

# **THE KARABAKH CONFLICT AND PROSPECTS FOR SETTLING IT**

- **Azerbaijan's public opinion about the Karabakh problem**
- **Armenia's public opinion about the Karabakh problem**
- **Azerbaijani media coverage of the Karabakh settlement problem**
- **Armenian media coverage of the Karabakh settlement problem**
- **Mountainous Karabakh media coverage of the Karabakh settlement problem**

**THE KARABAKH  
CONFLICT  
AND PROSPECTS  
FOR SETTLING IT**  
(the results of sociological research  
and media coverage)

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**THE RESULTS OF SOCIOLOGICAL  
RESEARCH  
(2001-2003)**

## INTRODUCTION

*Karabakh conflict, the most rooted and intricate conflict in the South Caucasus region, has either been aggravated or passed into latent phase throughout the history of its existence. The Bishkek agreement, signed in 1994, put a halt to intensive military operations of the early 90s and led to the regime of cease-fire along Armenian – Azerbaijani confrontation line. The latter only froze the conflict but «neither war nor peace» state of affairs contains a threat of new aggravation of the present situation. Neither the initiatives of international mediators on Karabakh problem settlement nor meetings of Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan have not yet yielded mutually acceptable solutions.*

*The present situation to a great extent has been an obstacle to the development of both countries and the region as a whole. It is acknowledged both on the state and public levels in Armenia and Azerbaijan.*

*What are possible ways for solving Karabakh problem, what paths and methods of settlement are viewed by the parties to the conflict as priorities? What lies under mutual compromises? How public opinion reacts and what is the role of media in its formation? These and other questions, concerning the prospects of Armenian – Azerbaijani relations, became subject of research implemented in 2001–2003 by Yerevan and Baku Press Clubs with the support of Open Society Network Media Program. The activity was developed simultaneously in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Mountainous Karabakh separately. The research in MK was conducted with the participation of Stepanakert Press Club.*

*In the course of research, various sociological methods were applied to reveal not only situational constants of public opinion but also the motives on which it is based, as well as the media impact on its formation. The three-year program included public opinion survey among the population and experts on MK problem, work with focus-groups, application of Delphi technology for revealing and comparing Armenian and Azerbaijani experts' positions concerning Karabakh conflict settlement, as well as media monitoring using elements of content analysis.*

*Sociological survey on Karabakh settlement was conducted in summer 2001.*

*In Armenia sampling territorially included 31 populated areas: Yerevan and all the 10 regions of the country each represented by administrative center, one more city in the region and one village. The total number of respondents is 1,000 people representing main socio-demographic categories of the population.*

*In Azerbaijan, a similar survey was conducted in 38 administrative regions of the country (14 urban and 24 rural). The number of respondents amounted to 1,155 people including 152 refugees – representatives of Azerbaijani community of Mountainous Karabakh. Data on census departments and areas served as a basis for sampling.*

*The survey implemented in Mountainous Karabakh proper included 250 people.*

*Simultaneously a survey was implemented among 100 experts in Armenia and 64 experts in Azerbaijan – state officials of high standing directly involved in Karabakh conflict settlement, Parliament deputies, leaders of political parties and NGOs, businessmen, media leaders, clergy representatives, etc. – those whose opinions and assessments influence or are likely to influence attitude towards the studied problem in government and the society. 25 experts from Mountainous*

*Karabakh participated in examination. All the experts were encouraged to state their positions on the issues raised in a thesis.*

*In 2002 a survey was conducted in 28 focus-groups (14 groups each from Armenian and Azerbaijani side), from 8 to 12 discussion participants. The groups represented different layers of the population: in Armenia these were workers, teachers, doctors, students, refugees, MK and Tavush border region inhabitants, housewives and individual entrepreneurs; in Azerbaijan – teachers and doctors, oil and postal workers, entrepreneurs and housewives, students, refugees, residents of Tovuz district bordering on Armenia. Mountainous Karabakh residents (Armenians), as well as displaced persons from Karabakh (Azerbaijanis) constituted separate groups. All the groups were divided based on gender in order to exclude possible tension likely to rise when discussing the problem in different gender groups. Besides, the groups with their own personal experience of MK problem (refugees, doctors, residents of Tavush region and Tovuz district, Mountainous Karabakh residents and displaced persons from Karabakh) were viewed as “experimental”: the data received here were compared with the opinions and statements voiced in other groups to find out the distribution of various positions on the issues discussed among different layers of the population.*

*In 2003, a more detailed survey of Karabakh problem experts was conducted using one of the most effective modern methods of collective examination – Delphi method. (Delphi technique is a multistage anonymous examination in which the participants of absentee brainstorming voice and substantiate their point of view, comment, criticize or agree with the opinions of the colleagues, comment on, criticize or agree with the opinions of their colleagues, specify and expand their positions taking into consideration the ideas expressed during discussion). The examination was conducted in three stages within groups of people with good knowledge of the given problem and active influence on the process of public opinion formation. 3 groups were formed: 15 experts from Armenia, 15 – from Azerbaijan and 5 – from Mountainous Karabakh separately.*

*Thus, a multistage program was implemented foreseeing several relatively independent projects each becoming a part of comprehensive research on Karabakh conflict problems. The results of survey and media monitoring 2001–2002 are reflected in the brochures published by the partners: «Karabakh Conflict in the Mirror of Media and Public Opinion» and «Karabakh Conflict and Prospects of its Resolution». Electronic versions of these publications are also placed on the web site [www.pressclubs.org](http://www.pressclubs.org). Below summary of data obtained in 2001–2002 research are provided, whereas the results of Delphi examination, implemented in 2003, are covered in more detail.*

# THE KARABAKH CONFLICT AND PROSPECTS FOR SETTLING IT

*(the results of sociological research  
conducted by the Baku Press Club among  
Azerbaijani respondents)*

- **Sociological poll – 2001:  
Azerbaijan's public opinion about the Karabakh problem.**

*(A total of 1,155 people from the whole country took part in the poll which was organized in the summer of 2001, including 152 Azerbaijani refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh. The poll also involved 64 experts who have been dealing with this problem in the last few years)*

During the research, Azerbaijan's public opinion on issues of settling the Armenian – Azerbaijani conflict was studied in a comparative context – «the opinion of the whole population» – «the opinion of refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh» – «the opinion of experts». It was established that the Karabakh problem is constantly taking first place among different subjects that interest the audience of the electronic and print media.

The following are the most important results of the sociological poll conducted among the population:

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Answers</i>	<i>Population %</i>	<i>Refugees %</i>
The most acceptable option for settling the Karabakh problem	Karabakh within Azerbaijan without any autonomy	56.0	55.3
	Karabakh within Azerbaijan with any autonomy	33.7	40.8
	Karabakh as an independent state	0.8	0
	Karabakh within Armenia	0.1	0
	Karabakh's «high degree» of autonomy with Azerbaijan	4.0	0.7
	«A common state»	0.2	0
	Territorial swap	0.7	0
Will the negotiating process lead to conflict settlement conditions acceptable to Azerbaijan and Armenia?	Don't know	4.5	3.3
	Yes	43.7	16.4
	No	39.8	59.2
	Possibly	10.3	17.1
	Don't know	6.3	7.2

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Answers</i>	<i>Population %</i>	<i>Refugees %</i>
Can Azerbaijan, under certain circumstances, sign a peace agreement that runs counter to its national interests?	Yes	11.8	5.9
	No	73.8	86.8
	Don't know	14.5	7.2
Can Armenia, under certain circumstances, sign a peace agreement that runs counter to its national interests?	Yes	26.7	9.9
	No	38.7	65.1
	Don't know	34.6	25.0
In which way should the conflict be solved?	Peaceful	32.6	15.1
	Peaceful, but if it is impossible, then military	53.3	65.1
	Military	13.0	19.1
Which settlement option do think is more rational?	Don't know	1.1	0.7
	«Stage-by-stage»	53.2	47.4
	«package»	20.0	8.6
	Other	3.0	19.1
	Don't know	23.7	25.0

*The following attracts attention in the distribution of the respondents' answers:*

**About acceptable settlement options.** More than half of the respondents do not agree that Nagorno-Karabakh should be given any status, even autonomy. Those who regard Nagorno-Karabakh's autonomous status within Azerbaijan as the most acceptable option take second place. These two proposals prevail Azerbaijan's public opinion. As for the idea of «high status» voiced by the Azerbaijani leadership and reflected in a number of international documents, it is not clear or popular with the wide strata of the Azerbaijani population.

**The estimation of a mutually-acceptable end result of the negotiating process.** If the absolute majority of the population (43.7 per cent) shares optimistic expectations in this process, pessimism prevails among the refugees – 59.2 per cent. Ideas similar to those of the refugees are common among the needy strata of the population.

**About a peace and military solution to the conflict.** More than half of the respondents in both groups can be described as supporters of a peaceful solution to the conflict, although they think that the occupied territories can be liberated in a military way if the negotiations are unsuccessful. At the same time, almost one third (32.6 per cent) of the respondents are only in favour of a peaceful

solution to the conflict. This number is very low among the refugees – 15 per cent. The supporters of a military solution to the conflict are in minority – 13 per cent. Those who hesitate comprise quite a big group (34.6 per cent of the population and 25 per cent of the refugees). Young respondents, in comparison with middle-aged and old respondents, are more pessimistic about chances to achieve a solution to the problem only in a peaceful way. People who have no relatives and loved ones who had taken part in the hostilities during the conflict are more peaceful.

***The probability of an unacceptable solution for the sides.*** Most of the respondents think that neither Azerbaijan nor Armenia will agree to sign a peace agreement that runs counter to their national interests. In their opinion, such peace cannot last for a long time.

***The «package/stage-by-stage» mechanism of solving the conflict.*** The supporters of a «stage-by-stage» solution to the problem comprise the biggest group, when the consequences of the hostilities should be eliminated first and then the status of Nagorno-Karabakh defined.

***The respondents' preferences on the format of the negotiations.***

<b><i>Format of negotiations</i></b>	<b><i>Population</i></b>	<b><i>Refugees</i></b>
Within the framework of the OSCE Minsk group	38.1	32.2
Bilateral negotiations between Azerbaijan and Armenia	41.3	44.1
Trilateral negotiations between Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh	1.4	1.3
Negotiations between Baku and Khankandi (Stepanakert)	1.4	0.7
Other	2.4	8.6
Negotiations Azerbaijan – Armenia + the two communities of Karabakh	9.9	6.6
Don't know	5.6	6.6

The above chart shows that about 80 per cent of the respondents are in favour of continuing the two known forms of the negotiations: Within the framework of the OSCE Minsk group and bilateral negotiations between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan. The population does not support direct negotiations between Baku and Khankandi (Stepanakert), as well as trilateral negotiations, looking on this as an attempt to legitimize the «NKR». At the same time, almost every tenth respondent says that four-sided negotiations involving both the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities of Nagorno-Karabakh are possible. Half of the respondents think that direct negotiations between the conflicting sides in the form of eye-to-eye meetings between the presidents may accelerate the negotiating process and another 30 per cent believe that this will help partly as the productivity of such contacts is limited.

***The opinion of Azerbaijani experts on ways of solving the conflict.***

The overwhelming majority of the experts (68.8 per cent) spoke out in favour of a peaceful solution to the conflict on condition that the occupied territories are liberated and the refugees return to their previous places of residence. If a peaceful solution to the problem is impossible, they said it is possible to resort to force to restore Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. Moreover, many experts

pointed out that the unproductivity of the negotiating process makes this option more topical (84.4 per cent of the experts said that an unexpected resumption of the negotiations was possible as well).

Most of the experts – 59.4 per cent (as participants in the sociological poll among the population) prefers a «stage-by-stage» option for settling the Armenian – Azerbaijani conflict. They are upbeat on meetings between the presidents of the warring sides and regard the continuation of the efforts of the OSCE Minsk group as useful (25 per cent each), although they point out that there is no progress in these directions. Almost 72 per cent of the experts forecast that the real time for solving the Armenian – Azerbaijani conflict is between one and five years.

In terms of establishing a lasting peace, 51.6 per cent of the experts regard the restoration of the pre-war status quo as the most acceptable option, i.e. Nagorno-Karabakh's autonomy within Azerbaijan. A significant number of experts suppose that if Azerbaijan is forced to restore its territorial integrity and sovereignty in a military way, there can be no talk about any autonomy, and on the contrary, agree to grant Nagorno-Karabakh higher status than its previous autonomy if the conflict is solved peacefully (12.5 per cent).

None of the experts supported the possibility of recognizing Nagorno-Karabakh's independence.

Many experts link the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh's status as an enclave with Nakhchivan's status as an enclave. 39.1 per cent of them believe that it is enough to ensure the operation of special transport corridors, possibly under the aegis of international organizations, only 12.5 per cent admit a territorial swap and 7.8 per cent propose combined options.

The Azerbaijani experts regard as unlikely a situation when Baku will be forced to sign an unacceptable peace agreement. In their opinion, the arguments and position of Armenia are weakening and this may lead to circumstances when Yerevan will be forced to make more concessions than Azerbaijan in the negotiations.

Thus, in this issue the experts see Armenia's position as more vulnerable than that of Azerbaijan which can increase its economic and military potential in order to strengthen its position.

- **Poll-2002:  
discussions of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem in focus-groups**

*(The poll was conducted in the summer of 2002 in 14 focus-groups of 8 to 12 people. The pool included teachers (female), doctors (male), oil workers, female communications workers, businessmen, housewives, students (male and female), residents of Tovuz District which borders on Armenia (male and female), refugees from Armenia (male and female) and displaced people from Nagorno-Karabakh (male and female).*

The purpose of this research was to study representatives of individual groups of the population more deeply on the current state of and prospects for settling the Armenian – Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh through personal discussions and motivation of answers. It was a logical continuation of a large-scale opinion poll on the same problem a year earlier.

The programme of the main research aimed to find out to which extent various groups of the population realize the danger of resuming hostilities, how acceptable a military solution to the conflict is to the polled groups, the limits of possible concessions in a peaceful solution and the degree of trust in the mediators' efforts.

The choice of questions was predetermined by the fact that the conflict has long been at the stage of «neither war nor peace», is still in this unsteady state and that the situation might change in this or that direction under certain circumstances.

