

Armenians in 2115

Strategic Directions for the Twenty-first Century



CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN
FOUNDATION
ARMENIAN COMMUNITIES

A Seminar Report

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Direcção : Razmik Panossian
Revisão de provas : Tatevik Sargsyan, Ani Koulian, Nareg Seferian
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Contact information
E-mail: carmenias@gulbenkian.pt
Tel.: +351 21 782 3347
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
Armenian Communities Department
Avenida de Berna 45-A, Lisboa 1067-001, Portugal
Dep. legal:
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Preface

The Armenian Communities Department of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation hosted a unique two-day seminar for Armenian leaders and prominent intellectuals to discuss future scenarios pertaining to the Armenian people globally. The gathering was a high-level forum where forward-looking strategic discussions took place in a private, invitation-only environment. It was held on 13-14 October 2014. Forty individuals took part in the seminar, representing the Armenian community worldwide: Europe, North and South Americas, Turkey, the Middle East, Russia, and of course Armenia. Moreover, all major intellectual and community dispositions within the diaspora were present. Certain non-Armenian experts were also invited as discussion facilitators.

Participants reflected on trends that are shaping the Armenian world, as expert facilitators outlined certain key issues affecting Armenians, including developments in Turkey, Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Europe, the Middle East, Armenia and the Armenian diasporas.

Questions discussed included the diaspora's relationship with the Armenian government and civil society; engagement with Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia; the sustainability of diasporan communities; and identity formations. These were cross referenced with scenarios entailing Russian influence on Armenia, Turkey's democratic development, the threat of war with Azerbaijan, the impact of the conflicts in the Middle East on Armenians, and dynamics within the EU.

What follows is an analytical summary of the discussion. It is not a transcript, but a systematic presentation of key points around vital emergent issues and scenarios. It is meant to capture the essence of the debates.

This report is divided in four major parts. Part I analyses where the world is going in relation to Armenia and Armenians, focusing on Armenia's neighbourhood. Part II presents five scenarios, over which

Armenians do not necessarily have any control. Part III outlines strategies for possible engagements for Armenians to consider – i.e. actions over which Armenians do have control. It concludes with Part IV on the steps ahead and recommendations.

We would like to thank all the participants of this important seminar. Their open and frank exchanges not only enriched our knowledge, but also inspired us to continue working for the betterment of the Armenian people.

Martin Essayan, Trustee of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
Razmik Panossian, Director of the Armenian Communities Department

Introduction: Keeping the Future in Mind

The world is rapidly changing, and yet there is a sense of impasse among Armenians both in the republic and in the diaspora. A more sustainable national approach is needed, in which strategies for positive change are developed and implemented. Such strategies must foster creativity and forward-looking approaches or frameworks.

In Armenia, the challenge is to create conditions whereby people see their future in Armenia, and not in moving abroad. A better future has to appear proximate enough, and tangible enough, for people to work towards it. This entails nothing short of Armenia redefining itself in light of domestic, regional and global challenges.

Similarly, in the Armenian diasporas – the “s” is intentional to highlight that the diaspora is not one coherent entity – the question of identity maintenance needs to be redefined and recast so that it is not just limited to preserving the old, but creating new ways of being Armenian. Diasporan identities in the 21st Century are much more self-consciously “constructed” or maintained rather than being “given” – policies and actions must reflect this fundamental social and cultural change.

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Part I: Where is the World Going in Relation to Armenia and Armenians?

The following are some of the key points which informed the subsequent scenario discussions. There was an expert facilitator for each of the topics, who led the discussion and circulated a brief paper in advance. Debate and elaboration distilled some of these ideas further during the ensuing sessions.

Russia

President Putin's leadership seems to be secure, as there are no obvious rivals on the political scene. This will mean a period of long and stable leadership in the country. Several points should be taken into consideration with regards to Armenians:

- As long as Putin is in power it is unlikely that there will be another war over Nagorno-Karabakh (NK);¹ Russia will act as a stabiliser. This view was somewhat modified in subsequent discussions, highlighting the volatility of the current ceasefire and the possibility of limited military engagement(s). Barring unforeseen surprises, Putin's succession will be planned and managed. Only after 2025 might there be some interesting developments in Russia in terms of leadership changes.
- Russia's relations with the EU and the West have become increasingly fractious, and this is likely to remain the case. If a new Cold War emerges, it would be because of missed opportunities on both sides.

1. Armenians refer to the region as Artsakh. Nagorno-Karabakh is used here since it is the most widely used name internationally.

- As an economic bloc, Russia has three options in the long run, i.e. over the next several decades. To be a bloc on its own, with some close satellite states; to be part of an economic zone close to China; or to be as a member of, or very close to, the European Union. In the meantime, Russia will become more self-reliant. Climate change (global warming) will likely have a positive impact on the Russian economy.²
- Armenia's economic well-being is directly dependent on Russia's economy. On the one hand, if the Russian economy continues to grow, it will have a positive impact on Armenia, but, on the other, it will entail a continued increase of Armenian migrant-workers in Russia. If the Russian economy contracts, it will have an adverse effect on Armenia both at the macro level and at the micro level – i.e. family remittances. The question is: can Armenia develop policies to get out of – or minimise – such a dynamic of dependence?

Turkey

Similarly, in Turkey, President Erdogan has a solid base of voters to keep him in power for the foreseeable future (again, barring unexpected incidents or health issues). It will take a long time for a serious opponent to emerge due to the fragmented opposition. Under AKP rule, Turkey has changed considerably and profoundly. More specifically, pertaining to Armenians, these are the likely trends:

- Most probably, the border between Turkey and Armenia will remain closed, since Turkey has tied it to NK negotiations under pressure from Azerbaijan. In contrast, if gas reserves in Azerbaijan prove to be significant, Turkey and Azerbaijan will grow closer together.
- Relations between Turkey and the Armenian diaspora will continue to be challenging and highly politicised.
- Armenians in Turkey are becoming more demanding of their rights, and play an active role in civil society and broader democratisation processes.

2. The seminar took place prior to the end of the 2014 economic crisis in Russia which was due to declining oil prices. However, as the perspective of the seminar was long-term, it would be premature to conclude that in the long run the Russian economy will decline.

Non-Armenian intellectuals, academics and civil society have also taken up and defend Armenian issues. This is likely to continue.

- In general, civil society in Turkey will continue to fracture further, notably along secularist vs Islamist lines. Sharp tensions between the two broad groups are likely, as a *mélange* of other dynamics overlap: social conservatism, liberal economics, views on minorities, human rights, European membership, etc. Armenians have to navigate and position themselves in such a complex environment.
- A forthcoming meaningful apology by Erdogan with regards to the Armenian Genocide and the centenary commemorations is unlikely, but he will probably issue a similar “shared pain” statement as in April 2014.

