplomacy and Others: Multi-Track Diplomacy

Generally speaking, because of the diversity of Track-Two diplomatic efforts, Track-Two Diplomacy was further subdivided into new categories by scholars of international relations. All those new categories are commonly referred to as “Multi-Track Diplomacy”¹⁶.

Track-Three Diplomacy (or Soft-Track-Two Diplomacy)¹⁷ is commonly defined as unofficial activities of conflicting parties at the grass-roots level aimed at bringing people together across conflict lines¹⁸. It is diplomacy among ordinary citizens or “people to people diplomacy established by both individuals and private organizations”¹⁹. Most of the Track-Three activities stem from “transnational advocacy networks”. As Keck and Sikkink point out, when channels between the state and right-seeking domestic actors are hindered, domestic NGOs bypass their state and directly search for international allies in order to fetch international pressure on their state and form Track-Three Diplomacy²⁰.

In contrast to Track-Three Diplomacy, Track-Two Diplomacy refers to different forms of discussions attended by leading and influential figures of the disputing parties. Track-One-And-A-Half-Diplomacy resembles Track-Two-Diplomacy in this vein. On this account, some scholars induce the term Track-One-And-A-Half Diplomacy (or Hard-Track-Two Diplomacy, Semiofficial Talks) by focusing on political offices of participants²¹. For

16 McDonald, “Further Exploration...”, <<http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/example/mcdo3682.htm>>.

17 Daniel Lieberfeld, “Promoting Tractability in South Africa and Israel/Palestine: The Role of Semiofficial Meetings”, *American Behavioral Scientist*, No: 50 (2007), pp. 1543-1544.

18 Amira Schiff, “Quasi Track-One’ Diplomacy: An Analysis of the Geneva Process in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”, *International Studies Perspectives*, No: 11 (2010), p. 95.

19 Kraft “Track Three Diplomacy...”, p. 52.

20 Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders*, New York, Cornell University Press, 1998, s. 12.

21 Lieberfeld, “Promoting Tractability...”, p. 1543-1544.

example, according to Schiff and Mapendere, in Track-Two Diplomacy only influential citizens are participants in the conflict resolution process. However, in Track-One-And-A-Half-Diplomacy official representatives of the conflicting parties are involved²². According to Susan Allen Nan, Track-One-And-A-Half-Diplomacy is the set of “unofficial interactions between official representatives of states”. It bridges official and unofficial activities²³. In Track-One-And-A-Half-Diplomacy, parties are official representatives; however facilitators are unofficial bodies²⁴. Thus, the official status of facilitators constitutes the basic distinction theme between Track-One and Track-One-And-A-Half Diplomacy²⁵.

Some scholars divide those tracks in a different way. For instance, John McDonald expanded Track-Two-Diplomacy into four separate tracks. According to this classification, diplomatic efforts of conflict resolution professionals constitute the Track-Two, business activities constitute the Track-Three, citizen-to-citizen exchange programs constitute the Track-Four, and media-to-media based efforts constitute the Track-Five Diplomacy²⁶. In 1991, Louis Diamond and John McDonald added those new tracks: funding, or peacemaking through providing resources, and religion or peacemaking through faith²⁷.

Finally, the Quasi-Track-One Diplomacy term is constructed by Amira Schiff in order to differentiate some kind of negotiations from both Track-Two and Track-One-And-A-Half Diplomacy. In

22 Schiff, “Quasi Track-One’...”, p. 95. Jeffrey Mapendere, “Track One and A Half Diplomacy and the Complementarity of Tracks”, *Culture of Peace Online Journal*, Vol: 2, No: 1 (2006), p. 69.

23 Susan Allen Nan, Daniel Druckman and Jana El Horr “Unofficial International Conflict Resolution: Is There a Track 1 ½? Are There Best Practices?”, *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, Vol: 27, No: 1 (Fall 2009), p. 66.

24 Mapendere, “Track One and...”, p. 69.

25 Ibid., pp. 69-70. Susan Allen Nan, “Track I Diplomacy”, 2003, <<http://www.beyondintractability.org/bi-essay/track1-diplomacy>>, (Access Date: 19 March 2013).

26 McDonald, “Further Exploration of...”, <<http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/examp le/mcdo3682.htm>>.

27 <http://imtd.server295.com/?page_id=119>, (Access Date: 4 April 2013).

Quasi-Track-One-Diplomacy, participants of one party have no access to the governmental leadership or influence on its thinking, while the other party has²⁸.