***The following picture was revealed according to the results of work with the focus-groups:***

Most of the members of the focus-group do not want and do not expect a resumption of hostilities in the near future. At the same time, an even higher number of representatives of various groups of the population presume that it will be necessary to resort to force to liberate the occupied Azerbaijani lands, but this will happen when there is a patriotic government in Baku and the army is more combat efficient.

The members of the focus-groups mainly demonstrated their belief in the final victory of their country, proceeding from its higher human and economic potential compared with Armenia. However, they do not think that Azerbaijan is ready for resuming hostilities at the moment. They see the main obstacle in the lack of national unity and foreign support.

On the whole, the respondents demonstrated their readiness to fulfill their duty by defending their country. However, there was a noticeable number of people who did not conceal that they are not ready and do not want to participate in a war for liberating the lands occupied by the Armenian forces. However, the reason for that is not that they have strong anti-war sentiment, but rather their indifference to the problem in question.

The members of the focus-groups, regardless of their social affiliation, were unanimous about rejecting further concessions from Azerbaijan and quite evidently demonstrated their mistrust in the productivity of concessions.

The Azerbaijani participants in the focus-groups had different opinions about evaluating the efforts of the mediators for a peaceful solution to the Armenian – Azerbaijani conflict. They expressed various attitudes: from positive evaluations to a desire to reject the mediators' services at all, the latter were obviously greater in number. The absolute majority of the respondents demonstrated their solidarity only in recognizing the fruitlessness of many years of efforts by the mediators in solving the conflict.

Among the members of the 14 focus-groups, men from displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh took the most uncompromising position while housewives had the most reconciliatory position. Female teachers, female communications workers and refugees from Armenia turned out to be more loyal to the incumbent authorities while male doctors and the residents of Tovuz District, which borders on Armenia, turned out to be more critical.

At the same time, it was revealed that the representatives of the various strata of Azerbaijan's population, who were polled during the opinion poll, are demonstrating on the whole a position that is closer to the most fundamental provisions pertaining to the settlement of the Karabakh conflict. In brief, this position is the following:

1. A fair solution to the conflict suggests, above all, the liberation of the occupied districts around Nagorno-Karabakh and the return of the refugees to their homes.
2. Azerbaijani citizens, regardless of the past decade, are still waiting for a change in the position of the opposite side and do not regard the chance for a peaceful settlement to the conflict as lost. At the same time, there are opinions that the waiting limit is running out and it is necessary to resort to military force with the aim of restoring the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

3. The population groups covered by the research are not inclined to exaggerating the role of such factors as direct negotiations between the presidents, or the two countries' admission to the Council of Europe, although they think that these circumstances could have a positive influence on the negotiating process (first of all, in terms of building confidence between the conflicting sides).
4. The key countries of the region are taking various positions on the Armenian –Azerbaijani conflict, which turns it into a noticeable factor of tension in the region and into a changing card in geopolitical and economic relations between the great powers, first of all, the USA, the EU and Russia. At the same time, stimulating impulses that emanate from them could make the Karabakh settlement process more dynamic, most of the participants in the poll think.
5. The poll also showed that public opinion is passive and ready to follow the authorities' policy on ways of solving the Karabakh conflict. People are ready to put up with the freezing of the current «neither peace nor war» situation, but in order to strengthen the army's combat efficiency using Azerbaijan's economic dominance, and to restore the country's territorial integrity by force under favourable foreign policy conditions. The Azerbaijanis, just like the Armenians, do not want to go for a comprehensive agreement through major concessions.

- **Research-2003:  
Delphy examination**

*(Fifteen analysts and political correspondents of the country's leading mass media were chosen as experts in Azerbaijan.)*

This research was a continuation and an integral part of many years of work to study the state of public opinion in both countries and prospects for solving the Armenian – Azerbaijani conflict.

A limited number of people who have broad knowledge of the problem were polled three times. The experts were first offered five questions. Then the answers were generalized and sent to the experts with other questions formed on the basis of an analysis of the results of the first stage (iteration). Thus, each expert had the chance to familiarize himself with the opinion and arguments of all the other participants in the poll and correct their answers.

In a generalized form, they look the following way:

*The results of the first iteration*

***1. How do you see the nature of Azerbaijani – Armenian relations in 2003 and 2004?  
If you anticipate a sudden change, then is it in the peaceful or military direction?***

- 1.1. Fourteen of the Azerbaijani experts clearly did not expect any drastic changes in the nature of Azerbaijani – Armenian relations in 2003. Their explanation was that this year is a year of elections for both sides and it is difficult and even impossible for a head of state to decide on concessions in this period.

- 1.2. Only one expert did not rule out a resumption of hostilities. In his opinion, in Azerbaijan, and partly in Armenia, this could seem to be the only way out of the impasse in the negotiating process. The foreign policy factors that have blocked the possibility of a new war so far might change. It cannot be ruled out that Russia and Iran, which are concerned about the growing influence of the USA in the region, will decide to use Armenia for «punishing» Azerbaijan for its pro-Western policy, to disrupt the construction of the Baku – Tbilisi – Ceyhan pipeline and the full-scale implementation of concluded oil and gas contracts. In turn, the Western powers, which need firm stability in the region, might think that the new hostilities will help speed up the Karabakh conflict settlement, including according to the «Kraina» scenario in the Serb-Croat confrontation.
- 1.3. The experts had different opinions in their predictions for 2004. Seven people are not waiting for drastic changes this year. In their opinion, the current situation suits Armenia while Azerbaijan will not have the possibilities for drastically changing it in any case. Five other experts suppose that the year 2004 will see the significant intensification of the efforts of the conflicting sides and great powers, interested in settling Armenian –Azerbaijani relations, in this sphere. However, they are not sure either that specific agreements will be reached. Only three experts expressed their optimism on the possibility of settling the Karabakh conflict in 2004.
- 1.4. Seven experts expressed assumptions that the danger of war will increase and hostilities will probably resume. Most of them linked such a change to the possibility of an opposition leader being elected president in Azerbaijan. One expert assumed that a resumption of hostilities will be caused by the changing regional balance of forces and geopolitical conditions. Two experts think that the illegitimate authorities of Azerbaijan and Armenia might provoke hostilities themselves in order to divert the attention of the dissatisfied public. The arguments of the experts who think that the «neither peace nor war» situation will be extended is based on the fact that the correlation of the sides' military potentials does not allow any of them to count on victory. However, if the domestic situation in one of the conflicting countries destabilizes, the likelihood is great that the other side will risk to use this moment to achieve final success.

***2. Which mutual steps by the conflicting sides (military, political, economic and propaganda) and in which sequence can bring about positive changes in settling the Karabakh problem?***

- 2.1. Six of the Azerbaijani experts presume that the most effective method of ensuring a positive change in settling the Karabakh conflict is the adoption and implementation by the sides of a «stage-by-stage» plan in this or other configuration. The issue of liberating the occupied territories should be solved first of all (outside Nagorno-Karabakh) with a parallel commitment by the sides to refuse to use force, unblock communications and establish diplomatic and economic relations. The issue of Nagorno-Karabakh's status, in the experts' opinion, will require lengthy negotiations and might lead to a solution that is more acceptable to the sides in conditions of strengthening measures of confidence.

Among other proposals:

- 2.2.1. The military liberation of all, or at least 1 or 2 districts, in order to prompt Armenia to give up its demand to recognize Nagorno-Karabakh's independence, which is unacceptable to Azerbaijan. This will make it possible to transfer the negotiating process into the positive channel of discussing problems of mutual security, delineating authorities between Nagorno-Karabakh and Baku, communications and economic cooperation.
- 2.2.2. A resumption of hostilities with the aim of prompting the UN and the mediating powers to use levers of enforced peace. Thus, the beginning of hostilities, regardless of their results, should lead the sluggish negotiating process out of the dead end.
- 2.2.3. The settlement of the Karabakh conflict should be closely linked with real progress in democratic development both in Azerbaijan and Armenia. Without rejecting Soviet mentality, one of the experts think, it is impossible to achieve progress in settling the conflict.
- 2.2.4. The recognition of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity by Armenia and in reply – the beginning of direct negotiations between Baku and Nagorno-Karabakh leaders.
- 2.2.5. The consolidation of Azerbaijan's military potential and at the same time, refusal to cooperate with foreign companies (especially Georgian and Iranian companies) which have business relations with Armenia. This will help, through increasing economic and military pressure, to persuade the leadership and population of Armenia to soften their uncompromising position on the settlement of the Karabakh problem.
- 2.2.6. To switch from confrontational propaganda to tolerance in the mass media. To start discussing what the sides can gain from the restoration of communications and economic cooperation. Emphasis should be placed on explaining the benefits that Armenia will receive from access to Azerbaijan's energy resources and communications.
- 2.2.7. To hold under the aegis of the OSCE or other influential international organization public discussions on the groundlessness of Armenia's territorial and other claims to its neighbours, including Azerbaijan.
- 2.2.8. To draw up a new proposal on settling Armenian – Azerbaijani relations, which includes elements of the «stage-by-stage» and «package» plans of the Minsk group.
- 2.2.9. To switch from disputes about the territories and status of Nagorno-Karabakh to discussing issues of ensuring human rights and freedoms. The Azerbaijani authorities should take effective measures that exclude cases of discrimination against the small number of citizens of Armenian descent who have remained in Baku. To start a direct dialogue with representatives of the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh as Azerbaijan's own citizens and encourage negotiations between the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities.

**3. Which foreign incentives (political, financial, moral and others) can prompt each of the sides to soften their current contradictory position?**

- 3.1. Almost all the Azerbaijani experts placed emphasis on the stimulating influence of sanctions and do not believe in promises about millions to be invested in the region if the Karabakh conflict is quickly resolved: All appeals of the sort have not brought about any serious changes in the positions of the conflicting sides yet.

- 3.2. Five experts presume that a threat to deprive Armenia of financial aid from the USA and EU could be an effective incentive.
- 3.3. Five other experts believe that a foreign incentive could be a change in the balance of geopolitical forces in the region as a result of:
  - 3.3.1. Rapprochement between Russia and Turkey;
  - 3.3.2. the USA, EU and Russia achieving a coordinated position;
  - 3.3.3. the increasing role of the USA and NATO in the South Caucasus;
  - 3.3.4. US plans with regard to Iran becoming more topical and Azerbaijan's increasing role in their implementation;
  - 3.3.5. Spreading the US «anti-terrorist operation» to the South Caucasus.
- 3.4. One expert believes that the international community needs to specify its position on this conflict, call a spade a spade and stop demonstrating an equal attitude to the sides in order to prompt the leaderships and populations of Azerbaijan and Armenia to take a constructive position.
- 3.5. One expert believes that the most effective incentive would be a strict demand by the UN Security Council to fulfill its previous resolutions on this conflict, engaging a mechanism of sanctions against the violator.
- 3.6. One expert believes that economic, financial and moral stimulation will not yield the necessary result while there are illegitimate authorities both in Azerbaijan and in Armenia. For this reason, he proposes concentrating the efforts of world powers on democratic evolution in the South Caucasus. The expert also recommends that a threat to publicize the secret accounts of representatives of ruling corrupt regimes in foreign banks be used as an effective incentive.
- 3.7. Another two experts took an openly pessimistic position. One of them does not believe in the effectiveness of foreign incentives at all and the other supposes that the current «neither peace nor war» situation suits the great and regional powers, which use it for increasing their influence in the region or preserving the remains of their previous influence.

Thus, in the issue of using foreign incentives for making the Karabakh conflict settlement process more dynamic, Azerbaijani experts prefer the «stick» rather than the «carrot». At the same time, they suppose that the potential of effectiveness of both of them has a limited nature in the current situation.

***4. Which unknown or little-known ideas, capable of giving an impetus to the peaceful settlement process, would you like to put up for debate by your colleagues and then submit to public opinion for consideration?***

- 4.1. Three of the specialists who participated in the examination stated that they have no new original ideas with regard to the Karabakh conflict settlement and the normalization of Armenian – Azerbaijani relations. Moreover, they pointed out that they regard any ideas as hopeless if the existing balance of forces in the region and the domestic political situation in Azerbaijan and Armenia do not change.
- 4.2. Five other experts in fact repeated the ideas known earlier. Thus, two experts proposed returning to the territorial swap idea (Goble plan), two others proposed beginning direct negotiations with the Armenian leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh. And finally, one expert thought it expedient to initiate the examination of the Armenian – Azerbaijani conflict at the UN Security Council with the aim of establishing a clearer legal framework for settling it and defining sanctions against the violator.

*The gist of other proposals is the following:*

- a) To jointly model the future of the South Caucasus with and without the conflict. Then the absurdity of this conflict will become obvious as it has inflicted and continues to inflict great damage on the national interests of Azerbaijan and Armenia. If what millions of people are losing from the protracted conflict is presented correctly, they will understand the deception of their leaders who struggle not for real national interests, but for their own gain and career, and who cynically use nationalist mythology and the elementary unawareness of the people;
- b) To make the Karabakh conflict less topical by forcing the entry of the South Caucasus states into the EU, in which the problem of borders and territorial affiliation loses its topicality;
- c) While solving the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh's status, it is necessary to specify in a similar way the status of the Azerbaijani minority on this territory. The expert proposes projecting to a more lower level the state-legal model that was formed by the Minsk group in the well-known «common state» plan.
- d) To seek a solution to the Karabakh problem on the path of Caucasian integration.
- e) To demilitarize the region and withdraw all foreign bases;
- f) To synchronize the settlement of all the conflicts in the South Caucasus and ensure the universality of the legal base in this issue;
- g) To start examining the issue of dividing authorities between Baku and Khankandi (Stepanakert) instead of continuing fruitless disputes about the status of Nagorno-Karabakh;
- h) With the participation of Armenian and Azerbaijani representatives, to prepare a model for a Karabakh settlement on the legal basis of the «European Security Charter» (a sort of European Constitution), which was adopted at the Istanbul summit of the OSCE in December 1999;
- i) With the aim of giving an impetus to the peace process, the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia, following the example of Anwar Sa'dat and Menahim Begin, should pay a visit to the capital of the opposite side and address the parliamentarians and the public with their own view of the current situation, prospects for bilateral relations, as well as for the development of the whole of the South Caucasus.