Armenia’s Other Neighbours (Azerbaijan and Georgia)³

The relationship between Armenia and its two post-Soviet neighbours are at the two ends of the spectrum: continued volatile relations with Azerbaijan and politically friendly relations with Georgia.

Azerbaijan

- There is a total lack of understanding between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and there does not seem to be any signs of improvement. Border skirmishes will continue, with varying intensity, as well as the bellicose rhetoric of confrontation, even though a full-scale war is unlikely.
- Azerbaijan’s growing oil revenue is unsustainable since proven oil reserves will start running out within years. However, Azerbaijan is counting on new gas fields coming on-line, but it is not yet clear if the reserves will be substantial.
- The shrinking oil revenues will have an impact on domestic politics. Will it further “radicalise” the Baku government on NK, or will it be a catalyst to negotiate meaningfully? Anti-Armenian rhetoric is a useful tool for the Aliyev regime in garnering legitimacy. This might become even more important if oil revenues shrink.

3. Relations with Iran were discussed tangentially. This relationship is crucial for Armenia, but unfortunately there was no expert on the subject at the seminar. Similarly, discussion of the USA and the impact of its policies were absent. The organisers recognise these lacunae and will address them at future events.

Georgia

- Armenia has good relations with its northern neighbour, and Armenia's major transport routes go through the country.
- Georgia, however, is more inclined toward the European Union, whereas Armenia has joined the "rival" Eurasian Union. It is not yet clear how these broader trends will affect Armenia-Georgia trade and political relations in the long-term.
- Georgia has developed a "habit of democracy," albeit a fragile one, but a more nationalistic government in the country could have negative consequences for Armenia and Armenians in Georgia.
- Issues pertaining to the Armenian minority in Georgia are currently managed satisfactorily and there is no significant source of overt tension between Yerevan and Tbilisi. Intellectual and cultural clashes do, however, take place.

The Middle East

There are important Armenian communities in the Middle East. However, the main socio-economic and political trends are not at all encouraging. Once a source of Armenian diasporan culture, education and intellectual preparation, Armenians in the Middle East are now more in the "survivor" mode than anything else.

- The main question pertaining to the Middle East is: should Armenians stay or go?
- Over the last forty years, the Armenian population in the region has halved – from approximately 620,000 to 280,000.⁴ And this trend will continue (it is part of the larger pattern of Christians fleeing Muslim countries). Wave after wave of Armenians have left the region due to political and economic crises, particularly 1940s onwards – mainly from Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Syria and Lebanon.
- The Armenian community in Syria is currently being decimated; the only significant populous community remains in Lebanon.
- There is the age-old Armenian community in Old Jerusalem, which

4. The population of the following countries are taken into account: Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Egypt, Iraq, Israel/Palestine, Kuwait, Jordan, UAE.

continues as a religious order; and the Catholicosate of Cilicia is situated in Lebanon. There is, therefore, a deeply rooted institutional presence in the Middle East, especially in Lebanon and Syria – from churches to schools and even villages, and these cannot be simply crossed out. The communities have survived many crises in the past, even though the numbers have declined considerably. But the question remains, in the face of regional trends and dynamics, and changing internal social dynamics (e.g. more integrated communities and hence less “ghettoized” in terms of identity maintenance): how will the Armenian community fare a decade or two down the road?

The main question pertaining to the Middle East is: should Armenians stay or go?

- It should be noted that Armenians in the Middle East are more optimistic about their future in the region – continuing to invest in the community and in the local economies – compared to their brethren abroad.⁵
- Armenians who flee the Middle East generally strive to go to North America and Europe. However, thousands have migrated from Syria to Armenia recently, where they can easily obtain citizenship.
- The one region of the Middle East where the Armenian population is increasing is the Gulf countries, but this employment-related migration has an air of being “temporary” or transient. Nevertheless, there are a significant number of Armenians, with some community institutions, within various Gulf states.

Europe (European Union)

The EU is currently in a deep crisis, and that will remain the case for the foreseeable future. The impact of the global financial crisis has hit the Euro Zone particularly hard and current solutions do not seem to have the desired effect. They are the wrong medicine for the wrong illness. Hence,

- The Euro Zone is closer to collapse than to “salvation.” If there is a return to national currencies, the consequences will be dire both

5. For example, a new multimillion-dollar Armenian school is being built in Bourdj Hammoud, Lebanon.

economically and politically (e.g. decline in GDP, “debt wars” and the rise of the far right).

- The difficult choice for European policy makers is deciding if the EU should head in the direction of a federation, with increased powers entrusted to a centralised body, particularly over fiscal matters (e.g. bank union), or face the prospect of disintegration as an economic union. The third option, the prospect of limping along as it is now is neither effective nor appealing.
- The reinforcement of the status quo would mean further German hegemony, and Germany has been a reluctant hegemon.
- If the EU emerges out of the current crisis stronger, with well-designed institutions, it will be a major economic bloc competing with the US and China over the next fifty years.
- International companies with a growing interest in Turkey will bring the country closer to the EU, providing it with a substantial economic advantage over Armenia. Moreover, the prospect of EU membership will help with Turkey’s democratisation process.
- The likelihood of Armenia joining the EU in the near future is between very slim and non-existent.

Armenia

Several years ago the “Armenia 2020” strategising initiative developed possible scenarios for the country. Based on extensive research and analysis, it distilled its conclusions into four possibilities – that Armenia will be (a) Russia-oriented, (b) EU-oriented, (c) a “Singapore-style” country, and (d) a “Syria-like” militarised state (the analogy with Syria was prior to the current war in that country). Armenia 2020 advocated for a national debate and policy discussion based on its findings. However, regrettably, neither Armenia nor major diasporan organisations took up the challenge. Its experience was shared with the seminar participants by way of “lessons-learned” – the most important question being: should policy change be brought about “top down” or “bottom up”? With this in mind, seminar participants discussed some specific issues:

- The independence or medium-term stability of Armenia cannot be

taken for granted. There are several contradictory dynamics which are at play:

- a. The cultural trend in the country is Western-oriented, while politically, economically and security-wise it remains firmly in the Russian orbit.
- b. The language of democratisation and human rights, civil society mobilisation, and formal laws that affirm a democratic system are in contradiction with a considerable lack of government legitimacy and good governance.
- c. The government has a limited ability to formulate national policy and yet there is a serious need for innovative and visionary policy formulation. For example, while the security of NK and relations with Turkey are central to the government, there has not been any debates about tangible solutions to these problems.
- d. The Turkish-Armenian border will likely remain closed, but Turkey may surprise Armenians by suddenly declaring that it is opening the border. The government and many Armenians want the border open, but both public officials and the private sector seem ill-prepared for such an unexpected announcement from Ankara.
- e. Inequality in Armenia has reached alarming rates. It has become very visible as the distribution of resources favours a small elite instead of the majority of the population.
- f. Similarly, corruption is still widespread across many sectors. Consequently, many diasporan and non-Armenian investors remain hesitant in making large financial commitments, be it as investors or as contributors to development projects.