The Factors That Affect the Success of Track-Two Diplomacy

The first factor that affects the success of Track-Two Diplomacy is the level of linkage between the participants of Track-Two talks and the officials in their countries' decision making circles. Since the basic criterion of success for Track-Two Diplomacy is the degree of conflict resolution at the inter-state level, in the absence of that direct linkage, Track-Two Diplomacy should not influence the governmental bodies and ultimately should not cause dramatic policy shifts²⁹. Conversely, if Track-Two participants are too intertwined with their respecting governments, this symbiotic relationship diminishes the critical thinking potential of participants and gives harm to the whole process³⁰.

The second factor that affects the success of Track-Two Diplomacy is simply the facilitator or the sponsor. As Kaye notes, private foundations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), universities, and governments (mostly based in the West) have dedicated substantial financial and human resources to Track-Two Dialogues³¹. The facilitator provides the setting, creates the atmosphere, establishes the norms, and offers occasional interventions that make it possible for such a process to evolve³². At this point, the potential and the perceived power of the facilitator and its identity-based image that is projected upon the eyes of conflicting parties and the facilitators' level of commitment to the mechanism, become new independent variables affecting the whole reconciliation process. It should also be noted that;

28 Schiff, "Quasi Track-One'...", p. 101.

29 Agha, Feldman, Khalidi and Zeev. *Track-II Diplomacy...*, p. 3. Herman Joseph S. Kraft "The Autonomy Dilemma of Track Two Diplomacy in Southeast Asia", *Security Dialogue*, Vol: 31, No: 3 (2000)., p. 343.

30 Kraft, "The Autonomy Dilemma...", p. 346.

31 Dalia Dassa Kaye, *Talking to the Enemy – Track-Two Diplomacy in the Middle East and South Asia*, Santa Monica, Rand Corporation, 2007, p. xii.

32 Schiff, "Quasi Track-One'...", p. 96.

most research institutes, universities or NGOs that provide Track-Two venues have strong governmental links and serve primary interests of their governments³³. In such a case, the government would be considered as a real sponsor of the talks by conflicting parties. Naturally, the impact of the facilitator (this time facilitator's government) increases when the dependency level of the participant's state to the facilitator's government increases.

The third factor is the social representation level of the participants. Some participants in the Track-Two talks may be disconnected from grassroots groups or other broadly based societal movements³⁴. This factor diminishes social acceptability of the results by masses and attenuates the success potential of the negotiation process specifically in democratic regimes.

The fourth factor is simply the regional environment. Generally speaking, the success potential of the negotiation process increases in more favorable security environments (for example when official peace processes appear to flourish)³⁵ or in a place of increasing economic interdependence between conflicting parties³⁶. As Kaye rightfully states, "high levels of regional conflict and tension make the transmission of cooperative security ideas to official policymakers and the wider public more difficult"³⁷.

The last factor is the sincerity level of the participants and the facilitator. As Lieberfeld notes, adversary groups may use Track-Two Diplomacy tactically to gather information, or strategically to cause exploitable splits on the other side³⁸. Similarly, a facilitator may use its position for gaining concessions from the parties in parallel diplomatic processes or for confirming its ascendancy in international politics. Those practices give harm to the talks by curtailing the fidelity – which constitutes the central point of

33 Agha, Feldman, Khalidi and Zeev. *Track-II Diplomacy...*, p. 4.

34 Kaye, *Talking to the Enemy...*, p. xiii.

35 *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

36 Kraft, "The Autonomy Dilemma...", p. 344.

37 Kaye, *Talking to the Enemy...*, p. xiv.

38 Daniel Lieberfeld, "Evaluating the Contributions of Track-Two Diplomacy to Conflict Termination in South Africa, 1984-1990", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol: 39, No: 3, (2002), p. 358.

every negotiation process. In this context, any perception about the fidelity of the other party and the facilitator should also be taken into consideration.

Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC) as a Track-Two Example

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Turkey officially recognized Armenia on December 16, 1991; however, it has not yet established diplomatic ties due to a range of historical and contemporary disputes that poison the relations. Once called the *millet-i sadıka* (the most loyal subjects) of the Ottoman Empire, Armenians were accused of collaborating with the Russians against the Ottomans during World War I, and in 1915 the Committee of Union and Progress leadership initiated large-scale deportations of Armenians³⁹. That deportation process has been labeled by some Armenians as “genocide” and transferred to the contemporary national identity construction realm as an identity marker.