**5. Do you imagine any other, more productive format of settling the Karabakh conflict than the current Minsk group or bilateral Azerbaijani – Armenian negotiations?**

- 5.1. Eight of the Azerbaijani experts expressed their dissatisfaction with the low effectiveness of the activities of the Minsk group and five – with the absence of results in the bilateral negotiations. Nevertheless, they suppose that at present, there is no real alternative to these formats.
  - 5.1.1. Three experts propose changing the composition of the Minsk group cochairmen by including Turkey and replacing France with a more impartial country – Germany or Italy;
  - 5.1.2. One expert proposed at the same time reconstructing the composition of the Minsk group and granting it a more specific mandate;
  - 5.1.3. One expert thinks that the Minsk group should be transformed into something that resembles a contact group on former Yugoslavia;
  - 5.1.4. One expert proposes supplementing the efforts of the Minsk group with the activities of a special representative of the UN Secretary-General.

- 5.2. Another three experts think it expedient to start a dialogue between the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities of Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as a Baku – Khankandi (Stepanakert) dialogue in parallel with the ongoing conflict settlement negotiations;
- 5.3. One expert suggested organizing a public forum of the intellectual elite for the problems of and prospects for the South Caucasus in addition to the current official negotiating formats.
- 5.4. One expert suggested setting up a permanent negotiating commission for settling the Karabakh conflict and normalizing Armenian – Azerbaijani relations (i.e. the formalization of the current bilateral negotiations).
- 5.5. One expert observed that the negotiating formats are «neither bad nor good». There is no point in offering something instead because there is no point in hoping for the productivity of efforts to solve the conflict as long as the balance of geopolitical forces in the region and the domestic political conditions in Azerbaijan and Armenia have not changed.

*The results of the second iteration:*

*In the period from 25 July to 10 August, analysts and leading correspondents of the most influential mass media, who participated in the examination, presented their answers to clarifying and additional questions. The answers look the following in a generalized form:*

***1. Is it possible for the sides to deviate from their maximalist demands after the completion of the 2003 election campaigns?***

Four experts gave a positive answer to this question. Most of them (11 experts) do not expect the sides to deviate from their current positions after the completion of the election campaigns in Armenia and Azerbaijan. Therefore, it is not realistic to expect any full-scale agreement in the negotiating process. If the sides have no intention of giving up on their maximalist demands, then headway in settling the conflict should be sought in mutually acceptable intermediate steps.

***2. Is it possible to open transport communications (at least partly) between Azerbaijan and Armenia in 2003–2004?***

There were two affirmative and 13 negative answers. This indirectly confirms that the experts do not expect any practical results in the peace process not only in 2003, but also in the coming years.

***3. Is the opening of the Turkish – Armenian border possible in the near future?***

The experts had different opinions on this issue. Eight experts suppose that this is possible and seven said it is impossible. We can suppose that this aspect is not regarded as decisive in the context of the Armenian – Azerbaijani conflict, but depends on the softening of the old Armenian – Turkish enmity.

**4. *Is it possible for Azerbaijani and Armenian journalists or individual media to take coordinated measures to restrict the propaganda of mutual hostility and hate?***

The following answers were received: nine – yes and six – no. But the experts stressed in comments on their answers that such an agreement is possible only at the level of individual publications and cannot be comprehensive for both countries' media.

**5. *Do you expect any intensification of contacts between both countries' public organizations?***

Pessimistic experts slightly dominate the optimistic ones (eight to seven). Apparently, the experts suppose that without real progress in the peace process, the potential of «people's diplomacy» can be realized in quite a narrow sphere, which has been almost completely used.

**6. *Do you think it is useful to discuss the legal aspects of the Karabakh problem at any authoritative international forum (within the framework of the UN and the OSCE)?***

The absolute majority of the experts – 13 said yes. Only two experts see no point in this.

**7. *Can the international community's threat to deprive the conflicting sides of financial aid and participation in international forums and projects prompt the sides to make concessions?***

Twelve experts suppose that it can and three – it can't. At the same time, many of them thought it necessary to stress that they see only Armenia as the object of such pressure.

**A. *Do the changing geopolitical conditions bring forward a peaceful solution to the Karabakh conflict, promote the freezing of the «neither peace nor war» situation or pose a danger of hostilities resuming between Azerbaijan and Armenia?***

Most of the experts agree that the geopolitical conditions in the region are changing. Russia is quickly losing its 200-year unconditional dominance over the South Caucasus while the USA and other Western powers are strengthening their positions here and Turkey's role is increasing.

It is pointed out that huge energy and transport projects require lasting stability and therefore, suggest some progress in the process of settling the Karabakh problem.

However, asked whether these changes are significant enough and whether they have formed a new balance of forces in the region and how all this will reflect on the settlement of the Karabakh conflict, the experts expressed different opinions. Four experts suppose that the situation is already ripe, which is why these changes should manifest themselves in this issue. It is pointed out that a peaceful solution is the priority, but it cannot be ruled out that the path to peace lies through an outbreak of short hostilities. At the same time, nine experts suppose that the geopolitical realities promote the freezing of the current «neither peace nor war» situation. In the opinion of one of the experts, it is linked with the fact that the USA has concentrated its attention on the problems of Afghanistan, Iraq and the Middle East. Another expert thinks that no geopolitical changes will lead to the settlement of the Karabakh conflict until Azerbaijan wields economic and military might. A third expert supposes that an increase in US and Turkish influence in the South Caucasus has not yet brought about a qualitative change in the balance of forces in the region, this influence is still being

established and any violation in it will «set in motion» the Karabakh conflict. Only one expert expressed his assumption that the changing geopolitical changes will directly lead to a resumption of the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia. The rest of them, although they do not rule out such a development of events, still think that impulses emanating from the power centres of the world and the region will be aimed first of all for moving the peace process forward.

***B. The observance of which minimum conditions could help the conflicting sides resume transport and economic contacts while the Karabakh problem remains unsettled?***

The overwhelming majority of Azerbaijani experts do not believe that a resumption of transport and economic contacts is realistic while the conflict has not been settled and new hostilities can break out at any moment. In the opinion of one of the experts, one gets the impression that Armenia is more interested in getting propaganda dividends from the absence of transport and economic contacts with its neighbours rather than in having them. Under this pretext, it is trying to receive aid from other states and its diaspora. There is not much Armenia can offer the world market today and it is not an attractive market for manufacturers.

Nevertheless, 11 experts described the liberation of the occupied territories outside Nagorno-Karabakh as the minimum condition for resuming transport and economic contacts. Some experts suppose that it should be done in the volume envisaged by UN Security Council resolutions (822, 853, 874 and 884), which call for the unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the six Azerbaijani districts. Others think it is possible to resume transport communications if the Armenian forces return at least four districts on the Azerbaijani – Iranian border and unblock Nakhchivan. Two experts point out that the withdrawal of the Armenians from the occupied Azerbaijani territories is not enough as the conflicting sides should issue a statement recognizing each other's territorial integrity.

Four experts do not see any possibility for establishing transport and economic relations to achieve significant progress in settling the conflict. Two of them pointed to the need to sign at least a frame agreement and engage the mechanism of international guarantees.

***C. What can direct negotiations between Baku and Nagorno-Karabakh give to the peaceful settlement of the Karabakh problem and which issues are the priority in this problem?***

Five experts suppose that in the current conditions, direct negotiations between Baku and Nagorno-Karabakh will not yield any result, which is why they regard them as fruitless. In their opinion, Armenia constantly raises this issue for propaganda purpose and in order to avoid responsibility for its aggression against Azerbaijan and occupying part of its territory, hiding «behind the back» of Nagorno-Karabakh. Thus, Yerevan is trying to avoid pressure from the international community. One of the experts thinks that there is no problem of «direct negotiations»: «Within the framework of the Minsk group, representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenian community have the opportunity to participate in negotiations with the Azerbaijani side, propose and discuss various settlement options. It is hardly possible to suspect Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenian community of trying to conduct secret negotiations with Azerbaijan unbeknown to Armenia».

Four experts regard these negotiations as possible and useful. One of them observed that «we should avoid the participation of Nagorno-Karabakh representatives in the negotiations, however, these negotiations should be conducted not in an international, but in a national format (central government and part of the country)». Another expert draws attention to the fact that the positions of

Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh do not always coincide and official Baku should take it into account.

Six experts did not reject the possibility of direct negotiations between Baku and Nagorno-Karabakh and pointed out that such negotiations could be fruitful only if they were initiated at a convenient moment and with certain conditions, first of all, if Armenia recognized Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and guaranteed Yerevan's non-interference in the internal affairs of the neighbouring country. At the same time, it was pointed out that the issue of withdrawing the Armenian forces from Azerbaijani territories is a priority at the moment, which is why Baku sees Yerevan as the main side to the negotiations.

The subject of negotiations between Baku and Nagorno-Karabakh could be issues of status, human rights and the restoration of ravaged territories. For the central government of Azerbaijan, issues of state security and Nagorno-Karabakh's demilitarization are a priority of course. It is also necessary to discuss the guarantees that the sides will honour their obligations.

***D. Which method of settling the conflict («package», «stage-by-stage» or other) seems to be the most promising one and why?***

Ten experts clearly spoke out in support of the «stage-by-stage» settlement of the Armenian – Azerbaijani conflict. To confirm their position, they cited a number of arguments. In the experts' opinion, the philosophy of the ««stage-by-stage»» settlement looks more practical: An agreement starts being implemented while disagreements continue being discussed. The «stage-by-stage» settlement plan has serious advantages as it makes it possible first, to demonstrate the direct effect of each step and second, to reveal the sides' readiness to honour their obligations. It was pointed out that the world is trying to solve such conflict in a «stage-by-stage» way (for example, the «road map» on Palestine).

In the «stage-by-stage» option it is possible to make corrections to the settlement plan depending on the circumstances. Moreover, the fact that the whole process takes a longer time makes it possible to carry out the population's psychological adaptation, form mechanisms of trust, cooperation and security.

Four experts believe that each method has its own pluses and minuses. Various options for settling the conflict can be successful depending on the situation. In the end, the «package» option is also doomed to some consistency (stages) in implementing agreements reached. In turn, it is planned to use some common «frame» agreement while implementing the «stage-by-stage» plan. The sides' sympathy with this or that approach are due to their intentions. The Armenian side, understanding that it is impossible to carry out its maximalist intentions, is in favour of the «package» approach, which makes it possible to freeze the conflict in the vicious circle of the negotiating process. The Azerbaijani side (as the loser) is more interested in the practical implementation of steps to settle the conflict, which is why it is in favour of the «stage-by-stage» approach. One of the undeniable advantages of the «stage-by-stage» option, according to the experts, is the fact that the humanitarian situation in the region can become much less tense in a very short period of time: helps to return most of the refugees to their homes, start rehabilitating the liberated territories, restore the work of transport communications and resume economic cooperation. However, the adoption of the «stage-by-stage» option puts back indefinitely the achievement of a final solution, without which there is no point in talking about a serious and lasting peace in the region. The «package» option implies a

simultaneous solution to all the complicated and controversial issues and if implemented, ensures a lasting and firm peace. For this reason, although the «package» option is preferable, it is simply unrealistic proceeding from the situation. One expert who supports both options regards them as «lifeless». In his opinion, the freezing of the Karabakh conflict is of benefit to everybody (or almost everybody except for the peoples without rights) both inside and outside the conflicting sides.

Only one Azerbaijani expert directly spoke out in favour of the «package» solution, but in combination with some elements of the «stage-by-stage» process. In his opinion, in order to be successful, such a «package» plan should include at least: 1) a coordinated text of the Constitution of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Republic within the Azerbaijani Republic; 2) an agreement on the immediate withdrawal of Armenian troops from Azerbaijani territory immediately after a referendum endorses constitutional changes in Azerbaijan, which will put the Constitution of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Republic into force; 3) an agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan on demilitarizing the border zone and ensuring a long-term international control regime in the demilitarized zone; 4) the establishment of an international arbitration mechanism which will solve disputes that appear in the process of implementing the peaceful settlement plan.

***The following was discovered while comparing the results of the first and second iterations:***

1. Pessimistic moods about the prospects for a peaceful solution to the conflict have increased. If in the first iteration only seven experts did not foresee drastic changes in Armenian – Azerbaijani relations in 2003–2004, in the second iteration eleven experts stated that they do not expect the conflicting sides to give up on their maximalist demands after the presidential elections.
2. During the first and second iterations, the overwhelming majority of Azerbaijani experts pointed out that the danger of applying international sanctions against the nonconstructive side is an effective way of leading the negotiating process out of the dead end.
3. If in the first iteration only three experts expressed an assumption that a bilateral dialogue between Baku and Nagorno-Karabakh is useful, in the second iteration the number of these people increased to four. Another six experts said that this was possible under favourable conditions.
4. The idea of examining the legal aspects of the Karabakh conflict at an authoritative international forum, expressed during the first iteration, was almost completely supported by the experts in the second iteration.
5. The «stage-by-stage» plan, which was put forward by six experts during the first iteration as the most realistic method of settling the Armenian – Azerbaijani conflict, was supported by 10 experts in the second iteration. Another four experts spoke out in favour of a combination of elements of the «package» and «stage-by-stage» settlement options.