(...) civil society activists are lacking developmental tools to move existing structures and influence public policy. Civic activism has hit a ceiling in Armenia in the absence of structural changes.

- There is a relatively active civil society and a strong youth voice, mobilised around important issues such as the environment. However, civil society activists are lacking developmental tools to move existing structures and influence public policy. Civic activism has hit a ceiling in Armenia in the absence of structural changes. Civil society can continue to “deliver services,” but change through public engagement has been frustrated.
- Is the status quo on the NK conflict a problem or not? Put differently, is the problem the threat of war or the absence of peace? The government thinks that the absence of peace is not a problem,

whereas some would argue that the resolution to the NK conflict is the key to all other problems facing Armenia. Hence, a peace agreement is essential if Armenia is to move ahead. But it is the rhetoric of war that continues to dominate in Azerbaijan and Armenia, as both Baku and Yerevan continue to think in terms of “winning it” instead of “solving it.” Hence, negotiations have been futile to date. Should Armenians mobilise globally to put pressure on the government in Yerevan to pursue peace? This would entail painful concessions, no doubt. It is no longer possible to just blame the Russians; if the two Presidents want a peace agreement, they can negotiate one irrespective of outside forces.

- Finally, there are progressive forces in Armenia that are trying to change the country for the better. They need to be encouraged. However, this leads to the thorny issue of diasporas’ involvement in the domestic politics of Armenia. It entails partisan political positioning. Are Armenians in the diaspora comfortable with this? Many diasporans blur the distinction between state and government, equating support for the homeland with support for the government. But change entails political engagement, and such engagement leads to partisan positioning. The government is aware of this tension within diasporan organisations and has generally succeeded in neutralising the political impact of critical voices in the diasporas (except on the Genocide issue).

The Diasporas

Approximately two Armenians live in diaspora for every Armenian in the Republic. It is not easy to have concrete numbers for the diaspora and at best we can “guesstimate.” What is certain is that the Armenian diaspora has changed fundamentally over the past two decades. We now speak of diasporas, in the plural, to denote the multiplicity of the different types of diaspora. The most basic distinction is between the traditionally established post-Genocide diaspora, with its roots in the Ottoman Empire, and the new post-Soviet diaspora, in Russia, Europe and elsewhere, with its roots in the Republic of Armenia.

The essential (and overarching) issue in the diaspora is that of maintaining identity as Armenian from one generation to the next. It should be remembered, however, that “investing” to maintain one’s national identity is not necessarily a rational choice, and hence policies

pertaining to diasporas cannot be modelled on markets and economic arguments. Several other points should be kept in mind:

- The question of “representation” – i.e. who represents diasporan Armenians – is a red herring. The “diaspora” as a whole cannot be represented due to its multiple locations and identities. Being stuck on this question is like being stuck in mud. If enough people follow an organisation or an individual, then that entity can be considered representative to some degree.
- Similarly, the homeland cannot control the diasporas or even fully coordinate them. The Yerevan government might want to exercise control, but it would be a futile attempt. Diasporas are loose and mobile networks.

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- Diasporan identities change. They reflect a multi-local consciousness which changes from place to place and generation to generation, while maintaining a subjective sense of belonging. Armenians are a “transnation” with greater centrifugal forces than uniting ones. The issue is how to mobilise such a disparate people. Is a “core” – be it in Armenia or in diaspora – needed around which identities orbit, or is it possible to maintain and create diasporan identity without major cultural and intellectual geographic centres?
- In the 21st Century, Armenian identity in the diasporas has become “part-time,” one of several identities, reflecting partial commitments. Traditional ways of reaching out to diasporas, based on early 20th Century models of engagement, no longer seem to work and hence have become ineffective in encouraging young people to maintain Armenian identity. Of course, institutions do matter and play a crucial role in identity formulation. Hence their transformation is essential.
- It should be noted that much of diasporas’ financial commitment to Armenia – outside of family-to-family personal transfers – is quite limited. Studies show that less than 15% of Armenians in the diaspora actually contribute to the Hayastan All Armenian Fund that supports development projects in the Republic.
- The most numerous community at this point is the newly emerged diaspora in Russia, and yet we know very little about it due to lack of serious research on the subject.

Part II: Five Scenarios

Subsequent to the above discussion, seminar participants outlined five scenarios affecting the Armenians. On the whole, Armenians do not have much control over these scenarios, but must take decisions and develop policies which take into account these global or regional dynamics.

Scenario 1: Russian influence over Armenia increases

Armenia's membership in the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) has ideological and geopolitical implications which are more significant than economic considerations. EEU membership may have further repercussions for Armenia as it will be faced with a greater political integration with Russia.

Armenia's primary concern, the security of NK, is at the root of Yerevan's decision to join the EEU. It is likely that Russia will continue to maintain the status quo, and remain the main broker between Armenia and Azerbaijan, thus dampening the prospects of both an escalating war and a peace agreement.

Membership to the EEU ties Armenia's economic development (or lack thereof) directly to Russia. This can be beneficial to Armenia as long as the Russian economy is healthy. However, any downturn in Russia will have immediate ripple effects in Armenia – from labour migration to monetary policy. In short, in this scenario, Armenia will have limited room to maneuver in economic strategy. To increase its space to maneuver, Yerevan's message to the outside world is that EEU membership does not mean that Armenia cannot have economic relations with other countries. The

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Armenian government will continue to pursue other trading partners, including Europe, to “balance” the EEU. It is too soon to say if such an approach would succeed. The biggest test will be if and when the border with Turkey opens.

In Russia itself, the prospects for democratic development are scarce. Putin’s popularity remains high, based on the pillars of nationalism, economic prosperity and control of the media. The Armenian political system will mirror the Russian “formula,” although Armenian presidents have never managed to garner the popularity of Putin.

In sum, Scenario 1 suggests the entrenched dependence of Armenia on Russia in the economic, political and geostrategic domains. With no war and no peace, the current status quo will continue for the foreseeable future.

Scenario 2: Democratic development in Turkey – increases, stalls or reverses⁶

Considerable advances have been made in Turkey during the past two decades in terms of democratic development, even though the process is far from perfect or complete: the military has been confined to the barracks, relations with Kurds have been generally peaceful and openly discussed, and the Kemalist model of homogenising nationalism has been challenged and the presence of minorities asserted. Of course, the picture is far from perfect. Journalists are jailed, critics of the government are harassed and authoritarian tendencies remain strong.

The “opening up” of Turkey has generally benefitted the Armenian community there. In fact, certain Armenian intellectuals played a crucial role in this process – and in the case of Hrant Dink, he was murdered for it. However, the Genocide is still officially denied and the community still faces various forms of discrimination.

