

took an interest in Turkey's deliveries of American and Turkish weapons to Azerbaijan. According to an Aug. 17 announcement by the Human Rights Caucus in the U.S. Congress, its co-chairman, Rep. John Porter (R-Ill.), stated that he was disturbed by a report that American weapons were being used by Azerbaijani forces in the continuing struggle over Nagorno-Karabakh. On Sept. 1, Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Va.) arrived in Karabakh for the purpose of identifying the path by which weapons manufactured in NATO countries were being delivered to Azerbaijan for use against Karabakh. Meanwhile, the Armenian press circulated photographs of NATO weapons, as well as documents proving their ownership and delivery into Azerbaijan with Turkey's assistance.

But the prospect of being exposed evidently does not disturb Turkey. During a recent visit to Baku by Turkish Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Guresh, agreement was reached on stepping up Turkish assistance to Azerbaijan. Moreover, the Third Turkish Field Army, with 1,500 tanks, 2,500 cannons, and 1,100 armored vehicles, has been deployed along the border with Armenia.

"Turkey could have done that a long time ago," Turkey's President Suleyman Demirel told Russian television on Aug. 24, replying to a question about whether Turkey didn't wish to introduce its troops into Karabakh. "But Turkey prefers to resolve the Azerbaijan question together with Russia, the U.S.A., France, and England." As if nothing had happened, he added: "We are faithful to the principle of nonintervention. We do not want the Caucasus to turn into an arena of Christian-Muslim struggle. Suppose for just a minute that the Christian world helped Armenia, and the Muslim world, Azerbaijan. This could lead to a Christian-Muslim war, which is impermissible."

The Turkish leader reached the height of cynicism when he said, "We do not wish for any people to suffer from the cold." It is now the third winter that the Armenian people are experiencing indescribable suffering because of Turkey's blockade, which does not permit even humanitarian aid to be shipped across its territory.

Russia's role

The dominant role of Russia in settling the Karabakh war also causes Turkey some discomfort. Demirel said that "Russia must not leave an impression of an attempt to restore the empire." General Guresh stated bluntly, "Russia presents a real threat for us."

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) is also expressing its irritation over Russia taking the Karabakh negotiation process "into its own hands." The CSCE is Russia's rival for the role of "main peacemaker." But it would seem that the CSCE let slip its last chance in 1992, when sluggishness, the absence of any real mechanisms, and failure to take into account the historically justified aspirations of the Karabakh population left the CSCE in the political shadows.

Ultimately, Russia's position in the Transcaucasus was also strengthened by the U.S.A.'s agreement for Russia to play the role of intermediary, given during the visit of the President of Armenia to Washington in August. Since the United States also agreed to the entry of Russian forces into the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict zone, one can speak about changes in U.S. foreign policy and Clinton's recognition of Russian interests in the Transcaucasus.

As for the Armenian-Azeri talks in Moscow, with Russian mediation, it is important to note that not only Armenia and Azerbaijan are participating as parties to the conflict, but also Nagorno-Karabakh. The basic thesis of the talks—peace for land—is interpreted variously by the sides: What kind of peace, and which land? In exchange for stopping the war, Azerbaijan demands the return of all territories around Karabakh, including also the Lachin "humanitarian corridor," as well as the city of Shusha, in the very heart of Karabakh.

At the same time, Azerbaijan categorically does not want to recognize the independence of Karabakh. The Armenian side naturally opposes the surrender of Lachin, which would mean a complete blockade of Karabakh. Giving up the city of Shusha is an equivalent to the loss of Karabakh itself. Furthermore, several areas of Karabakh are under occupation by Azerbaijan.

The fundamental problem, however, is the question of the guarantees for a comprehensive peace. The only such guarantee is for Azerbaijan to recognize the independence of Karabakh. Until this occurs, the Transcaucasus region will constantly be a zone of risk for rekindled war and the struggle among the "powerful of this world" over the right to dispatch "peacemaking forces" here.

Unrest rocks Azerbaijani capital

Over 400 people were injured and 77 people were arrested on Sept. 12 in the first serious riots since Haidar Aliyev came to power in Azerbaijan. The violence occurred in Baku when security forces, joined by pro-government crowds, broke up a demonstration by the opposition Popular Front. The Popular Front had called the demonstration to protest what they said is a coming Armenia-Azerbaijan peace agreement, brokered by Russia, that would end the five-year-old war over the region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Talks were held in early September in Moscow between Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossian and Azerbaijan President Aliyev. No agreement was reached.