The results of the third iteration

From 22 September to 2 October, the leading experts provided answers to the clarifying and additional questions that were differentiated by the degree of consent. The highest degree of consent was estimated at five points, while the lowest at 1 point. Summarized and average estimations were made on the basis of the answers. The average estimations of up to 2.4 points were accepted as disagreement (complete or mainly), as partial agreement between 2.5 and 3.4 and over 3.5 – as agreement (complete or mainly). The final results are the following:

**1. The conflicting sides themselves will find a way out of the negotiating impasse, including by involving Nagorno-Karabakh in the dialogue.**

1. Totally agree	0
2. Mainly agree	1
3. Partly agree, partly disagree	6
4. Mainly disagree	5
5. Totally disagree	3

Total: 35 points. Average point – 2.33

**2. The application of international mechanisms of «enforced peace» will speed up the search for ways of a political solution to the Karabakh problem.**

1. Totally agree	2
2. Mainly agree	10
3. Partly agree, partly disagree	3
4. Mainly disagree	0
5. Totally disagree	0

Total 59 points. Average point – 3.93

**3. During the negotiations it is possible to formulate a «package solution» that will be acceptable to the conflicting sides and will make it possible to lead the Karabakh settlement process out of the impasse.**

1. Totally agree	1
2. Mainly agree	6
3. Partly agree, partly disagree	2
4. Mainly disagree	3
5. Totally disagree	3

Total: 44 points. Average point – 2.93

**4. The conflicting sides can draw up a «stage-by-stage» option that will be mutually acceptable and will make it possible to lead the Karabakh settlement process out of the impasse.**

1. Totally agree	9
2. Mainly agree	3
3. Partly agree, partly disagree	1
4. Mainly disagree	1
5. Totally disagree	1

Total: 63 points and average point is 4.2

**5. *The discussion of the legal, historical, political and other aspects of the Karabakh problem at some authoritative international forum (UN, OSCE and others) can be useful for the peaceful settlement of the conflict.***

1.	Totally agree	4
2.	Mainly agree	7
3.	Partly agree, partly disagree	3
4.	Mainly disagree	1
5.	Totally disagree	0

*Total: 59 points and the average point is 3.93*

**6. *The development of democracy in both countries, the improvement of the human rights and freedoms situation can bring forward a solution to the conflict and lend a positive nature to Armenian – Azerbaijani relations.***

1.	Totally agree	6
2.	Mainly agree	4
3.	Partly agree, partly disagree	5
4.	Mainly disagree	0
5.	Totally disagree	0

*Total: 61 points and average – 4.07 points*

**7. *Individual mass media of Armenia and Azerbaijan are capable of taking coordinated measures to restrict the propaganda of mutual hostility and hatred, which can have a positive influence on the formation of an atmosphere of trust between the nations.***

1.	Totally agree	4
2.	Mainly agree	3
3.	Partly agree, partly disagree	3
4.	Mainly disagree	5
5.	Totally disagree	0

*Total: 51 points and average – 3.4 points*

**8. *It is necessary to set up state and public commissions for a joint solution to humanitarian problems – searching for and clarifying information about missing people, assistance to refugees and restoring documents for receiving pensions, social allowances and others.***

1.	Totally agree	8
2.	Mainly agree	4
3.	Partly agree, partly disagree	2
4.	Mainly disagree	1
5.	Totally disagree	0

*Total: 64 points and average – 4.27 points*

**9. Although the Karabakh problem has not been settled, it is possible to implement joint environmental projects related to the protection of border and transborder rivers from pollution, prevention of damage to the flora and fauna in the conflict zone.**

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Totally agree                 | 2 |
| 2. Mainly agree                  | 5 |
| 3. Partly agree, partly disagree | 2 |
| 4. Mainly disagree               | 3 |
| 5. Totally disagree              | 3 |

*Total: 45 points and average – 3.0 points*

**10. Although the conflict has not been settled, joint participation in institutional regional economic projects (TRASECA and others) is possible as they create the basis of cooperation after the conflict is settled.**

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Totally agree                 | 1 |
| 2. Mainly agree                  | 0 |
| 3. Partly agree, partly disagree | 3 |
| 4. Mainly disagree               | 4 |
| 5. Totally disagree              | 7 |

*Total: 29 points and average – 1.93*

**11. It is necessary to demilitarize the districts adjacent to the railway in the conflict zone in order to resume transport communications between Armenia and Azerbaijan on condition that peacekeeping forces and international observers are brought into this zone.**

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Totally agree                 | 0 |
| 2. Mainly agree                  | 2 |
| 3. Partly agree, partly disagree | 6 |
| 4. Mainly disagree               | 5 |
| 5. Totally disagree              | 2 |

*Total: 38 points and average – 2.53 points*

Thus, the following was discovered on the basis of analyzing the above information:

- Ø The following assumptions and ideas caused agreement: (2) about using the enforced peace mechanism; (4) about using the «stage-by-stage» plan for settling the Karabakh problem; (5) about discussing the legal and historical aspects of the Karabakh problem at some international forum; (6) about the positive influence of further democratization in the conflicting countries on the peaceful settlement process; (8) about the expediency of setting up state and public structures for solving humanitarian issues.
- Ø The following proposals cause an ambiguous attitude (i.e. partial agreement): (3) about the acceptability of the «package» plan for solving the conflict; (7) about a moratorium on hostile propaganda in the mass media; (9) about joint environmental projects; (11) about the possibility of resuming railway communications under certain circumstances.

Ø The following proposals met with disagreement: (1) to involve Nagorno-Karabakh in the negotiating process as a side and (11) joint participation in regional economic projects in order to make visible progress in the peaceful settlement.

- **A comparative analysis of the results of the Delphy examination and previous research into the Karabakh problem.**

Almost all the Azerbaijani participants in the Delphy examination did not anticipate changes in Armenian – Azerbaijani relations in 2003 because this year was a year of elections in both countries and because it is difficult to make compromises in such conditions. The correlation of pessimists and optimists in their views on the prospects for solving the Karabakh problem in 2004 turned out to be almost equal. The experts who did not rule out a resumption of hostilities this year linked such a change with the possibility of an opposition leader being elected Azerbaijani president. As is known, this did not happen.

Most of the experts suppose and support the efforts aimed at achieving a peaceful solution to the conflict. They expressed their solidarity with participants in previous sociological polls and polls in focus-groups. More than half of the participants in the previous research into the Karabakh problem support a peaceful solution to the conflict although they said it is possible to liberate the occupied territories in a military way if the negotiations are unsuccessful. The number of those who support only a peaceful solution is 2.5 times higher than the number of warlike respondents. This attitude to the problem, both among the experts and rank-and-file citizens, corresponds very well to the information policy of the Azerbaijani mass media. 57 per cent of reports and articles in newspapers and TV channels monitored in 2002 gave prominence to a peaceful solution to the conflict while they mentioned a military solution twice as less.

At the same time, more than two thirds of experts do not expect the conflicting sides to deviate from their tough positions after the completion of the election campaigns in Azerbaijan and Armenia. Therefore, in order to make progress in the negotiating process it is necessary to increase foreign pressure and put forward new ideas. Almost all the Azerbaijani experts placed emphasis on the stimulating influence of sanctions and do not believe in the effectiveness of promises about financial injections worth millions of dollars in the region if the Karabakh conflict is swiftly resolved. This is the result of the fact that repeated promises of this kind have still not brought about any changes in the positions of the conflicting sides. Many experts suppose that a threat to deprive Armenia of financial aid by the USA and the EU could be an effective incentive. The proposal to use international «enforced peace» mechanisms to speed up the search for a political solution to the Karabakh problem received a high level of support from the experts. They see Armenia as the only object of such pressure. Thus, in the issue of using foreign incentives for making the Karabakh conflict settlement process more dynamic, the Azerbaijani experts prefer the «stick» rather than the «carrot».

The Azerbaijani experts suppose that the most effective way of ensuring a positive change in settling the Karabakh conflict is to adopt and implement the «stage-by-stage» plan in this or other configuration. First of all, it is necessary to solve the issue of liberating the occupied territories outside Nagorno-Karabakh, which is linked with the sides' obligations not to use force, to unblock communications and establish diplomatic and economic links. The determination of Nagorno-Karabakh's status will require lengthy negotiations, the experts think. It would be easier to find a mutually acceptable solution in an atmosphere of strengthening measures of confidence. The «stage-

by-stage» settlement plan has obvious advantages, the experts think, because it makes it possible to demonstrate the direct effect of each step taken and reveal the sides' readiness to honour their obligations. It was pointed out that the world is trying to tackle such problems in a stage-by-stage way (for example, the «Road Map» on Palestine). Attention was drawn to the fact that in the stage-by-stage option it is possible to correct the plan depending on the circumstances. Moreover, the fact that the stage-by-stage option takes a longer time makes it possible to carry out the population's psychological adaptation, form mechanisms of confidence, cooperation and security. Some experts expressed assumptions that various options for solving the conflict can be successful depending on the situation. The «package» option is also doomed to some consistency (stages) in its implementation. In turn, the «stage-by-stage» plan, when it is adopted, suggests signing some «frame» agreement. Some Azerbaijani experts agree that the «package» option is good because it suggests an instant and coordinated solution to all the complicated and disputed issues, but at the same time, they regard it as unrealistic proceeding from the situation. The aforesaid circumstances imply that the assumption about the possibility to form during the negotiation a «package» solution that would be acceptable to the conflicting sides and make it possible to lead the Karabakh settlement process out of the impasse was given the average point by the experts – 2.93. Nevertheless, the «stage-by-stage» plan was given a much higher evaluation – 4.2 points. The experts' opinion is quite close to public moods discovered during the previous research into the Karabakh problem.

Most of the Azerbaijani participants in the examination expressed dissatisfaction with the activities of the Minsk group and with the fact that the bilateral negotiations have been fruitless. Nevertheless, they suppose that there is no real alternative to these formats at the moment. The absolute majority of the experts think it useful to discuss the legal aspects of the Karabakh problem at an authoritative international forum (within the framework of the UN and OSCE). This proposal was given quite a high average point by the participants in the examination – 3.93.

The previous research showed that the population's attitude to the activities of the Minsk group is not clear. Many participants in polls in the focus-groups, for example, expressed their dissatisfaction with the fruitlessness of many years of efforts by the mediators; Along with positive evaluations of their activities, there were calls to give up on the mediators' services, and the number of the latter was much higher. The reflection of such moods in the mass media is the fact that all these years they have been discussing options for changing the format of the negotiations and demanding that the role of various countries and international organization to be stepped up in this process. The fact that in this context, the USA and Turkey were mentioned more often than Russia, Germany and the UN Security Council, which are represented in the Minsk group or involved in the Karabakh settlement process in another form, testifies to dissatisfaction with the results of the negotiations rather than their format. In spite of the population's critical attitude to the results of the negotiations within the framework of the OSCE Minsk group and the bilateral negotiations between the presidents, almost every four of five respondents in the sociological poll conducted in Azerbaijan in 2001 spoke out in favour of continuing them.

In the issue of the expediency of a bilateral dialogue between Baku and Khankandi (Stepanakert), the opinions of the Azerbaijani participants in the Delphy examination were divided. Five experts clearly pronounced against such a dialogue, saying that in the current conditions, direct negotiations between Baku and Nagorno-Karabakh will not yield anything to Baku. Armenia will try to use this circumstance as a «smoke screen» to avoid responsibility for invading Azerbaijan and seizing part of its territory. Four experts regarded such negotiations as possible and useful. Six experts, without denying the possibility of direct negotiations between Baku and Nagorno-

Karabakh, pointed out that they can be useful only if they are initiated at a convenient moment and under certain conditions: first of all, Armenia's recognition of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and Yerevan's guarantees not to interfere in Azerbaijan's internal affairs. The level of the experts' support for the idea that «the conflicting sides themselves will find a way out of the negotiating impasse, including by involving Nagorno-Karabakh in the dialogue», totalled 2.33 points. The following issues were described as a subject of negotiations between Baku and Nagorno-Karabakh: status, observance of human rights and the restoration of the ravaged territories. For the central government of Azerbaijan, issues of state security and Nagorno-Karabakh's demilitarization.

The Azerbaijani population which was represented by participants in sociological polls and focus-groups disapproves direct negotiations between Baku and Khankandi (Stepanakert) and trilateral negotiations between Baku, Khankandi (Stepanakert) and Yerevan even more than the experts. At the same time, almost every tenth admits that there could be a four-sided format in the negotiations involving the representatives of the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The experts think that Baku is unlikely to sign an unacceptable peace agreement. In their opinion, Yerevan's arguments and position are weakening and in the course of time, there might be a situation when Armenia will be forced to go for more concessions than Azerbaijan. In the long-term, they regard Armenia's position as more vulnerable than that of Azerbaijan. In their opinion, Azerbaijan can increase its economic and military potential to strengthen its position in the negotiations. The experts, respondents, participants in the focus-groups, regardless of their social affiliation, demonstrated unanimity on Azerbaijan refusing to make any further concessions.

The joint participation of Azerbaijan and Armenia in institutional regional economic projects (TRASECA and so on) as long as the conflict has not been settled was not supported by the experts. The absolute majority said it was impossible to open transport communications (at least partly) between the two countries to make tangible progress in settling the conflict. The idea of resuming transport communications between Armenia and Azerbaijan without taking into account this factor, even if the districts adjacent to the railway in the conflict zone are demilitarized and peacekeeping forces and international observers are brought into the zone, was given an average point – 2.53.

It seemed that cooperation in the environmental sphere should not cause any objections, but the experts partly supported this idea (3 points), apparently, not regarding it as topical at the moment.

The idea of adopting coordinated measures to restrict the propaganda of mutual hostility and hatred at the level of Azerbaijani and Armenian journalists or individual mass media was supported by most of the experts (9 to 6). However, in their comments on the answers, the experts stressed that such an agreement was possible only in individual publications and cannot be comprehensive. Admitting that this factor can have a negative influence on the formation of an atmosphere of trust between the peoples, the experts did not express any special enthusiasm about this issue during the additional evaluation (average point: 3.4). To all appearances, this was affected by the circumstance that some media in both countries have been taking certain actions for a long time, but it has not had a tangible influence on the general situation.

The experts' opinion about the usefulness of intensifying public contacts were divided slightly in favour of the pessimists. Apparently, this is a reflection of the fact that when there is no progress in the peaceful settlement process, the potential of «people's diplomacy» can be realized in a very narrow sphere that has already been almost completely used. The idea that the development of democracy in both countries and the improvement of the human rights and freedoms situation can bring forward the settlement of the conflict and give a positive nature to Armenian – Azerbaijani relations was given an average high point by the experts – 4.07.

The proposal to step up efforts to solve humanitarian problems was completely supported by the experts: They spoke out in favour of setting up state and public commissions to search for and

clarify information about missing people, help refugees and restore documents required for issuing pensions, social allowances and so on.