The main question here, in terms of scenario planning, is: will Turkey’s democratic development continue, or has it reached its limits? Current indications are that it has stalled, and might even be reversing to some degree.

6. Note that the seminar took place prior to April 2015 commemorations and the summer-autumn 2015 parliamentary elections in Turkey. Hence the summarised discussion of the report does not take these events or the increased violence during the second half of 2015 into account.

Working through civil society and academic institutions has proven to be an effective way of not only promoting Armenian issues but also safeguarding broader democratic gains. Many Armenians in Turkey remain actively engaged, supported by many non-Armenian sympathisers. Elements within Turkish civil society (and local Kurdish governments) are pushing for Genocide education and recognition as part of a broader democratic agenda. They are taking the lead, not the government in Ankara. They have helped to reframe the paradigm of the Armenian Question, reflecting a quest for the democratisation of Turkey rather than a singular issue of international recognition.

In contrast, the government of Turkey is in turn trying to frame the Genocide issue on its own terms: as one of “shared pain.” It has also returned some confiscated Armenian properties, mainly in Istanbul, to their Armenian owners. But this has been a self-interested political act which benefitted government-friendly construction companies.

Nevertheless, President Erdogan, who is known for unexpected decisions, might surprise Armenians again by making announcements that will undermine Genocide recognition efforts. In addition to another “shared pain” statement in April 2015, a sudden decision to open the border with Armenia, or the granting of Turkish citizenship to descendants from the Ottoman Empire, might be announced at some point. Armenians need to be strategically prepared for such developments.

In the medium-term, it is unlikely that any Turkish government will accept the use of the term “genocide” in relation to 1915. However, it is likely that within civil society and academic circles in Turkey, the term would be employed freely, and the presence of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire recognised. In this context, reparations and other mechanisms to right past wrongs can be discussed.

Improved Armenia(n)-Turkish relations might make another war between Azerbaijan and Armenia less likely, *if* Ankara decides to resist pressure from Baku. However, such a correlation cannot be made easily.

In sum, Scenario 2 suggests that Turkey will continue to struggle between the challenges of democratic development and the tendencies

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of authoritarian rule. Civil society will remain vibrant, and it will be the main agent of change pertaining to Armenian issues. Discussion of the Armenian Genocide will likely become “normal” even though the government will continue to deny it.

Scenario 3: War erupts between Armenia and Azerbaijan

Even though at this stage a full-scale war between Armenia and Azerbaijan is unlikely, an “accidental” war is possible as border skirmishes escalate, taking a dynamic of their own. The NK conflict is, after all, inherently unstable. While Azerbaijan is desperate to recapture territories it lost to Armenians in the early 1990s, it is wary of the destabilising consequences domestically of another military confrontation. War is a huge risk for both Armenia and Azerbaijan. Hence the uneasy status quo remains, even though it is untenable for both countries in the long run.

Neither Armenia nor Azerbaijan can afford another war at this stage. However, the current situation is not sustainable in the long-run. If the two countries want to solve the conflict, they can, but need to find a new political means of engagement. Both sides are not ready for a solution. They see the conflict in terms of “winning it” instead of “solving it.”

The NK war (the loss of large amounts of land) and the increasing oil exports (significant revenues) have marked Azerbaijan profoundly in the past twenty years. If gas reserves prove to be substantial, new pipelines will be built, bringing Azerbaijan and Turkey closer together. This will have a negative impact on the rapprochement between Armenia and Turkey on the one hand, and on the other, more significantly, provide Azerbaijan even more revenue to build up its armed forces. If the potential fields yield little or no gas, then the “no war, no peace” scenario is more likely to continue in the near future.

Neither Armenia nor Azerbaijan can afford another war at this stage. However, the current situation is not sustainable in the long-run. If the two countries *want* to solve the conflict, they can, but need to find a new political means of engagement. Both sides are not ready for a solution. They see the conflict in terms of “winning it” instead of “solving it.” Hence the almost total lack of meaningful engagement in negotiations and the unlikelihood of a peace agreement.

There is also a danger for both sides in overestimating Russia’s capacity or willingness to engage in the South Caucasus.

Domestically, both sides use the conflict to justify a more militaristic regime, albeit to differing degrees, whereby human rights are further violated and democratic development thwarted or reversed.

In short, all the indicators point to the eventuality of another war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. A slight shift in regional dynamics, changes in Russian policy, domestic instability, ever more increasing oil revenues in Azerbaijan and even a frontline “accident” could upset the current status quo leading to either a “controlled” war or a major military confrontation. The outcome of another war is not clear, but sheer military spending is not in favour of Armenia.

Scenario 4: Wars in the Middle East continue and new political entities emerge

The wars in Iraq and Syria will continue to ebb and flow, with regional and global players being intimately involved. No one can be certain if state boundaries will formally be redrawn in the near to medium-term future, but it is a fact that new regional players have emerged and will play a role in parts of the Middle East: Kurdistan – be it a series of autonomous regions in several states or a separate independent state of its own – and radical Islamic movements such as ISIS. What impact would these new entities have on Armenians in the region, or on Armenia as a country?

Armenians in the Middle East have contributed considerably to the preservation and development of Armenian culture, including Western Armenian. Over the last forty years, however, there has been a sharp decline in the number of Armenians in the region, while the profile of those who have remained has changed to some degree – from being “ghettoized” communities to being more integrated into mainstream society. The decline in the number and the change in the characteristics of the community have had consequences for cultural production and identity formation.

Changes in the Middle East beg the question: where is the point of no return at which the Armenian communities can no longer be sustainable demographically, culturally and in terms of security? This question needs to be asked explicitly and analysed in light of the current geopolitical changes in the region. The analysis would lead to related ethical and strategic questions: should, for example, the emigration of Syrian Armenian refugees to Armenia, the US, Europe or elsewhere be

facilitated? Does the Armenian Church have an obligation to remain with the Armenian people no matter what the security conditions? If there is another civil war in Lebanon, what options do Armenians have?

The tensions between Arabs and other ethnic or religious minorities are expected to continue over a long period in many parts of the Middle East, with various consequences. While new community structures are built, schools still function (even in war-torn Aleppo) and many cultural events take place through a “thick” web of community structures, Armenians will continue to be adversely affected by security threats and be part of the emigration flow of Christians from the region.

Historically, Armenian culture and identity has not only survived, but also thrived during multiple conflicts and wars. Will this remain the case in the 21st Century in the Middle East?

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Century in the Middle East?

Scenario 4 can be summed up in a question requiring serious analysis: what is the future of Armenians in the Middle East?