The Armenian Declaration of Independence, accepted on the August 23rd 1991, heralded the new republic’s full support for the recognition of genocide claims in the international arena, which should be regarded as the Armenian state’s attempt to exacerbate a historical dispute between two countries. Similarly, the newly founded Armenian Republic declared its determination to renounce the Treaty of Kars that had sealed the Turkish-Armenian border in 1921⁴⁰. This attempt meant the questioning of Turkish territorial integrity. Additionally, a dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nogorno-Karabagh, Armenian occupation of Nogorno-Karabagh and 7 adjacent Azerbaijani districts, and Turkey’s reaction of closing the Turkish-Armenian border severed relations between Turkey and Armenia during the

39 Ayla Göl, “Imagining the Turkish Nation through ‘Othering’ Armenians”, *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol: 11, No: 1 (2005), p. 130.

40 Fatih Özbay, *Turkey-Armenia Relations*, Wise Men Center for Strategic Studies, Report No: 25, İstanbul, 2011 <<http://www.bilgesam.org/en/images/stories/rapor/turkeyarmeniaing.pdf>>, (Access Date: 25 March 2013), pp. 4-5.

1990s⁴¹, since the Azerbaijan-Turkey special bilateral relationship was officially promoted via the motto “one-nation, two states” by both Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Under such hard circumstances, *Track-Two Program on Turkey and the Caucasus* was formally established in 2001 under the auspices of the United States (US) Department of State⁴². In other words, during the reconciliation process between Turkey and Armenia, the US served as a facilitator. As Phillips notes, the US promotion on reconciliation started during the Clinton Administration (1993-2001) and continued during the administration of George Walker Bush (2001-2009)⁴³. Phillips writes the reasons behind the US support in this negotiation process as follows:

“The United States and the international community have several stakes in promoting better relations between Turkey and Armenia. Not only are both countries valued allies and important partners in the war against terrorism, but also regional peace, stability, and economic prosperity are problematic without resolution of differences between the neighboring countries...”⁴⁴.

The American University’s Center for Global Peace and its director David L. Phillips was the basic guarantor and the chairman of that process⁴⁵. The Center for Global Peace introduced many bilateral leadership development projects,

41 Michael Gunter and Dirk Rohtus, “Special Report: Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement”, *Middle East Critique*, Vol: 19, No: 2 (Summer 2010), p. 158.

42 Sedat Laçiner, *Türkiye ve Ermeniler: Bir Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışması*, Ankara, Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırmalar Kurumu, 2005, p. 279. Gunter and Rohtus, “Special Report: Turkish...”, p. 161. According to David L. Phillips, Marc Grossman - US Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs - was the central figure behind this negotiation process. David L. Phillips was appointed by the US Department of State as the moderator of TARC. (“Türk-Ermeni Diyalogunun...”, 2005, <<http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=299939>>).

43 David L Phillips, *Unsilencing the Past: Track-Two Diplomacy and Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation*, New York, Berghahn Books, 2005, p. 2.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

45 Gunter and Rohtus, “Special Report: Turkish...”, p. 161.

media, culture, gender, economy and education projects in order to establish cooperative activities⁴⁶. However, *Track-Two Program*'s centerpiece was the TARC. TARC was set up in Geneva on July 9th, 2001 after the discussions hosted by the Henry Dunant Center for Humanitarian Dialogue and was originally financed by the US⁴⁷. TARC had six Turkish and four Armenian members. Turkish members of the TARC were Gündüz Aktan (former ambassador), Özdem Sanberk (director of the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation and former ambassador), İter Türkmen (Former Foreign Minister), Şadi Ergüvenç (Rtd Lieutenant General), Üstün Ergüder (former rector of the Boğaziçi University) and Vamık Volkan (professor of psychiatry, University of Virginia). The Armenian members were: Van Kirkorian (chairman of Board of Trustees of the Armenian Assembly of America), Alexander Arzumian (chairman of Armenian National Movement and former foreign minister of Armenia), David Hovhannissian (professor at Yerevan State University and former Armenian ambassador to Syria), and Andranik Migranian (former presidential advisor to Russian President Boris Yeltsin)⁴⁸. TARC, as a bilateral Track-Two mechanism, survived until 2004 but lost its momentum after the withdrawal of four Armenian members in December 2001⁴⁹.

The Reasons behind the Failure of the TARC

The first reason behind the failure of the TARC was the relative lack of meaningful linkage between the participants and their

46 For details and examples see. "CGP Track Two Diplomacy Program – Project Details", <<http://www.american.edu/cgp/track2/project/index.cfm>>, (Access Date: 25 March 2013).