Among other ideas expressed by the Azerbaijani experts, we can highlight the proposal on the joint modelling of the future of the South Caucasus with or without conflicts. The author of the idea supposes that in this case, the absurdity of the Karabakh conflict, which has inflicted and continues to inflict great damage on the national interests of Azerbaijan and Armenia, will become obvious. In the experts' opinion, if people realize the scale of losses from the delay in solving the problem, they will understand the deception of their leaders who are struggling not for the real national interests, but are cynically using nationalist mythology and the elementary unawareness of the people for their own career.

The idea of making regional conflicts less topical by speeding up integration processes seems productive. As one of the directions, the experts outlined the intensification of the entry of the South Caucasus countries into the European Union, where problems of borders and territorial affiliation lose their importance. As an intermediate stage in this way, it is proposed to launch a South Caucasus integration programme.

The proposal to synchronize and generalize the legal basis for solving all the conflicts in the South Caucasus can be regarded as quite interesting. The following proposal is also of the same nature: To prepare with the help of Armenian and Azerbaijani representatives a model for the Karabakh settlement on the legal basis of the European Security Charter adopted at the 1999 Istanbul summit of the OSCE.

Taking into consideration that this examination, like the previous research, is a public initiative, the idea voiced by one of the Azerbaijani experts to supplement the current official negotiating format with a public forum of the intellectual elite to discuss problems and prospects for the South Caucasus seems to be expedient.

***Thus, both the participants in the Delphy examination and the respondents who had participated in previous polls conducted within the framework of this programme expressed their solidarity on the following issues:***

- Ø preferring a peaceful solution to the Karabakh conflict;***
- Ø it is unacceptable to make concessions on Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and sovereignty;***
- Ø the «stage-by-stage» plan is more realistic than the «package» option for settling the conflict;***
- Ø refusal to accept Nagorno-Karabakh as a side to the negotiating process before the liberation of the districts occupied outside Karabakh;***
- Ø refusal to cooperate with the Armenian side in any form before the beginning of practical withdrawal from the occupied Azerbaijani territories;***
- Ø a decrease in trust in the Minsk group and in bilateral negotiations, realizing at the same time that there is no real alternative to these formats in the current situation.***

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# KARABAKH CONFLICT AND ITS SETTLEMENT POSSIBILITIES

*(the results of research conducted  
by Yerevan Press Club  
among Armenian respondents)*

- **Sociological survey–2001:  
public opinion on Karabakh problem in Armenia**

*(In Armenia sampling territorially included 31 populated areas: Yerevan and all the 10 regions of the country. The number of those interviewed is 1,000 people. Simultaneously, an expert survey (100 people) was conducted. In the survey implemented in Mountainous Karabakh, 250 respondents participated along with 25 experts)*

The survey showed that Mountainous Karabakh problem ranks second in importance after international affairs among the topics media audience is interested in. The preferences of 46.5% of respondents support this statement.

MK problem is actively discussed in the context of personal communication – conversations with friends, family members, colleagues, etc. The total indicator (48.4%) surpasses the number of those who turn to media for information on this topic. (Running ahead, we will state that it is this circumstance that has served as a basis for detailed discussion of Karabakh conflict issues in focus groups).

The overwhelming majority of the respondents (69.9%) opt for peaceful resolution of the conflict. However, about 24% of the respondents do not exclude the possibility of restarting military operations if the negotiations prove to be ineffective. Besides, the respondents carefully assess possibilities of the negotiation process for reaching consensus on MK problem resolution. The number of those uncertain is quite considerable (44.3%), as well of those who did not know how to answer the question (26.6%). Thus, a controversy emerges between the desire for a peaceful resolution and expectations from the negotiation process.

As for the form of negotiations, more than a quarter of those interviewed gives preference to the settlement of the problem within OSCE Minsk group framework. The majority of the respondents (42.1%) note that trilateral negotiations Armenia – Azerbaijan – Mountainous Karabakh would be most effective. The option of direct negotiations between Baku and Stepanakert is not very popular.

Regarding future status of Mountainous Karabakh the respondents' opinions were distributed as follows: 45% were in favor of «MK – independent state» alternative and 42.7% of the respondents opted for «MK as a part of Armenia». However, only from 0.3% to 0.7% of the respondents expressed positive attitude towards MK's subordination to Azerbaijan as an autonomy or any other structure.

It is noteworthy that 47.2% of the respondents think that Karabakh problem primarily was inspired by external forces; in particular, it has become a consequence of superpowers' regional policy. And the second cause of this conflict, as the survey findings show, is Azerbaijan.

44% of the respondents found it difficult to answer the question on conflict settlement methods, which most likely testifies to poor information of the audience on this issue. Alongside this, 30.2% of the respondents opted for «gradual» resolution, and the «package» alternative won 16.5% of the respondents.

The expert survey, also conducted in 2001, allowed determining the positions and approaches on Mountainous Karabakh problem in government and among famous representatives of the public. The survey participants pointed to the negative impact of the conflict on all the sides of Armenia's life – economic (79%), social-political (68%), social (65%). In the expert group, similarly to sociological survey, preference for peaceful settlement of the conflict became evident (public opinion poll – 69.9%, experts – 78%). However, herein the possibility of restarting military operations is not excluded in case the sides fail to reach consensus (19%).

«May Armenia, forced by circumstances, sign a peace treaty running against its interests?» 60% of the experts gave a negative answer to this question. 22% accepted this possibility, 18% – were uncertain. Regarding the prospects of the agreement in which Armenia's national interests might be at risk, the majority of experts keep to the opinion that a similar treaty will not be long-term – 52%, 37% do not have any definite view, only 11% think such a treaty may be long-term.

What is noteworthy is the accordance between the positions of experts and respondents of the survey (further on in this context the term «public at large» is also used) concerning the form of negotiation process. 42% of both groups support trilateral negotiations Armenia – Azerbaijan – Mountainous Karabakh. Besides, a quarter of the survey participants and more than one-third of the experts prefer negotiations within OSCE Minsk group framework.

Accepting the possibility of peaceful resolution of Karabakh problem, the majority of expert group, similar to the public at large, support the position that acceptable settlement alternatives are MK independence or its unification with Armenia. The experts hold that under the condition of recognizing Mountainous Karabakh status as an independent state the Armenian side might cede to Azerbaijan the territories from the so-called «security belt» around MK. The common opinion here is that concessions should not menace inviolability of borders of MK and Armenia.

A serious discrepancy is evident in the opinions of experts and survey respondents concerning methods of conflict settlement. If 16.5% of the public at large opted for «package» solution alternative, within the expert group this indicator reached 51.1%. It points to the fact that the majority of experts share the position by authorities that the «package» method ensures more security for MK than «stage-by-stage» option.

Meanwhile, further development of the issue in question within focus groups showed that the public at large attaches a different meaning to «stage-by-stage» concept – in this case gradual steps towards peaceful settlement with security guarantees for MK and Armenia.

Similar to public opinion poll, within expert group the respondents pointed to media as the main source of information on MK problem. As mentioned already, 46.5% of the public at large turned to

media for information on this topic, as for the expert group, a much larger interest in media is observed: 61% of the respondents named print media as the main source of information, 32% – TV channels. In this respect, media monitoring, implemented within the research framework, appears to be particularly urgent.

To note, the data of the survey, conducted also in Mountainous Karabakh, testifies to analogous state of public opinion in MK and Armenia.

- **Survey–2002:  
discussion of MK problem in focus-groups**

*(The survey was conducted in 14 focus groups, from 9 to 12 discussion participants in each (totally 145 people). The groups were represented by various layers of the population: workers, teachers and doctors, students, refugees, residents of Tavush region bordering on Azerbaijan, housewives and individual entrepreneurs. Mountainous Karabakh residents constituted a separate group)*

After the sociological survey of 2001, the necessity to conduct a more thorough research of public opinion, to reveal socio-psychological aspects of the opinions formed and motivation of the responses got from the respondents in the previous stage of activity became evident. Within standardized interview (questionnaire survey) it becomes a complex task. Therefore, it was decided, in this case through free conversations and personal discussions in focus groups, to get detailed, substantiated answers to most important questions on Karabakh problem.

A number of topics were put to discussion: military and peaceful paths for conflict resolution, Armenia's preparedness for conducting military operations, willingness of focus groups members to personally participate in military struggle, possible compromises and concession limits, the role of international organizations in Karabakh problem settlement.

The opinions, arguments and assessments expressed were selected from audio records of the discussions in the form of meaningful paragraphs, theses, logically and grammatically connected sentences. The total number of the units of content analysis on all thematic categories comprised 1,636 opinions.

*As regards peaceful and military paths of conflict settlement*, the overwhelming majority of discussion participants in all the groups opted for peaceful resolution of Karabakh problem. However, stressing the position of Azerbaijan – belligerent declarations of the country's authorities and other political actors, the respondents expressed their concern over official Baku using the present situation for strengthening its army and stabilization of economy in order to gain superiority and restart military operations. People expressed anxiety that the military assistance of Turkey and USA to Azerbaijan will be directed against Armenia. Baku's unwillingness for compromises in the negotiations was accounted for by these reasons.

70.1% of opinions were for the peaceful solution of the problem; the military solution (if forced upon) won 25.2%, and exclusively military option – 4.7%. Approximately the same situation is observed in the focus group of Mountainous Karabakh residents where the majority of respondents also give preference to peaceful, political settlement of the conflict. Besides, there was a firm belief that neither Armenia nor MK will be the first to start military operations against Azerbaijan.

The topic of *Armenia's preparedness for conducting military operations* was considered by the discussion participants through the prism of economic, internal political, religious potential of the country. A considerable place in the discussions was allotted to social problems, in particular low standard of living, unemployment. Besides inadequate attention of the authorities to the families of the disabled and those killed in action was also mentioned. It is with these phenomena that the respondents associated the morale of the people. However, it was mentioned that in Karabakh problem resolution the authorities defend Armenia's interests and do their best for strengthening the country's defensive capacity. Although the majority of opinions on the topic in question stated that Armenia was not prepared for war, assuredness was expressed that in case of necessity all the potential would be concentrated on parrying a possible attack. Concerning army's military potential, mainly uncertain views were expressed with references to lack or poor information.

When considering the issue of *willingness for personal participation (or that of close relatives) in military operations*, the respondents in certain cases associated it with existing social domestic problems, having a negative impact on the morale of an individual. However, the aspiration to protect the homeland from aggression was evident in practically all the groups, particularly among the residents of Tavush border region and Mountainous Karabakh. The young participants of the discussions in male groups opted for the necessity of being loyal to military duty. General arguments about patriotism and morale of the people, expressed during discussion of the previous issue, appear to be somewhat different on personal level: 79% of opinions on this topic express willingness to repulse the assault in case of necessity.

*Compromises and concession limits* turned to be the most intricate topic for discussion. These questions took far longer time and the greatest number of arguments. The discussions mostly concerned the problem of determining Mountainous Karabakh status. Possible concessions of the Armenian side, according to the majority of discussion participants, directly hinge on the way of its settlement. An extremely negative attitude towards the alternative of territorial exchange emerged within focus groups, in particular concerning Meghri. Opinions related to compromises of the Armenian side were distributed along the range from «nothing should be ceded» to the possibility of returning the regions from the «security belt» around MK except Lachin. Existence of Mountainous Karabakh as a separate, yet unrecognized state, not a part of Armenia, is also viewed as a concession. Azerbaijan is expected to recognize this status of MK.

Focus-group discussions have revealed that the public does not have sufficient information on the *activity and role of international* organizations in Karabakh conflict settlement. Apparently, it is the outcome of the circumstance that the details of the negotiation process are not publicized, are not disclosed to the public. Besides, the respondents' opinions stressed the positive role of OSCE Minsk group in preserving the regime of cease-fire and implementing the mediation mission between the parties to the conflict. The approaches by PACE, directed at peaceful resolution of the problem, as well as those of the Red Cross on exchange of war prisoners, are positively assessed. In general, positive attitude towards involvement of international organizations in Karabakh settlement is expressed in 61% of the opinions voiced, which testifies to a sufficiently high degree of trust in these structures.

We will note that the data received in the course of discussions in focus groups are quite comparable with the results of public opinion poll conducted in 2001.

Thus, on the basis of research of 2001–2002 vast amount of information, characterizing public opinion in Armenia and MK on Karabakh conflict, was gathered and analyzed. It becomes evident that the public priorities on this problem are:

- a) peaceful settlement of the conflict;
- b) determining the status of Mountainous Karabakh as an independent formation or a part of Armenia;
- c) necessity of MK's involvement in the negotiations as a full party to this process;
- d) negative attitude towards those settlement alternatives that suggest territorial exchange;
- e) possibility of ceding the regions adjacent to MK, for the exception of Lachin in case of Azerbaijan's recognition of Mountainous Karabakh independence;
- f) necessity to be prepared for repelling aggression if Azerbaijan restarts military operations and attempts to solve the problem through military means.

The discrepancy between the positions of official Yerevan and public at large concerning «package» and «stage-by-stage» conflict settlement methods was revealed. Public opinion supports stage-by-stage solution under the condition of security guarantees for Mountainous Karabakh and Armenia.

Given the positive assessment of the mediation by international organizations – primarily OSCE Minsk group – there is no confidence in public opinion that their efforts will contribute to a compromise between the parties to the conflict.

- **Research 2003:  
Delphi method examination**

*(The examination was conducted in three stages within a group of 15 experts – political scientists, media leaders and political observers)*

If during focus group discussions the aim was to reveal the motivation of positions by different layers of Armenian population on Karabakh problem, 2003 research was directed at the study of approaches, assessments and arguments of the experts. It necessitated the use of Delphi method that foresaw conducting a multistage anonymous absentee discussion among a limited number of specialists and determining the positions of agreement or disagreement.

In selection of experts both their knowledge of the problem, experience and place within «authority – opposition» paradigm were taken into consideration. The research was divided into three iterations (stages) during which issues of the same thematic spectrum but in different modifications were put to discussion. Each iteration results were presented to the experts as general reports. On the basis of the results of previous discussion, the questions of the next stage were formulated.