Scenario 5: The European Union will remain in crisis, or will recover in the foreseeable future

The impact of the EU on Armenia and Armenians is rather minimal, and that is likely to remain the case over the next decade, as there are no visible prospects of Armenia joining the EU. Nor are there any prospects of the EU playing any significant security or geopolitical role in the Caucasus. Diaspora’s engagement with the EU will be limited as well, except for lobbying purposes.

If Turkey joins the EU, which is unlikely in the near future, relations between Armenia and the EU would change.

Hence, irrespective of developments in Europe, be it positive or negative for the Union, the tangible impact on Armenia will be negligible.

Nevertheless, there is an ideological and cultural component to Armenians’ relationship with Europe. Many Armenians feel close to Europe and see its value system as a counterweight to the country’s geopolitical location and choices.

Part III: Actions and Engagement Opportunities for Armenians

In light of the above scenarios, there are several areas of engagement and opportunities for Armenia and Armenians to consider. What follows are avenues of possible action – elements over which Armenians do have some control – whereby policies could be developed and leadership exercised to influence decisions or events. In some cases, only questions are asked to highlight issues that ought to be considered in policy formulation. The five domains are: engagement with Armenia, the institutional sustainability of the diaspora, the (re)formulation of Armenian identity, relations with Turkey and relations with Armenia's other neighbours.

Engagement with Armenia

Since 1988, many Armenians in the diaspora have engaged with Armenia through various means, from humanitarian aid to repatriation, from higher education to civil society support. The relationship has had several ups and downs, but the engagement has been constant. Nevertheless, diasporas' involvement has been much less than the full potential possible. Remarkably, there is little serious research undertaken to date to explore the obstacles to enhanced Armenia-diaspora(s) collaboration, and to suggest appropriate “models” for development. Thorny questions pertaining to conflicting interests, lack of trust and how to overcome it, collective psychology and cultural differences, issues of capacity and capability are rarely asked and much less analysed objectively. They need to be addressed in a non-politicised manner.

There are many more specific issues that require research. Diasporan engagement with Armenia tends to be haphazard, often reflecting the interests and impulses of the diasporan organisations and individuals

rather than the actual needs of the country. It is not difficult to compile a long list of needs, including:

- Rural development
- Business development
- Improvements in education
- Advancements in the health sector
- Integration of “repatriates” – i.e. immigrants (so they will stay in Armenia)
- Modern cultural production
- Strategic planning capacity
- Human capacity development
- Youth engagement in civil society and the economy
- Middle class development.

The challenge, however, is not in compiling a list, but in prioritising it and suggesting solutions so that specific and tangible objectives are met. Investors and development agencies need to know what is having an impact and what is not working. A national consensus on a priority list would greatly help decision makers in devising appropriate policies, as well as diasporan leaders in encouraging direct foreign investment in Armenia. It would also be a guideline to gauge the success or failure of needed domestic socio-economic reforms. At this point, neither the impact of the engagements from the previous 20 years is known sufficiently, nor the priority needs for the forthcoming 20 years.

A national consensus on a priority list would greatly help decision makers in devising appropriate policies, as well as diasporan leaders in encouraging direct foreign investment in Armenia. (...) At this point, neither the impact of the engagements from the previous 20 years is known sufficiently, nor the priority needs for the forthcoming 20 years.

Hanging over these specific issues is the overall strategic question: how can the diaspora go beyond the charitable nature of engagement with Armenia, and be an actual partner in the development of the country?

The main task then is to first really *know* what is needed and what will work in Armenia in terms of socio-economic development and sustained engagement. Hence, in addition to the many areas of current diaspora involvement in Armenia, what is very much needed is serious non-partisan policy driven research. Such research must be disseminated widely – within government, academia, civil society and diasporan

institutions – so that an open and meaningful pan-national debate can take place about needs, priorities and impact. Such research would influence policy, and help people with their decisions pertaining to Armenia – be it investment, humanitarian aid or even relocation.

The Institutional Sustainability of the Diaspora

In the 20th Century, Armenians have generally been successful in maintaining their collective identity within the diaspora. This was achieved through various institutions (schools, churches, political parties, various types of clubs), often in concentrated physical spaces. A “core” or a nucleus – be it institutional, cultural or geographical – has maintained the main contours of identity, with the broader community evolving around it. This approach is considered increasingly inapplicable in the context of the globalised 21st Century. What is therefore needed is a “transition plan” from the core-driven model⁷ to a networked and socially integrated model of identity maintenance, and the institutional set-up that goes with it. It remains an open question, nonetheless, if a loose (mostly virtual) network can indeed be as successful as the “core” model of identity formulation. Five points need to be made in this context, pertaining to possible institutional transformations.

First, established (i.e. post-Genocide) Armenian diasporan communities are moving beyond the old organisational model in terms of intra-community political and social divides, particularly in North America, Europe and to some degree in Lebanon. New types of intra-community communication networks and mobilisation strategies are needed to deal with new dynamics, reflecting the fact that the “iron curtain” within the diaspora has been opened significantly. Moreover, new divisions have emerged in many cities, namely between the established diaspora and the new post-Soviet diaspora, necessitating new institutional set-ups.

Second, unlike the first generation of post-Genocide migrants, three to four generations later, Armenians in the diaspora are integrated within their “host societies.” In fact, in the established diaspora, the immigrant/host society dichotomy no longer makes sense. Consequently, institutions that seek to somehow employ the “us” and “them” division between

7. This is sometimes loosely referred to as a “ghetto” model, the term being used in its broad sense, to mean a geographically and/or ideologically concentrated community.

Armenian identity and other identities lose significance with the younger generation who need markers of identity that *combine* the “us” and the “them.” This is particularly the case in the Western diaspora, but also relevant in the Middle East, as well as in Russia and Eastern Europe. For example, in the Middle East, for Armenians to survive and prosper, they need to engage with Arab intellectuals and be active in Arab civil society. Arab nationalist narrative has traditionally viewed Armenians as “foreigners” rather than a local Christian community.

Third, and following from the above, networks based on professional considerations are becoming increasingly popular, whereby mobilisation takes place around a common interest or a specific goal (e.g. “skills donation,” exchange programmes and locally-led projects). Identity issues could be one component, but it is rarely the only or even primary element of such activities. Part of the necessary re-imagining of institutions entails moving away from charitable acts and focusing more on entrepreneurship, supporting young start-ups and offering young people work opportunities within successful organisations run by influential Armenians or sympathisers.

Gone are the days where Armenians gravitate toward Armenian organisations just because they are Armenian. Parents, for instance, insist on high quality schools; youth want their local clubs to be connected to global networks and issues, using the latest technologies and know-how. There is a slew of challenges facing diasporan institutions to “scale up” quality to remain attractive to their members and users.