47 Hovhannes Nikoghosyan, "Next Steps to Harmonize Turkish-Armenian Relations", *AZG Daily*, No: 223, 5 December 2001, <http://www.diplomatictraffic.com/debate_archives.asp?ID=667>, (Access Date: 25 March 2013).

48 Kamer Kasım, "Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission: Missed Opportunity", *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, 13 October 2004, <<http://www.turkishweekly.net/print.asp?type=2&id=12>>, (Access Date: 21 February 2013).

49 McDonald David B., *Identity Politics in the Age of Genocide: the Holocaust and Historical Representation*, New York, Routledge, 2008, p. 125.

respective governments (especially on the Armenian side). In such a case, contiguous governmental support for the negotiation process was hindered⁵⁰.

During the negotiation process, Alexander Arzumanyan, a leading political figure of former Ter Petrosyan presidency and David Hovhanissian, Armenian ambassador to Syria during Ter-Petrosyan era, were criticized harshly by Kocharyan's governmental elites for domestic political considerations⁵¹. As Khackatrian notes, most of the Armenian political forces wielding power during the negotiation process were hostile to Ter-Petrosyan's legacy. Any support for Arzumanyan or Hovhannissian was perceived by the Armenian public opinion as support for Petrosyan, and most of the governmental elites refrained from establishing concrete contacts with Arzumanyan or Hovhanissian. On the other hand, Antranik Migranyan – another Armenian participant – was a Russian citizen of Armenian origin, a valued member of Russian elite, an advisor to Boris Yeltsin during his presidency, and the director for the Institute for Democracy (a think tank based in New York), and he also lacked political support both from the Kocharian government and the Putin administration of Russia⁵². Likewise, none of the Turkish participants of the TARC had declared direct links to the Turkish government⁵³. However, Kalpakian and İpek note that the

50 Haroutiun Khachatrian, "Armenian Turkish Reconciliation Commission Encounters Sceptism", *Eurasianet.org*, 9 September 2001, <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav091001.shtml>>, (Access Date: 04 April 2013).

51 *Ibid.* Kasım, "Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation...", <<http://www.turkishweekly.net/print.asp?type=2&id=12>>.

52 Jack Kalpakian and Volkan İpek "The Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement Processes: a Case Study Approach", *Digest of Middle East Studies*, Vol: 20, No: 2 (2011), p. 297, 305, 306. <<http://nationalinterest.org/profile/andranik-migranyan>>, (Access Date: 12 April 2013).

53 Khachatrian, "Armenian Turkish...", <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav091001.shtml>>.

Turkish participants' link with the Turkish state was deeper than their Armenian counterparts⁵⁴.

Secondly, as it is mentioned above, the US government was seen as the real facilitator of the negotiation process by most of the scholars⁵⁵. Another affirmative evidence for US domination in the process was the nomination of Van Krikorian as an Armenian commission member. Krikorian had been the chairman of the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA), an influential lobby group having cordial relations with the US State Department⁵⁶. At first sight, regarding its huge economic and political power, the US involvement in the process should be considered as a factor increasing the potential success of the track-two diplomacy. However, on the Armenian side, the US involvement became a factor in diminishing the support of the public opinion to the talks. TARC was attacked as a pawn of the US government, and the TARC members were labeled collectively as "traitors"⁵⁷.

According to some Armenian nationalist groups, the US, in concert with Turkey, sought to solve the Nagorno-Karabagh problem for the sake of Baku-Ceyhan pipeline. For instance, Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), a Dashnak nationalist diaspora organization in the US, argued that the US only cared about US oil companies in the Caspian region. The basic obstacle to Western energy security in the Caucasus was the continuation of the Karabagh dispute. In this connection, they perceive the TARC as a tool for US energy security and a mechanism for dispute settlement contrary to basic Armenian interests⁵⁸. Likewise, Harut Sassounian, the publisher of the

54 Kalpakian and İpek, "The Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement...", p. 305.

55 For example, Kalpakian and İpek argue that, US involvement in TARC was placed behind an academic façade as well as "track-two diplomacy" (See. Kalpakian and İpek, "The Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement...", p. 296).

56 Khachatryan, "Armenian Turkish...", <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav091001.shtml>>.

57 Gunter and Rohtus, "Special Report: Turkish...", p. 161.

58 Khachatryan, "Armenian Turkish...", <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav091001.shtml>>. Kasım, "Turkish-

California Courier and one of the impressive figures of the Armenian diaspora in the US, urged the Kocharian government to demand the TARC to proclaim its funding sources, expenditures, activities and future plans⁵⁹. Since the US was perceived as a destabilizing factor by some segments of the Armenian society, US efforts to conflict resolution were perceived in the same vein.