*In the first iteration 5 questions were put forward for experts' discussion:*

1. *How do You envision the nature of Armenian – Azerbaijani relations in current 2003 and coming 2004? If you expect a sharp turn, is it in peaceful or military direction?*
2. *What mutual steps by the parties to the conflict (military, political, economic, promotional) and in what sequence may result in positive shifts in Karabakh problem settlement?*
3. *Which external stimuli (political, financial, moral, etc.) may urge each of the parties to reconsider their current conflicting positions?*
4. *What unknown or unpopular ideas, able to boost the peaceful settlement process, would You like to put forward for the discussion of you colleagues and later to submit to public opinion judgment?*
5. *Do You envision any other, more effective alternative of Karabakh conflict settlement than current Minsk group or bilateral Armenian – Azerbaijani negotiations?*

1. The responses to the first question asked by the experts mainly stated that the relations between the sides in the course of 2003 would not undergo changes since both in Armenia and Azerbaijan elections were underway and all the efforts were concentrated on the solution of internal political problems. Opinions differed concerning 2004. Since development of situation on Karabakh problem, according to the experts, hinged on who would come to power in Azerbaijan; different scenarios were considered according to different election results. Herein, the military tendency (menace or even attempt at restarting military operations) was associated with the intentions of nationalistic opposition forces of the neighboring country.

The overwhelming majority of discussion participants were of the opinion that Armenia and Mountainous Karabakh would not violate the regime of cease-fire. The nature of Armenian – Azerbaijani relations was also related to the mediators' activity: in 2004 experts anticipate activation of efforts by OSCE Minsk group. In the scenarios of peaceful settlement of the conflict a considerable place is allotted to «pressure of external forces» demanding acceleration of the process for seeking mutually acceptable solutions.

2. The majority of Armenian experts (12 out of 15) in the process of Karabakh problem settlement prioritize adoption of political decisions in Yerevan and Baku determining future steps on reconciliation. Among the possible mutual compromises the following are mentioned by the discussion participants:
  - a) rejection of the existing radical claims by the parties to the conflict;
  - b) Azerbaijan's reconsideration of its position of avoiding any contacts with the Armenian side in favor of the alternative of achieving political settlement of the conflict;
  - c) Armenia's withdrawal from unconditional priority of «package» settlement;
  - d) involvement of MK in the negotiation process, Stepanakert – Baku direct dialogue;
  - e) lifting of Armenian blockade by Azerbaijan and Turkey;
  - f) promoting atmosphere of trust between the sides through concluding an agreement on abstention from violent and aggressive methods of conflict resolution;
  - g) joint actions in fighting international terrorism.

In this respect, the discussion participants stress the necessity for activating political contacts on different levels – between the presidents, ministers of foreign affairs, ministers of defense, heads of other offices.

All the 15 experts think it possible to restore and develop Armenian – Azerbaijani relations under the conditions of suspended Karabakh conflict and note that it will contribute to political solution of the problem. In particular, the necessity is stressed to undertake discussion of the issues of cooperation in different spheres simultaneously with the negotiation process. First and foremost, joint participation in regional institutional projects on transport communications (TRASECA), energy, ecology, tourism and several other spheres needs to be stressed. There are also prospects for establishing direct contacts between Armenian and Azerbaijani businessmen, joint participation in South Caucasus expo-exhibitions, organization of a permanently functioning Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Tbilisi, and after stabilization of interstate relations – also in Yerevan and Baku.

Settlement of Karabakh problem, as experts assert, is impossible without changing public attitude, overcoming mutual hatred between the conflicting sides. In this respect, the necessity of ceasing information war, abstaining from creation and propaganda of «enemy image», as well as intensification of contacts among public organizations, political party leaders, media representatives. The most prominent issues seem to be democratic development of the two countries and human rights situation as factors promoting peaceful resolution of the MK problem.

3. As regards external stimuli (political, financial, moral, etc.), able to induce each of the sides to mitigate their positions, experts mainly expressed the opinions already stated in the second question comparing them with the interest of international organizations in peaceful settlement of MK problem. There was a conviction that firm position of the international community on the issue of obligatory participation of all the three South Caucasus countries in regional economic, communication and other projects may become one of the positive stimuli. There were also single statements that no promises about financial investments as a compensation for possible concessions would result in mitigation of existing positions.

In the political sphere, the experts think that in case of firm guarantees by OSCE Minsk group not to restart military operations, the process of peaceful settlement will have all preconditions for development. At the same time, among the discussion participants a negative attitude towards possible pressure by the international community and application of compulsory measures is prevalent.

4. No fresh or rare ideas that might boost peaceful resolution of Karabakh problem were put forward during discussions. The experts substantiated their opinions on regional integration in more detail stressing the possibility of removing demarcation lines in the future. Alongside this, such concepts as «associated state», «common territories», «unifying space» were applied. The necessity of developing contacts on all levels was also emphasized.

The singular opinion that «historical-legal approach corresponding to the essence and content of the problem» may contribute to peaceful settlement was taken up for development in other iterations to reveal the positions of other experts.

5. When discussing form of negotiation process the experts noted the positive role of OSCE Minsk group in preserving the regime of cease-fire. Besides, in a number of opinions, low efficiency of efforts on peaceful settlement of the problem in general was pointed out. Negotiations within OSCE Minsk group framework, nevertheless, are assessed by the majority of experts as an optimal form for negotiations; however, they also stress the necessity of involving Mountainous Karabakh in this process. This would contribute to a quest for mutually acceptable solutions, as a considerable number of discussion participants hold.

A single opinion stating that unilateral mediation of USA would be effective, since they are capable of suggesting a proper solution to common security problems, as well as financial assistance, was not however supported by the rest of the experts.

### Second Iteration

This stage of research was directed at determining positions and assessments on Karabakh problem and prospects of Armenian – Azerbaijani relations. The findings within the first iteration were reflected in the general report and submitted for expert consideration along with the new questions formed on the basis of the most significant aspects of previous discussions. At this stage, 11 questions were put forward: 7 of them demanded strictly disjunctive responses («Yes» or «No»), 4 of them – detailed statement of personal positions and their substantiation.

Expert assessments on each of the 7 questions are grouped and presented as indexed total scores. The largest numerical indicator – index, denoting full agreement of all the experts amounts to **100** points, the equivalent for a singular opinion is **6.6** points.

Thus, the responses to the first package of questions were distributed along the scale of 100 points the following way:

1. *Are the parties to the conflict likely to withdraw from their radical claims after 2003 election campaigns in Armenia and Azerbaijan?*

Positive assessment	Negative assessment
26.6	73.3

2. *Is opening (at least partially) of transport communication between Armenia and Azerbaijan possible in 2003–2004?*

Positive assessment	Negative assessment
13.3	86.6

3. *Is opening of the Armenian – Turkish border possible in recent future?*

Positive assessment	Negative assessment
60	40

4. *Is adoption of coordinated measures on restricting propaganda of mutual enmity and hatred possible on the level of journalistic communities or local media of Armenia or Azerbaijan?*

Positive assessment	Negative assessment
73.3	26.6

5. *Do You expect intensification of contacts among the public organizations of the two countries?*

Positive assessment	Negative assessment
73.3	26.6

6. *Do you think useful to discuss legal aspects of Karabakh problem in a reputable international forum (within UN or OSCE)?*

Positive assessment	Negative assessment
73.3	26.6

7. *May the threat of international society to deprive them of financial assistance and participation in international forums or projects lead to mutual concessions by the conflicting sides?*

Positive assessment	Negative assessment
33.3	66.6

According to the data received, the majority of experts think that after election campaigns in Armenia and Azerbaijan the parties to the conflict are not likely to withdraw from their positions and claims. Thus, at the second stage of research opinions expressed on this issue in the first iteration were confirmed.

Concerning the possibilities of restoring transport communications between the two countries, it is again negative assessment that prevails (agreement index – 86.6 points). This issue is likely to be postponed until political solution of Karabakh problem. The prospects for establishing transport communication in the conditions of an open conflict get a positive assessment only on the 13.3 score level.

The opinions of experts differ on the issue of opening Armenian – Turkish border. Herein optimistic prospects are granted the score of 60. The 40 score level is for pessimistic assessment. It is noteworthy that in expanded opinions on this problem argumentation was reduced to the fact that Turkey is against opening of the border, keeping to its pro-Azerbaijani position on Karabakh conflict.

The prospects for adopting coordinated measures on restriction of propaganda of mutual enmity and hatred (73.3 points), as well as activation of contacts between Armenian and Azerbaijani NGOs (73.3 points) on the level of journalistic associations and the media of the two countries are highly assessed. On the same level – 73.3 – agreement index is fixed concerning the fact that discussion of legal aspects of MK problem in a reputable international forum will be useful for its peaceful settlement.

The majority of experts do not think that the pressure of international organizations will lead to mutual concessions of the conflicting sides (66.6 points). However, approximately one third of the discussion participants (positive index – 33.3) are of the opposite opinion.

*The second block of questions, to which the experts were supposed to give detailed, substantiated responses as stated already, was introduced in the following wording:*

- 1. Do the changing geopolitical conditions promote peaceful settlement of Karabakh conflict or contribute to the preservation of «neither war nor peace» situation or may be they contain a threat of restarting military operations between Azerbaijan and Armenia?***
- 2. Compliance with what minimal conditions would enable the conflicting sides to restore transport and economic contacts when the conflict is still unresolved?***
- 3. How will Baku – Mountainous Karabakh direct negotiations contribute to the process of peaceful settlement of Karabakh problem and what issues are viewed as priorities?***
- 4. Which of the methods of conflict settlement («package», «stage-by-stage» or any other) appears to You more promising and why?***

1. Concerning the issue of changing geopolitical conditions in South Caucasus, the discussion participants primarily pointed to the increase of American influence in the region, activation of the role of NATO, weakening of the positions of Iran and Russia. At the same time, 14 out of 15 assess the stated factors as promoting preservation of the status quo or facilitating peaceful settlement of MK problem (positive index – 93 points). Herein, special attention is allotted to coordination of the positions and actions of USA and Russia in South Caucasus. Besides, other scenarios are also considered in which the conflict of interests among Western countries, Russia and USA for influence in the region is stressed. «It is for this reason, – as one of the

experts notes, – that attempts to find a mutually acceptable alternative of Karabakh conflict settlement have not yielded any results for 10 years». Nevertheless, Armenian participants of the discussion almost unanimously believe that global and regional processes are directed at creation of transparent democratic system with liberal economic base in the South Caucasus, therefore the new geopolitical conditions will contribute to peaceful settlement of Karabakh conflict.

2. When considering the issue of minimal conditions under which the conflicting sides may agree to restoring transport communications and economic contacts two thirds (10 out of 15) experts answered that it is impossible to achieve without resolving the conflict. Besides, the main obstacle in this case is Azerbaijan's claim for the return of the territories around MK now under the control of Armenian forces in exchange to resumption of ties.

It is notable that in the course of discussions there emerged a certain controversy between the conviction expressed by the majority that the pressure of international organizations was unable to change the positions of the conflicting sides and the opinion that with urgent requests of USA and EU, transport communication Armenia – Azerbaijan – Central Asia might be settled. Negative and positive assessments (with positive indices 86.6 and 13.3 points respectively), expressed in disjunctive responses concerning the prospect of resuming communication, slightly changed in the course of the discussions: now this correlation is fixed on the level of 66.6 and 33.3 points. And although pessimism prevails concerning prospects for establishing transport communications when the conflict is not yet settled, nevertheless in the course of discussion the index of negative assessments decreased in favor of positive ones. It is evident that one of the contributing factors was reconsideration of the judgment about Azerbaijan's interest in establishing communication with Nakhichevan. Single opinions were also expressed related to possibility of ceding to Azerbaijan part of the territories controlled by Armenian forces as a compromise for restoring transport and other types of communication.

3. The issue of direct negotiations between Baku and Stepanakert also does not inspire definite responses among the experts. Some of them think that such a dialogue would contribute to overcoming standstill in negotiations, others assessed this form of negotiations as a step backward. Still others have the opinion that it is not the form of negotiations that matters but their outcome. However, the majority of discussion participants believe that in any case MK should be involved in negotiation process. The same attitude was observed in the expert survey in 2001, so that no changes were traced in the positions on this issue in this period.

The proponents of Baku – Stepanakert dialogue think that in conducting such negotiations it is essential first to discuss: MK status, problems of refugees, issues of common water usage, border trade, etc. However, a number of experts think that Baku will not agree to direct negotiations with Stepanakert although they allow discussing a whole spectrum of issues which are considered at the meetings of the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan and their official representatives. It is suggested also not to replace one form of negotiations with another but to conduct a parallel dialogue in two forms.

4. The attitude to the issue, related to methods of Karabakh conflict settlement («package», «stage-by-stage» or any other), was studied in all the three pieces of research in 2001–2003. And each time the distribution of opinions remained quite diverse. In the course of present examination, a little more than one third of discussion participants opted for «stage-by-stage» method and only one fifth – for «package» method. Besides, each second expert was of the opinion that any method should meet the will of MK people expressed in the Referendum of 1991. The advocates of «stage-by-stage» alternative hold that any «package» may be divided into time intervals (stages), in the course of which «small packages» should be implemented. Taking into consideration shortcomings of both methods, the majority of experts prioritize the issue of mutual trust of the parties and emphasize that any of the approaches will be difficult to implement without firm guarantees of the international mediators as regards compliance with agreement conditions.

As for agreement on the problem as a whole, the participants of the discussion again considered prospects of restoring transport communication and participation in regional economic projects, ceding to Azerbaijan the territories from «security belt» around MK. They also mentioned issues of integration in Western structures, development of democracy in both countries and human rights protection as important factors in peaceful settlement of the conflict. It was also proposed to postpone final resolution of Karabakh problem for a certain period and get back to it only after it has lost its urgency. And for the time being, MK may be granted status of «trust territory» of UN, OSCE or EU.

### Third iteration

At the final stage of research the experts were proposed to express their attitude to the theses highlighted from the previous stages of discussions, based on the degree of agreement. Differentiated scale (Likert scale) is applied to reveal the positions, measure the degree of agreement or disagreement. As stated already, in response indexation the highest indicator – 100 points – stands for full agreement of experts on a concrete issue, the lowest indicator – 6.6 corresponds to the opinion of one participant of observation. Below, theses are presented and further on – index assessments according to degree of agreement among the experts.