Fourth, the excellence of existing Armenian institutions – from education to community services – is a must. Gone are the days where Armenians gravitate toward Armenian organisations just because they are Armenian. Parents, for instance, insist on high quality schools; youth want their local clubs to be connected to global networks and issues, using the latest technologies and know-how. There is a slew of challenges facing diasporan institutions to “scale up” quality to remain attractive to their members and users.

Finally, financial models of community maintenance need to be rethought. The established Armenian diaspora is a self-sustaining diaspora through donations and forms of voluntary “taxation.” Is this model sufficient or does it need to be “scaled up” as well to attract new philanthropists and local government support?

The institutional challenges mentioned above reflect the changing nature of the Armenian diaspora, principally in the West and in the

Middle East: from survivors and new immigrants to established and integrated communities, largely composed of middle class professionals. The case is different with the post-Soviet diaspora, particularly in Russia.

The (Re)formulation of Armenian Identity

Institutional sustainability is of course inexorably connected to the collective identity issue – that there are groups of people in the various diasporas who wish to remain Armenian or, as some people put it, “relatively Armenian.” The challenge is to give the tools to each generation of Armenians to formulate their own identity, inspired by history and past cultural expressions, but not frozen in them. The “core” versus the “loosely networked” dynamic mentioned above is just as applicable here.

The fact of the matter is that Armenian identity in the diaspora is no longer (if it ever was) “fixed,” “clear cut” or “given,” but is fluid, ambiguous and malleable. The matter is further complicated with the emergence of “Islamised Armenians” in Turkey. The key question is: in such an environment, what is the “thread” that keeps people – or a people – to remain Armenian? Perhaps it is impossible to identify a clearly defined thread. Nevertheless, how to develop a collective identity in the diaspora that is distinct, is a crucial question which requires multiple answers. Are there a set of common denominators which must be nurtured? And, on what basis can solidarity and responsibility be nourished so that future generations affirm “we *are* Armenian” instead of saying “our grandparents (or parents) *were* Armenian”?

Certain elements of a common denominator seem to be the willingness to affirm identity as an Armenian, to connect to others – at least with some regularity – on that basis (to family, friends, social causes, etc.), having some concern for Armenians and Armenia, and manifesting some engagement and involvement. Note that these are very different set of denominators than the traditional ones of language, religion and ethno-territorial origin.

If in the second half of the 20th Century Armenians in the West moved away from single national identities to hyphenated identities (e.g. from “Armenian” to “Armenian-American”), in the 21st Century there is further fragmentation as more and more people become “percentile” Armenians – i.e. half, quarter, one-eighth, part-time, etc. Identity is not,

obviously, a biological issue; the “percentile” terminology is a metaphor for engagement and subjective self-identification.

One seminar participant summed up the challenges succinctly:

Armenian identity has had extensive and well-sourced “hardwares” (schools, clubs, churches, etc.). What is lacking is “software” for the 21st Century. The development of the Armenian identity “software” would require well-thought through and organised sets of ingredients (values, ideas, symbols) that would provide a common denominator (a problematic concept) of Armenian identity. The process of coming up with workable “software” (creed, commandments) is complex on multiple levels – from geographical and socio-cultural to ideological and political differences.

Part of this complexity is entrenched in being survivors of genocide and still coming to terms with it. After 100 years, a shift is taking place

New (meta)narratives need to be created, with new platforms of expression, which make being Armenian – and diasporan – “sexy,” future oriented and desirable; that is, a source of pride.

– as expressed through certain significant initiatives – from victimhood to celebration of survival, creation and contribution. New (meta)narratives need to be created, with new platforms of expression, which make being Armenian – and diasporan – “sexy,” future oriented and desirable; that is, a source of pride.

As with any kind of social or conceptual change affecting identity, a negative reaction to new ways of being Armenian is expected from conservative elements within Armenian communities.

Engagement with Turkey

Three sets of questions need to be addressed in this matter. First, why do Armenians want to engage with Turkey? Second, who will engage? And third, how is it to be done?

The “why” question has three interlinked answers, which are also an indication of the core issues to engage on:

- a. To end the denial of the Armenian Genocide by Turkish state and society, and to finally obtain some justice for the descendants of the victims, and possible reparations. This also entails preserving

- and reinventing the Armenian patrimony in Turkey, restoring monuments and buildings for the public good.
- b. For the future prosperity of Armenia, the understanding being that with an open Armenian-Turkish border trade will flow and the economy will grow. Even though Turkey has tied the opening of the border with the conflict over NK, if the border does open, it might have a positive impact on negotiations with Azerbaijan.
 - c. The democratisation of Turkey is in the interest of Armenians, particularly for the well-being of the Armenian minority in Turkey.

Who should engage has some obvious answers: the governments of Armenia and Turkey, directly with each other. But Armenian-Turkish relations are not confined to governments. Individual engagement from Armenia and the diaspora is important too, as are the contacts of civil society organisations (NGOs) and academic institutions. To date, these have been instrumental in establishing contact between the two peoples, and enhancing the spaces of understanding. Diaspora-based Armenian organisations have a role to play as well, although they have been lagging in their presence in Turkey. Crucially, the Armenian community of Turkey is a major actor, and interlocutor, in this relationship. Finally, engagement with local municipalities in the Kurdish region has borne some fruit in the past several years and can be augmented.

“How to engage” has many possibilities, but also many snares. Armenians need to be bold, knocking on doors and building trust, and yet exercise much caution so that they are not used for propaganda purposes or naively outstrategised. They must also see some good faith and confidence building measures from the government in Ankara. Some possible areas of engagement include the following ten ideas.

To begin with, given the dearth of knowledge about Turkey in Armenia and in the diaspora, initiatives are needed to learn about Turkey. Academic visits, policy oriented research projects, publications, are all important mechanisms of engagement at this stage.

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Second, Armenians can be involved in patrimony preservation projects, bringing their knowledge of Armenian culture to its conservation.

Third, working with individuals with Armenian heritage, Armenians can be instrumental in educating Turkish citizens, particularly in the East, about the Armenian past of the region and of their families (this is particularly poignant in the face of a newly emerging identity, that of Islamised descendants of Genocide survivors in Anatolia⁸).

Fourth, civil society to civil society engagement should expand, particularly in the domain of respectful dialogue. This will, importantly, introduce diasporan agency into the equation.

Fifth, economic cooperation between businessmen and the private sector is another area of engagement (which is more likely if there are commercial interests involved).

Sixth, organisational cooperation with Kurdish municipalities and establishments (which already takes place to some degree) is an effective way of establishing networks and undertaking joint projects.

Seventh, visiting Turkey, as vocal and visibly engaged Armenians, is a form of engagement as well (i.e. “heritage tourism”).

Eight, making Armenian collective memory available through publications, exhibitions, films, translations and the like is an important educational tool.

Ninth, the possible citizenship issue – i.e. granting citizenship to descendants of Genocide survivors can be a point of discussion with the government.