Thirdly, the social representation level of the participants was not high enough. On the Armenian side, the AAA was the basic institution supporting the TARC; Dashnaks both in the diaspora and in Armenia opposed the process harshly. For example, the ANCA accused the AAA of dividing the Armenians and eliminating the joint Armenian lobby efforts in the US⁶⁰. The perception of a division in Armenian unity engendered debates both in the Armenian ruling elite and in Armenian public opinion about the pernicious complications of the TARC.

As Kasım notes, in Turkey the TARC did not get as much interest as it got in Armenia and Armenian diaspora. Despite the support of some leading media figures such as Mehmet Ali Birand, Sami Kohen, İlder Türkmen⁶¹, the level of awareness of the great masses remained substantially low. Concurrently, the pro-Azeri lobby, in cooperation with some influential brands of the Turkish nationalist movement, enjoyed widespread support from Turkish public opinion. This fact became a devastating factor in

Armenian Reconciliation...”, <<http://www.turkishweekly.net/print.asp?type=2&id=12>>.

59 Harut Sassounian, “Armenia Should not Allow TARC to Meet in Yerevan”, 22 February 2004, <http://adl.hayway.org/default_zone/-gb/html/page3593.html>, (Access Date: 4 April 2013).

60 Kasım, “Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation...”, <<http://www.turkishweekly.net/print.asp?type=2&id=12>>.

61 See. Mehmet Ali Birand, “Yine Ermeni Çalışıyor, Yine Türk Seyrediyor”, *Hürriyet*, 14 July 2001, <<http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2001/07/14/3382.asp>>, (Access Date: 4 April 2013). İlder Türkmen, “Ermeni Sorunu’nu Aşmak”, *Hürriyet*, 14 July 2001, <<http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2001/07/14/3373.asp>>, (Access Date: 4 April 2013). Sami Kohen, “Barış Zamanı”, *Milliyet*, 11 July 2001.

undermining the already limited public support to the peace process⁶².

Fourthly, the regional environment in the Caucasus after the demise of the Soviet Union diminished the success potential of the TARC. “Frozen conflict” in the Armenian-Azerbaijan dispute on Nagorno-Karabagh should be depicted as one of the most headache-inducing legacies of the Soviet Union⁶³. Due to the cordial relationship between the Turkish and Azeri states and the dominance of Turkish pro-Azeri lobby in Turkish high-politics, Turkish governments and public opinion tended to evaluate Armenian-Turkish relations through the lens of Nagorno-Karabagh dispute. TARC critics in Armenia declared that no reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia was realistic until Turkey revised its Karabagh position⁶⁴. Likewise, the Turkish government declared that a drastic change in Armenia’s Karabagh policy was a prerequisite for any Turkish initiative regarding Armenia⁶⁵. On the other hand, low levels of economic interdependence between Turkey and Armenia (as a direct result of closed borders) became another factor that decreased the success potential of negotiation process.

Fifthly, perceptions of participants and public opinion about the sincerity level of the other party and/or the facilitator became another reason behind the failure of the TARC. For example, Harit Sasunyan, an influential Armenian lobby representative in the US, labeled the TARC as a plot prepared by Turkey in order to prevent the Armenian Genocide Drafts, which had been proposed in various countries. Sasunyan’s claim was based on an interview of Özdem Sanberk – a Turkish participant of the TARC – in an Azeri newspaper. According to Sasunyan, Sanberk had sinister

62 Kalpakian and İpek, “The Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement...”, p. 297.

63 Ellen Barry, “Frozen Conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia Begins to Boil”, *The New York Times*, 31 May 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/01/world/asia/01azerbaijan.html?pa_gewanted=all&_r=0>, (Access Date: 5 April 2013).

64 Khachatryan, “Armenian Turkish...”, <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav091001.shtml>>.

65 “Erivan’a Açılım Hükümete Takıldı”, *Milliyet*, 13 January 2001, p. 11.

intentions regarding the peace process and he admitted the real intention of the TARC – abolishing the genocide drafts – at his interview with the Azeri Newspaper 525-chi Gazet on July 19th, 2001⁶⁶.