<b><i>1. Conflicting sides themselves will overcome standstill in negotiations also through involvement of Mountainous Karabakh in the dialogue.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree	0
2.	Agree	66.6
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	26.6
4.	Disagree	0
5.	Strongly disagree	6.6

<b>2. Application of international «peace enforcement» mechanisms will promote quest for political alternatives of Karabakh problem settlement.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree	0
2.	Agree	20
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	53.3
4.	Disagree	6.6
5.	Strongly disagree	20
<b>3. In the course of negotiations a «package plan» may be formulated which will be acceptable for the parties and will move the process of Karabakh settlement out of a deadlock.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree	0
2.	Agree	33.3
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	33.3
4.	Disagree	6.6
5.	Strongly disagree	26.6
<b>4. The parties to the conflict may work out a «stage-by-stage» plan that will be mutually acceptable and will move the process of Karabakh settlement out of a deadlock.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree	0
2.	Agree	40
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	26.6
4.	Disagree	26.6
5.	Strongly disagree	6.6
<b>5. Discussion of legal, historical, political and other aspects of Karabakh problem in a reputable international forum (UN, OSCE and others) may be useful for peaceful settlement of the conflict.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree	40
2.	Agree	26.6
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	6.6
4.	Disagree	26.6
5.	Strongly disagree	0

<b>6. <i>Development of democracy in Armenia and Azerbaijan, improvement of situation with human rights and civil freedoms in both countries may facilitate conflict settlement and place Armenian – Azerbaijani relations in positive context.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree	53.3
2.	Agree	46.6
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	0
4.	Disagree	0
5.	Strongly disagree	0
<b>7. <i>Local media of Armenia and Azerbaijan are capable of taking coordinated measures on restricting propaganda of mutual enmity and hatred, thus promoting atmosphere of trust between the peoples.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree	46.6
2.	Agree	26.6
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	26.6
4.	Disagree	0
5.	Strongly disagree	0
<b>8. <i>State and public commissions need to be established for joint solution of humanitarian problems – search and verification of information on missing people, assistance to refugees in restoring the documents for getting pensions, social benefits, etc.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree	80
2.	Agree	20
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	0
4.	Disagree	0
5.	Strongly disagree	0
<b>9. <i>The Karabakh problem still unresolved, it is possible to implement joint environmental projects on conservation of boundary and transboundary rivers from pollution, prevention of environmental damage to flora and fauna in the conflict zone.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree	26.6
2.	Agree	46.6
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	20
4.	Disagree	6.6
5.	Strongly disagree	0

<b>10. The conflict still unresolved, there are prospects for joint participation in regional institutional economic projects (TRASECA and others) paving the way for cooperation after settlement of Karabakh problem.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree	46.6
2.	Agree	33.3
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	6.6
4.	Disagree	6.6
5.	Strongly disagree	6.6
<b>11. To restore transport communication between Armenia and Azerbaijan, it is essential to demilitarize the regions adjacent to railway in the conflict zone under the condition of deployment of peace forces and international observers in that zone.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree	0
2.	Agree	13.3
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	40
4.	Disagree	20
5.	Strongly disagree	26.6

Combination of positive and quasi-positive portions of the response spectrum on the one hand and negative or quasi-negative on the other yields the following results concerning the degree of agreement among the experts on the theses put forward:

<b>1. Conflicting sides themselves will overcome standstill in negotiations also through involvement of Mountainous Karabakh in the dialogue.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	66.6
2.	Neither agree / nor disagree	26.6
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	6.6
<b>2. Application of international «peace enforcement» mechanisms will promote quest for political alternatives of Karabakh problem settlement.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	20
2.	Neither agree / nor disagree	53.3
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	26.6

<b>3. In the course of negotiations a «package plan» may be formulated which will be acceptable for the parties and will move the process of Karabakh settlement out of a deadlock.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	33.3
2.	Neither agree / nor disagree	33.3
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	33.3
<b>4. The parties to the conflict may work out a «stage-by-stage» plan that will be mutually acceptable and will move the process of Karabakh settlement out of a deadlock.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	40
2.	Neither agree / nor disagree	26.6
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	33.3
<b>5. Discussion of legal, historical, political and other aspects of Karabakh problem in a reputable international forum (UN, OSCE and others) may be useful for peaceful settlement of the conflict.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	66.6
2.	Neither agree / nor disagree	6.6
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	26.6
<b>6. Development of democracy in Armenia and Azerbaijan, improvement of situation with human rights and civil freedoms in both countries may facilitate conflict settlement and place Armenian – Azerbaijani relations in positive context.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	100
2.	Neither agree / nor disagree	0
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	0
<b>7. Local media of Armenia and Azerbaijan are capable of taking coordinated measures on restricting propaganda of mutual enmity and hatred, thus promoting atmosphere of trust between the peoples.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	73.3
2.	Neither agree / nor disagree	26.6
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	0

<b>8. State and public commissions need to be established for joint solution of humanitarian problems – search and verification of information on missing people, assistance to refugees in restoring the documents for getting pensions, social benefits, etc.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	100
2.	Neither agree / nor disagree	0
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	0
<b>9. The Karabakh problem still unresolved, it is possible to implement joint environmental projects on conservation of boundary and transboundary rivers from pollution, prevention of environmental damage to flora and fauna in the conflict zone.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	73.3
2.	Neither agree / nor disagree	20
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	6.6
<b>10. The conflict still unresolved, there are prospects for joint participation in regional institutional economic projects (TRASECA and other) paving the way for cooperation after settlement of Karabakh problem.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	80
2.	Neither agree nor disagree	6.6
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	13.3
<b>11. To restore transport communication between Armenia and Azerbaijan, it is essential to demilitarize the regions adjacent to railway in the conflict zone under the condition of deployment of peace forces and international observers in that zone.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	13.3
2.	Neither agree / nor disagree	40
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	46.6

As the data show, based on degree of agreement the overwhelming majority of experts adhere to the opinion that the parties themselves will find a way out of the standstill (thesis1): 66.6 index 10 times surpasses the indicator of pessimistic response spectrum. Thus, along with positive attitude to negotiation process, the belief in prospects for political, peaceful settlement of Karabakh problems emerges. (Neither agree nor disagree attitude is assigned by us to an uncertain position or doubts by the discussion participants concerning the issue in question).

Alongside this, the overwhelming majority of experts have doubts that application of «peace enforcement» mechanisms activates quest for political ways of conflict settlement. (thesis 2).

The opinions along agree/disagree scale are distributed evenly concerning the issue of working out a «package plan» that will be mutually acceptable for the parties to the conflict (thesis 3). Approximately the same attitude is expressed regarding «stage-by-stage plan» (thesis 4), although positive index among the optimists (40) slightly surpasses the corresponding index of pessimists at the expense of reducing the number of those who neither agree nor disagree.

The positive index on thesis 5 appears to be quite high – about expediency of discussing legal, historical, political and other aspects of Karabakh problem in a reputable international forum: 66.6 points with a negative attitude index of 26.6 (the difference is 2.5 times).

Full agreement (100 points) is obvious on thesis 6. At the final stage of discussions, all the experts agreed with the point that development of democracy in Armenia and Azerbaijan, improvement of the situation with human rights and civil freedoms may contribute to peaceful settlement of the conflict although initially experts had certain negative assessments in this regard.

Agreement index concerning possibility of taking by local Armenian and Azerbaijani media coordinated measures on restricting propaganda of mutual hostility and hatred (thesis 7) amounts to 73.3 points. The overwhelming majority of experts are certain that this step will have a positive impact on the atmosphere of trust between the two peoples. Doubts are indexed on the level of 26.6 points. Negative assessment equals zero, which certainly is quite an interesting fact revealing change of public attitude in Armenia for the past few years.

It is notable that agreement index (with zero indices of uncertainty and disagreement) also reached 100 points concerning necessity of establishing joint state and public commissions for solving humanitarian problems – search and verification of information about missing people, assistance to the refugees in restoring documents for getting pensions, social benefits, etc (thesis 8).

The prospects for implementing joint environmental programs in the conflict zone and under the conditions of suspended MK problem (thesis 9) are considered quite feasible and are highly assessed (73.3 points). Agreement index is still higher – 80 points – concerning participation in regional institutional economic projects with a prospect of further cooperation between Armenia and Azerbaijan after resolution of the conflict (thesis 10).

Thesis 11 is perhaps the only one where negative attitude (46.6 points) obviously prevails over the positive (13.3) with a considerable index of those uncertain (40). Thus, statement that restoring transport communication between Armenia and Azerbaijan necessitates demilitarization of the regions adjacent to the railway in the conflict zone under the conditions of deployment of military forces and international observers in this zone was not overall supported by the experts.

- **DELPHI EXAMINATION IN MOUNTAINOUS KARABAKH**

*(The examination was conducted in three stages within a group of 5 experts – political scientists, media leaders and political observers)*

The research with the methodology agreed upon by the experts was also conducted in Mountainous Karabakh. The expert group, as mentioned already, consisted of 5 people in this case. In the course of *first iteration* the responses on five questions proposed (they are presented in a corresponding section on Armenia) are the following:

1. Assessing the nature of Armenian – Azerbaijani relations for 2003–2004, the experts do not forecast considerable change of the present situation. Karabakh participants of the discussion are unanimous concerning this issue. Alongside this, it is mentioned that activation of negotiation process is possible on the initiative of international mediators who may exert pressure on the parties to the conflict for achieving peaceful solution of the problem. Confidence is expressed that in the given period Azerbaijan will not resume military operations.
2. As regards mutual steps that might lead to positive shifts in Karabakh conflict settlement, interim agreement, excluding the possibility of military solution of the problem, is proposed. Signing of a treaty between Azerbaijan and Mountainous Karabakh on border trade, joint water usage, etc. is also considered essential. Among the political steps contributing to settlement, experts emphasize the necessity of developing a dialogue for common strategic interests ensuring regional security.
3. Considering the issue of external stimuli likely to promote mitigation of the positions of the parties, only one expert notes that economic, financial, moral-psychological support of international organizations would contribute to reaching compromises. The majority still have a skeptical attitude to the prospects of such scenario of problem settlement. The opinion that the essence and nature of Karabakh conflict should be assessed on international level and that objective examination will become an initial step towards reconciliation of the parties is of great significance.
4. As regards the proposal of putting to colleagues' discussion new approaches likely to boost the process of peaceful settlement, an idea of «competition among three democracies» was initiated (in Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Mountainous Karabakh). Its essence is that the parties to the conflict should bring the level of democracy and human rights protection within their countries in accordance with European standards, and then Karabakh problem will be more easily resolved. At the same time, it is noted that given the current state of affairs within the sphere in question and obvious Armenophobia, the very idea of MK's return under constitutional order of Azerbaijan becomes absurd. As an intermediate step, temporary passing of Mountainous Karabakh under the auspices of OSCE, UN or EU is proposed.
5. As for the form of negotiations, the experts are unanimous concerning the issue that MK should be involved in the negotiation process. It is expected that trilateral negotiations (Armenia – Azerbaijan – Mountainous Karabakh) would be more effective and would accelerate quest for solutions. The expediency of conducting negotiations simultaneously along Armenia – Azerbaijan and Baku – Stepanakert formats is also mentioned. However an option prevails among the experts that it is not so much the form of negotiations but their content that matters.

Second iteration

11 questions, formulated on the basis of summing up the results of previous discussions, were submitted to the consideration of Karabakh experts as well. We will remind that the first questions out of the 7 asked demanded responses in strictly disjunctive form («Yes» or «No»), the rest 4 – detailed statement of positions. Such an approach was conditioned by the necessity for specification of opinions and assessments of the experts concerning different aspects of Karabakh problem. The responses got on the first block of questions, demanding disjunctive answers, are indexed on the 100-point scale and presented below (in this case the minimal index, standing for single opinion, amounts to 20 in contrast to 6.6 index applied in the section on Armenia since the number of the experts from Mountainous Karabakh was three times less than those from Armenia and Azerbaijan):

- 1. Are the parties to the conflict likely to withdraw from their radical claims after 2003 election campaigns in Armenia and Azerbaijan?***

Positive assessment	Negative assessment
20	80

- 2. Is opening (at least partially) of transport communication between Armenia and Azerbaijan possible in 2003 – 2004?***

Positive assessment	Negative assessment
40	60

- 3. Is opening of the Armenian – Turkish border possible in recent future?***

Positive assessment	Negative assessment
20	80

- 4. Is adoption of coordinated measures on restricting propaganda of mutual enmity and hatred possible on the level of journalistic communities or local media of Armenia or Azerbaijan?***

Positive assessment	Negative assessment
80	20

- 5. Do You expect intensification of contacts among the public organizations of the two countries?***

Positive assessment	Negative assessment
60	40

**6. Do you think useful to discuss legal aspects of Karabakh problem in a reputable international forum (within UN or OSCE)?**

Positive assessment	Negative assessment
80	20

**7. May the threat of international society to deprive them of financial assistance and participation in international forums or projects lead to mutual concessions by the conflicting sides?**

Positive assessment	Negative assessment
40	60

In this case, just like in the group of experts from Armenia, pessimism prevails over the prospects that the parties to the conflict will withdraw from their radical claims (question 1).

As regards the possibility of restoring transport communication between Armenia and Azerbaijan (question 2), though the index of negative assessments is in a way higher than that of positive ones, Karabakh experts are more optimistic than their Armenian colleagues: the latter have 13.3:86.6 points correlation of positive and negative forecasts.

In case of question 3 – prospects of opening Armenian – Turkish border – the situation is quite different. If experts from Armenia mainly have optimistic prospects for improving relations with Turkey (positive and negative indices amount to 60 and 40 points respectively), among Karabakh experts, with a correlation of 20: 80, pessimistic forecasts prevail.

On the rest of the issues, the positions of discussion participants in Armenia and Mountainous Karabakh overall coincide. Thus, the majority of experts agree on the opinion that adoption of coordinated measures on restricting propaganda of mutual enmity and hatred is possible (question 4), in the foreseeable future intensification of contacts between Armenian and Azerbaijani public organizations may be expected (question 5), discussion of legal aspects of Karabakh problem in a reputable international forum (OSCE or UN) would be useful for the process of peaceful settlement (question 6).