And tenth, using the Turkish legal system to get back confiscated properties is a form of legal engagement which can be effective in some instances.

A “condolence statement” is expected on the Centenary of the Armenian Genocide from the Turkish government. But for Armenians this is not enough. It is time for the Turkish state (and establishment) to go beyond statements and take concrete steps in certain domains, such as the restoration of Armenian patrimony, and its identification as such in official Turkish history.

Goodwill is needed from all sides to put engagement ideas in practice. Armenians can use conciliatory words and actions from the Turkish

8. Often referred to as “Hidden Armenians” or “Islamised Armenians.”

government as stepping stones on which further engagement can be built, both with state agencies and the general Turkish public.

Finally, if the democratic development of Turkey takes root, the Armenian community of Istanbul, with its web of schools, churches and newspapers could once again emerge as a major centre of Western Armenian language, culture and learning. Are Armenians in the diaspora ready to face such a development, to look at Istanbul once again as a major centre of Western Armenian identity? Or even consider migration to a reformed Turkey, particularly to escape the violence in the Middle East?

(...) the Armenian community of Istanbul, with its web of schools, churches and newspapers could once again emerge as a major centre of Western Armenian language, culture and learning. Are Armenians in the diaspora ready to face such a development, to look at Istanbul once again as a major centre of Western Armenian identity?

Engagement with Armenia's Other Neighbours

Armenia and Armenians do have some choices in their engagement with other neighbours. What follows are certain points and questions that ought to be considered as Armenians look ahead into the next several decades. These points are for discussion and would, hopefully, feed into policy formulation by various institutions.

Azerbaijan

In Scenario 3 above, the possibility of war erupting between Armenia and Azerbaijan was mentioned. As a party to the conflict, Armenia does have certain choices and can influence outcomes pertaining to its relationship with Azerbaijan. The following questions ought to help with policy formulation:

- a. First and foremost is the fundamental question, is peace essential for the development of Armenia and Karabakh? If so, what are the minimum requirements to achieve peace?
- b. Should the Armenian government be encouraged to negotiate?
- c. What measures can be taken to mitigate the discourse of hatred, or of perpetual conflict?
- d. Should non-government organisations take a proactive role in peacebuilding, and encourage the will to negotiate? What other role, if any, should civil society organisations assume?
- e. Can informal and confidential channels of communication be opened? Should they be encouraged?

Seminar participants did not provide answers to these questions, but posed them to frame future discussions. There was consensus, however, on the point that Armenians should not rely on outsiders to resolve the conflict.

Georgia

Given that Armenia and Georgia have different inclinations in terms of foreign policy – the first is more EU-focused whereas the latter is part of the Eurasian Union – it is important to analyse the long-term implications and impact of this divergence on Armenia. Based on such analysis, Armenia can develop policies to reduce its dependence on Russia and have a more balanced economy. Part of this dynamic is the scenario whereby Georgia, Azerbaijan and Turkey integrate further economically, leaving out Armenia. Armenia does have the ability to pursue policies so as not to be excluded from regional trade networks. There are more specific issues to contend with. These include:

- a. Nuance in dealing with the Javakheti region of Georgia which is populated by Armenians.
- b. Possible tensions over Armenian churches in Georgia in the face of attempts by the Georgians to take over some properties.

Armenia cannot afford to have its relations with Georgia deteriorate, and to date the relationship has been well managed. It is important for Armenians to see Georgia as part of the solution to its problems and not as another problem.

Russia

Armenia's engagement with Russia remains steady, and is at multiple levels: political, security, economic and social. Many of these issues were discussed previously and there is no need to repeat them here. Only two further points need to be added in terms of Armenian policy development:

- a. The importance of engaging with Russia on the large Armenian diaspora in that country, while also engaging directly with that diaspora to help it organise and mobilise to maintain its identity.
- b. Related to the first point is the crucial need to enhance our knowledge of that diaspora through serious research. It is seriously understudied.

Iran

Even though Armenia's relations with Iran were not discussed at any length, certain points were made in passing which have relevance to foreign policy development:

- a. The prospects of improved relations between Iran and the United States. How can Armenia benefit from this?
- b. Actions Yerevan could take so that Iran becomes a significant source of energy for Armenia.
- c. Constantly monitoring Russia-Iran and Azerbaijan-Iran relations, and adapting Armenia's policies accordingly while maintaining good relations with Iran.

Part IV: Steps Ahead and Some Recommendations

All participants of the seminar agreed that such meetings must continue, and the momentum created by the “Armenians in 2115” gathering must be channeled into further strategic research. “This should not be a ‘one-off’ event” suggested a number of people, rather it should become a “Davos-like” series of meetings to foster debate on strategy, coordinate activities and share information.

All participants of the seminar agreed that such meetings must continue, and the momentum created by the “Armenians in 2115” gathering must be channeled into further strategic research. “This should not be a ‘one-off’ event” suggested a number of people, rather it should become a “Davos-like” series of meetings to foster debate on strategy, coordinate activities and share information.

Hence, the first recommendation was to continue such meetings, perhaps on a smaller scale, and focused on specific issues.⁹ For instance, each of the scenarios and actions of engagement discussed in skeleton format during the seminar could be developed further.

Second, there was also consensus that more policy-relevant research is needed. Time and time again participants bemoaned the lack of substantial research to enable proper decision making, particularly on the subjects discussed. Some specific areas that were mentioned include: a comprehensive study of the Armenian diaspora in Russia; a wide-ranging survey of other significant diasporan communities to actually have facts about current dynamics and attitudes; objective research on Turkey, particularly on its domestic political and economic developments (about which Armenians in general know very little); and further investigations on the impact of the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border.

9. It was also suggested that the topics were too broad to be covered adequately in two days.

Related to the above two recommendations, there was a call to establish a centre (or initiative) for strategic research in the diaspora to facilitate such discussions, where experts and leaders would be gathered in a non-partisan setting on a regular basis to discuss issues of relevance. In other words, to *institutionalise* strategic thinking, which the diaspora currently lacks. For example, research could be commissioned and the results presented in a series of workshops on particular topics that could then feed into the policy making of various organisations, as well as the Government of Armenia.¹⁰

In addition to these three overarching recommendations, some more specific suggestions emerged:

- Armenia needs to cultivate a clear development plan or a roadmap, which would help guide investment in and assistance to the country.
- A serious national discussion needs to take place about the long-term sustainability of the status quo in relation to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.
- A similar national discussion needs to take place regarding relations with Turkey, preparation for the opening of the border, the use/return of confiscated Armenian properties, and engagement with Armenians in Turkey, as well as civil society. There needs to be an open debate on the question “What do Armenians want from Turkey?”
- Initiatives to enhance diasporas’ engagement with Armenia, based on a long-term framework. Good governance must be part of the equation, as well as the lessons learned from studies on the successes and failures of other nation- and state-building experiences.
- Armenian organisations, particularly in the diaspora, must foster the formulation of new identities and new institutional structures. There needs to be a change of discourse – a shift in collective mentality – from the “survival mode” mind set to the “creative mode” that is future oriented and focused on prosperity. Inherent in this shift is the formulation of a “grand idea” around which Armenians can coalesce. The exchange of best practices and the enhancement of global networks is essential to this.