Controversial decisions taken at the New York meeting of the TARC symbolized the milestone in the commission's future. After the New York meeting, David Phillips, the mediator and the chairman of the meeting, published a declaration that coincided with the demands of the Armenian members about the genocide claims. In this declaration, David Phillips requested from the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) – an international non-profit organization specializing in the field of transitional justice⁶⁷ – to study the applicability of the United Nations Genocide Convention to the events in 1915⁶⁸. However,

⁶⁶ According to Sasunyan, Sanberk had allegedly made the following statement: “The basic goal of our commission is to impede the initiatives put forth every year in the US Congress and parliaments of Western countries for the genocide issue and aimed at weakening Turkey. The key goal is to prevent the genocide issue from being regularly brought into the agenda of the Western countries. The significant matter for us is that the genocide issue is not discussed by the American Congress any more. Because—as long as we continue the dialogue—the issue won't be brought to the Congress agenda. If it is not discussed in the Congress—we-being Turkey—will gain from that. The US Congress will see that there is a channel of dialogue between Turks and Armenians and decide that ‘there is no necessity for the Congress to take such decision while such a channel exists.’” See. Harut Sassounian, “Commission Member Reveals Sinister Intentions”, *Asbarez.com*, 29 August 2001, <<http://asbarez.com/45367/commission-member-reveals-sinister-intentions/>>, (05.04.2013). “Armenian Lobby Protect Their Hardline”, *Hürriyet Daily News*, 31 August 2001, <<http://admin.hurriyetdailynews.com/armenian-lobby-protect-their-hardline.aspx?pageID=438&n=armenian-lobby-protect-their-hardline-2001-08-31>>, (Access Date: 5 April 2013).

⁶⁷ See ICTJ web page <<http://ictj.org/>> for detailed information.

⁶⁸ The commission report suggested the presence of the genocide as follows: “Although the Genocide Convention does not give rise to state or individual liability for events which occurred prior to January 12, 1951, the term “genocide” as defined in the convention may be applied to describe such events...The Events, viewed collectively, can thus be

Phillips published this important declaration without the Turkish side's assent⁶⁹. Because of that, the Turkish side's suspicions about the sincerity levels of both the mediator and the other party were increased⁷⁰.

Conclusion

Track-Two Diplomacy is an important mechanism in overcoming psychological barriers between adversaries by opening non-official interaction channels. In this way, it increases the chance of success of Track-One Diplomacy. TARC, established in 2001 under the auspices of the United States, should be regarded as a clear example of Track-Two Diplomacy. Turkish and Armenian non-official participants had meetings in New York, London and Moscow for the purpose of promoting mutual understanding and goodwill between Turks and Armenians, encouraging improved relations between Armenia and Turkey, fostering reconciliation among Turkish and Armenian civil societies including members of diaspora communities, supporting contact, dialogue and cooperation between Armenian and Turkish societies in order to bring forth public awareness about the need for reconciliation

said to include all of the elements of the crime of genocide as defined in the Convention, and legal scholars as well as historians, politicians, journalists and other people would be justified in continuing to so describe them". See. "The Applicability of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention of Punishment of the Crime and Genocide to Events Which Occurred During the Early Twentieth Century", *Web Site of American University Center for Global Peace*, <<http://www1.american.edu/cgp/track2/data/ICTJreportEnglish.pdf>>, (Access Date: 5 April 2013).

69 Kasım, "Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation...", <<http://www.turkish-weekly.net/print.asp?type=2&id=12>>.

70 See. Gündüz Aktan, "TARC: Çıkamaz Sokak", *Radikal*, 12 December 2001, <<http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=23570>> (Access Date: 5 April 2013).

Gündüz Aktan, "Kuğunun Ölümü", *Radikal*, 1 July 2002, <<http://www.radikal.com.tr/radikal.aspx?atype=radikalyazar&articleid=620673&categoryid=100>>, (Access Date: 5 April 2013).

and derive practical benefits as written in the Terms of Reference of the TARC⁷¹.

However the commission demised on December 11st 2001 when Armenian members quit the commission. The reasons for the failure of the TARC should be summarized as follows: The relative lack of a meaningful linkage between the Turkish and Armenian participants and their respective governments, negative public attitudes to the US presence at the talks (especially on Armenian side), the fragility of social representation level of the participants, ongoing Armenian-Azerbaijan dispute on Nagorno-Karabagh, and negative perceptions of participants and public opinion about the sincerity level of the other party and/or the facilitator.

⁷¹ See. "Terms of Reference of the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission", *Web Site of American University Center for Global Peace*, <<http://www1.american.edu/cgp/track2/tarc.htm>>, (Access Date: 5 April 2013).