Certain recommendations were made to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. These include:

10. One way of doing this would be to do a call for proposals for research topics related to the subjects of the “Armenians in 2115” seminar.

- Continue acting as a neutral space within the global Armenian community, supporting and commissioning research; maintain and further develop the “Armenians in 2115” initiative.
- Consider becoming a platform for strategic research, debate and policy development (i.e. assume the role of a think-tank for the diaspora).
- Organise further such meetings, focusing on specific issues, where experts and leaders are brought together to discuss policy-relevant research.¹¹

11. The Armenian Communities Department organised two expert seminars under the rubric of “Armenians in 2115” seminar series. The first, in June 2015, was on the use of information technologies and the enhancement of the Armenian language (held in Yerevan). The second, in September 2015, was on innovation in Armenian education and schools in the diaspora (held in Paris). Other suggestions the Department is considering, and which were discussed at the seminar, include: commissioning two research studies, one on the Armenian diaspora in Russia, and the other, a survey based study of other major diasporan centres that would examine attitudes and community dynamics. Through its scholarship programme, the Department also encourages original research on Turkey as it pertains to Armenians.

Conclusion

The “Armenians in 2115” seminar was a unique gathering both in terms of its content and participation. It was an opportunity for important elements of the Armenian global leadership to collectively discuss the future of the Armenian people. Such strategising sessions are vital for analysis, coordination and planning. Armenians do face some serious challenges, both in the republic and in the diasporas, but also do have a long history of innovation, adaptability and survival. The key is to match collective skills to collective challenges, focus on the future with a clear vision, and act based on solid research.

This seminar was one modest step in that direction.

Summary of Recommendations

General recommendations

1. Organise seminars and other meetings which bring together leaders and researchers in a neutral environment where strategic issues can be discussed.
2. Undertake high quality policy-relevant research so that decisions are made on facts and not assumptions.
3. Institutionalise strategic thinking and research in the diaspora through a centre or an ongoing initiative.

Specific recommendations

4. A development plan for Armenia should be cultivated.
5. A national dialogue should take place on:
 - a. The sustainability of the status quo of the NK conflict.
 - b. Armenians' relations with Turkey.
6. Initiatives to enhance diasporas' engagement with Armenia.
7. Initiatives to foster new identities that go beyond the "survival mode" and enhance creativity, innovation and development; a "grand idea" around which Armenians can coalesce.
8. To the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation:
 - a. Continue with and develop further the "Armenians in 2115" initiative, encouraging strategic thinking and research by providing resources and a neutral space.
 - b. Consider acting as a policy development think tank for the Armenian diaspora.
 - c. At future such seminars focus on specific issues, bringing together experts and leaders.

Appendices

Appendix I: The Seminar Participants

Hosts

M. Essayan
R. Panossian

Expert facilitators

F. M. Gocek (on Turkey)
J. Hughes (on Russia)
A. Ishkanian (on Armenia)
V. S. Marques (on Europe)
H. Tchilingirian (on Middle East)
K. Tololyan (on diaspora)
T. de Waal (on Armenia's neighbours)

Participants

N. Afeyan	O. Ghazarian	A. Nalci
P. Akkelian	S. Ghazarian	S. Panossian
A. Andonian	M. Grigorian	V. Papazian
R. Ardhdadjian	K. Hachikian	S. Samuelyan
K. Bardakjian	V. Hovsepian	S. Simonian
B. Busetto	A. Jilavyan	N. Tavitian
A. Chalabyan	J. Karaaslanian	H. Tchoboyan
V. Cheterian	R. Kevorkian	R. Vardanyan
K. Der Ghougassian	J. Libaridian	Y. Zorian
D. Dink	R. Markosyan	
Y. Djeredjian	S. Mironyuk	

Appendix II: The Seminar Agenda

Armenians in 2115

Strategy Seminar – Agenda

13-14 October 2014

The seminar is held under Chatham House Rule: “participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.”

Monday **13** October

9h30-10h00

Introduction: why this seminar?

10h00-11h30

Other strategising initiatives pertaining to Armenia and Armenians.

11h30-11:45 – Break

11h45-13h15

Where is the world going in relation to Armenians?

- Where is Russia heading? (45 minutes)
- Where is Turkey heading? (45 minutes)

13h15-14h30 – Lunch

14h30-15h15

- Where is Europe heading?

15h15-15h30 – Break

15b30-17b00

- Where is the Middle East heading?
- Where are Armenia's neighbours heading?

17b30-18b30 (*Optional*)

Private tour for seminar participants of the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum.

20b00

Dinner hosted by the President and Board of Trustees (Director's Dining Room)

Tuesday **14** October

9b30-10b30

Where is Armenia heading?

10b30-10b45 – Break

10b45-11b45

Where are Armenian diasporas heading?

11b45-13b15

What are the key issues facing Armenians in the coming 20 years?
Towards building some scenarios (plenary discussion).

13b15-14b30 – Lunch

14b30-16b00

What can be done on each issue identified in previous session?
Towards addressing various scenarios (break-out groups based on issue or theme).

16b00-16b45

What can be done on each issue?
(Plenary discussion)

16b45-17b00

Concluding comments

19b00 (Optional)

Seminar guests are invited to attend the Armenian camera music concert, in the Grand Auditorium of the Foundation. The music of Gomidas, Dikran Mansurian and Arno Babajanian will be played by Orchestra musicians and guests.

Appendix III: Matrix to Develop Possible Recommendations Based on Scenarios and Levers

After the first day of discussion, the following matrix was developed to frame the debate during the second day. Participants found such a matrix helpful in formulating key questions and possible recommendations. Each cell would contain a series of questions and possible engagements. The matrix below is only a draft and can be altered or expanded to include other scenarios and levers.

A Seminar Report

Scenarios (largely beyond Armenians' control)

<i>Levers Armenians can use (tools)</i>	Russian influence over Armenia increases	Democratic development of Turkey increases, or not	War erupts in the region (Azerbaijan-Armenia)	Wars in Middle East continue	New political entities emerge in the Middle East	EU crisis
Engage with Turkey (gov't and/or CS)						
Engage with Armenia (gov't and/or CS)						
Ensure sustainability of Armenian diasporan communities (institution reform/build)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key questions to ask • Some possible actions Armenians can take (for each cell) 			
Encourage new identity formulations						
Engage with Armenia's neighbours						