Alongside this, accordance of positions is observed on question 7 but in this case both in Mountainous Karabakh and in Armenia index of positive assessments is lower than that of negative ones (in Mountainous Karabakh 40: 60, in Armenia – 33.3: 66.6 points respectively). That is, an opinion prevails among the experts that threat by the international community to deprive the parties to the conflict of financial assistance will induce them to compromise.

The second block of questions, demanding detailed responses as already stated, concerned:

- 1. impact of changing geopolitical conditions in the region on the prospects for Karabakh problem resolution;**
- 2. minimal conditions under which the parties to the conflict would resume transport and economic contacts;**
- 3. possibilities for direct Baku – Stepanakert negotiations;**

**4. *methods of conflict settlement – «package», «stage-by-stage» or another (the full wording of the questions can be found in the corresponding section on Armenia). The essence of the responses by Karabakh experts was the following:***

1. In the coming years, international community will not allow to change the conditions of conducting settlement process. However, an opinion prevails among the experts that the new geopolitical situation (the activity of USA in Iraq, threats to Iran, increase of American influence in the South Caucasus, weakening of Russia's positions) in general raises chances for resumption of military operations in Karabakh conflict zone. The discussion participants associate military threat with internal political processes in Azerbaijan, its geostrategic role in the region, economic resources, intention of political leaders to direct this potential to the military sphere.

It is notable that the opinion of the majority of Karabakh experts on the issue in question is at discord with the main position of their colleagues from Armenia where 14 out of 15 participants of absentee discussion noted that new geopolitical factors contribute to status quo and even facilitate peaceful resolution of MK problem.

2. Trust between the parties is viewed by the experts as the most important condition for restoring transport and economic communication, therefore signing an interim agreement on adherence to peaceful settlement of the conflict is proposed. Alongside this, emphasizing the radical position of Azerbaijan on return of the territories, the majority of the Karabakh discussion group participants do not see any prospects of improving relations until complete resolution of the problem. In this case agreement of views among the majority of experts from MK and Armenia is observed.
3. As to the question about direct negotiations between Baku and Stepanakert, Karabakh experts are unanimous in their opinion that such a dialogue is essential and may have good prospects. At the same time, it is proposed to consider the whole range of questions related to overcoming the consequences of military operations, including the problems of refugees and displaced persons, prisoners of war, territorial demarcation. As a basis for such negotiations, various opinions are expressed; in particular that Karabakh side should refrain from using the term «self-determination», and the Azerbaijani side – from the term «territorial integrity». It is supposed that just in the course of such a dialogue «started from zero» MK problem may be resolved. It is also noted that such negotiations will enable to diagnose the conflict correctly and to disclose main reasons of antagonism, to convince the Azerbaijani side of the failure of military solution of the problem and to make steps for gradual restoration of mutual trust through contacts among different layers of society.
4. Stating their positions concerning methods of problem settlement, Karabakh experts again turn to the issue of trust measures considering it fundamental. Such measures being in place, the discussion participants do not see any considerable difference between «stage-by-stage» and «package» methods and note that it is the content of the adopted documents that matters. To all appearances, it is these attitudes that condition high proportion of doubts experts have on a

certain approach. At the given stage only 1 out of 5 discussion participants expressed a definite opinion in favor of «package» method, 2 others – for «stage-by-stage» but under the condition of international guarantees for suspension of military operations, 2 more hinge their preferences on the same measures of trust and level of Armenian – Azerbaijani relations.

In the course of *third iteration*, when it was required to express the degree of personal agreement/disagreement with the theses selected from the previous stages of discussion, the positions of experts became more distinct undergoing certain changes. These theses, along with the responses indexed on 100-point scale, are presented below. We will remind that the minimal index corresponding to single opinion amounts to 20.

<b>1. <i>Conflicting sides themselves will overcome standstill in negotiations also through involvement of Mountainous Karabakh in the dialogue.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree	0
2.	Agree	20
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	80
4.	Disagree	0
5.	Strongly disagree	0
<b>2. <i>Application of international «peace enforcement» mechanisms will promote quest for political alternatives of Karabakh problem settlement.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree	0
2.	Agree	40
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	40
4.	Disagree	20
5.	Strongly disagree	0
<b>3. <i>In the course of negotiations a «package plan» may be formulated which will be acceptable for the parties and will move the process of Karabakh settlement out of a deadlock.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree	0
2.	Agree	40
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	40
4.	Disagree	20
5.	Strongly disagree	0

<b>4. <i>The parties to the conflict may work out a «stage-by-stage» plan that will be mutually acceptable and will move the process of Karabakh settlement out of a deadlock.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree	20
2.	Agree	0
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	60
4.	Disagree	20
5.	Strongly disagree	0
<b>5. <i>Discussion of legal, historical, political and other aspects of Karabakh problem in a reputable international forum (UN, OSCE and others) may be useful for peaceful settlement of the conflict.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree	40
2.	Agree	40
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	20
4.	Disagree	0
5.	Strongly disagree	0
<b>6. <i>Development of democracy in Armenia and Azerbaijan, improvement of situation with human rights and civil freedoms in both countries may facilitate conflict settlement and place Armenian – Azerbaijani relations in positive context.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree	40
2.	Agree	60
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	0
4.	Disagree	0
5.	Strongly disagree	0
<b>7. <i>Local media of Armenia and Azerbaijan are capable of taking coordinated measures on restricting propaganda of mutual enmity and hatred, thus promoting the atmosphere of trust between the peoples.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree	40
2.	Agree	60
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	0
4.	Disagree	0
5.	Strongly disagree	0

<b>8. State and public commissions need to be established for joint solution of humanitarian problems – search and verification of information on missing people, assistance to refugees in restoring the documents for getting pensions, social benefits, etc.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree	80
2.	Agree	20
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	0
4.	Disagree	0
5.	Strongly disagree	0
<b>9. The Karabakh problem still unresolved, it is possible to implement joint environmental projects on conservation of boundary and transboundary rivers from pollution, prevention of environmental damage to flora and fauna in the conflict zone.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree	60
2.	Agree	0
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	40
4.	Disagree	0
5.	Strongly disagree	0
<b>10. The conflict still unresolved, there are prospects for joint participation in regional institutional economic projects (TRASECA and other) paving the way for cooperation after settlement of Karabakh problem.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree	60
2.	Agree	40
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	0
4.	Disagree	0
5.	Strongly disagree	0
<b>11. To restore transport communication between Armenia and Azerbaijan, it is essential to demilitarize the regions adjacent to railway in the conflict zone under the condition of deployment of peace forces and international observers in that zone.</b>		
1.	Strongly agree	0
2.	Agree	0
3.	Neither agree, nor disagree	40
4.	Disagree	40
5.	Strongly disagree	20

Combination of positive and quasi-positive portions of the responses spectrum on the one hand and negative and quasi-negative on the other provides the following results concerning the degree of agreement on the proposed theses among the experts:

<b>1. <i>Conflicting sides themselves will overcome standstill in negotiations also through involvement of Mountainous Karabakh in the dialogue.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	20
2.	Neither agree, nor disagree	80
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	0
<b>2. <i>Application of international «peace enforcement» mechanisms will promote quest for political alternatives of Karabakh problem settlement.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	40
2.	Neither agree, nor disagree	40
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	20
<b>3. <i>In the course of negotiations a «package plan» may be formulated which will be acceptable for the parties and will move the process of Karabakh settlement out of a deadlock.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	40
2.	Neither agree, nor disagree	40
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	20
<b>4. <i>The parties to the conflict may work out a «stage-by-stage» plan that will be mutually acceptable and will move the process of Karabakh settlement out of a deadlock.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	20
2.	Neither agree, nor disagree	60
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	20
<b>5. <i>Discussion of legal, historical, political and other aspects of Karabakh problem in a reputable international forum (UN, OSCE and others) may be useful for peaceful settlement of the conflict.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	80
2.	Neither agree, nor disagree	20
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	0

<b>6. <i>Development of democracy in Armenia and Azerbaijan, improvement of situation with human rights and civil freedoms in both countries may facilitate conflict settlement and place Armenian – Azerbaijani relations in positive context.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	100
2.	Neither agree, nor disagree	0
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	0
<b>7. <i>Local media of Armenia and Azerbaijan are capable of taking coordinated measures on restricting propaganda of mutual enmity and hatred, thus promoting atmosphere of trust between the peoples.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	100
2.	Neither agree, nor disagree	0
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	0
<b>8. <i>State and public commissions need to be established for joint solution of humanitarian problems – search and verification of information on missing people, assistance to refugees in restoring the documents for getting pensions, social benefits, etc.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	100
2.	Neither agree, nor disagree	0
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	0
<b>9. <i>The Karabakh problem still unresolved, it is possible to implement joint environmental projects on conservation of boundary and transboundary rivers from pollution, prevention of environmental damage to flora and fauna in the conflict zone.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	60
2.	Neither agree, nor disagree	40
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	0
<b>10. <i>The conflict still unresolved, there are prospects for joint participation in regional institutional economic projects (TRASECA and other) paving the way for cooperation after settlement of Karabakh problem.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	100
2.	Neither agree, nor disagree	0
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	0

<b><i>11. To restore transport communication between Armenia and Azerbaijan, it is essential to demilitarize the regions adjacent to railway in the conflict zone under the condition of deployment of peace forces and international observers in that zone.</i></b>		
1.	Strongly agree / Agree	0
2.	Neither agree, nor disagree	40
3.	Strongly disagree / Disagree	60

The data of indexed assessments show that the majority of Karabakh experts neither agree nor disagree that the parties to the conflict will themselves overcome standstill in negotiations also through involvement of MK in the dialogue (thesis 1). It is notable that in Armenia optimism on this issue prevails – agreement index amounts to 66,6 points.

Alongside this, in Mountainous Karabakh rather positive than negative attitude prevails as regards the idea that application of «peace enforcement» mechanisms will promote quest for political alternatives of problem settlement (thesis 2). However, in Armenia, the majority of discussion participants have doubts concerning it.

Within third iteration, a certain change occurred in the approaches of Karabakh experts concerning methods of conflict settlement – «package» (thesis 3), and «stage-by-stage» (thesis 4): agreement index on «package» alternative proved to be higher than the corresponding indicator for «stage-by-stage» method with the level of uncertainty being the same.

The majority of MK experts, similarly to their colleagues in Armenia, hold that discussion of legal, historical, political and other aspects of MK problem in a reputable international forum will be useful for peaceful settlement of the conflict (thesis 5). Alongside this, Karabakh discussion participants agree with the idea that development of democracy in Azerbaijan and Armenia, improvement of the situation with human rights and civil freedoms in both countries will facilitate MK problem settlement and will place Armenian – Azerbaijani relations in positive context (thesis 6).

In Mountainous Karabakh, full accordance of opinions on theses 7 and 8 is observed: the experts believe in the prospects for adopting measures by the parties to the conflict on restriction of propaganda of mutual enmity and hatred. They also stress the necessity for establishing state and public commissions for joint solution of humanitarian problems. In this case, like with the rest of the three questions, the results of MK and Armenian experts' assessments are overall quite similar. Karabakh experts are also inclined to think that in case of suspended conflict, i.e. under the current circumstances, it is possible to implement joint environmental programs (thesis 9) and participation in regional institutional economic projects (thesis 10), but at the same time they do not agree that for restoration of transport communication between Armenia and Azerbaijan it is essential to demilitarize the regions adjacent to the railway in the conflict zone (thesis 11).

## • CONCLUSION ON THE RESULTS OF DELPHI EXAMINATION AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON KARABAKH PROBLEM

The research of public opinion and positions of Armenia and MK experts on Karabakh conflict for the past three years allowed determining main priorities of the Armenian side.

Sociological research of 2001 and survey of 2002 among the focus groups representing different layers of the population revealed:

- Ø *the society opts for peaceful alternatives of problem settlement;*
- Ø *future status of Mountainous Karabakh is viewed as either an independent state or a part of Armenia;*
- Ø *OSCE Minsk group mediatory mission enjoys trust;*
- Ø *the most acceptable form of negotiations is the trilateral option: Armenia – Azerbaijan – Mountainous Karabakh;*
- Ø *the possibility of compromise, in particular concerning return of the regions outside MK and controlled by Armenia forces, is supposed to hinge on determining the status of Mountainous Karabakh and provision security guarantees;*
- Ø *the «territorial exchange» settlement alternative is rejected;*
- Ø *the public at large is ill-informed and does not have a clear idea of the details of negotiation process, which conditions the lack of obvious preferences on its part concerning «package» and «stage-by-stage» methods of conflict settlement.*

Delphi method examination, implemented in 2003 and being a final stage of the three-year research on practically all the main aspects of Karabakh problem, allowed to not only specify positions on a definite issue but through absentee discussion, to reveal assessments concerning prospects for peaceful settlement of the conflict.

*According to the data received, experts agree on the view that without positive changes of public opinion in Armenia and Azerbaijan and promoting atmosphere of trust between the sides, reaching compromises and mutually acceptable solutions cannot be expected. In this respect, unanimity or high agreement indices among the discussion participants are common as regards:*

- Ø *development of democracy in Armenia and Azerbaijan, improvement of the situation with human rights and civil freedoms in both countries may promote settlement of the conflict and place Armenian – Azerbaijani relations in positive context;*
- Ø *coordinated measures need to be adopted on restriction of propaganda of mutual enmity and hatred which will promote atmosphere of trust between the peoples;*
- Ø *activation of contacts between Armenian and Azerbaijani NGOs will also contribute to such an atmosphere;*
- Ø *it is essential to establish bilateral commissions for joint solution of humanitarian problems – quest and verification of information about missing people, assistance to refugees in restoring documents for pensions, social benefits, etc.*

*As a consistent part of working out trust measures, other steps on establishing contacts under the conditions of suspended conflict are also considered. In particular, under the present conditions, the majority of experts think possible:*

- Ø *implementation of joint environmental projects aimed at conservation of boundary and transboundary rivers from pollution, prevention of environmental damage to flora and fauna in the conflict zone;*
- Ø *joint participation in regional institutional economic projects (TRASECA and others) paving the way for cooperation after Karabakh problem resolution.*

At the two initial stages of the examination, a considerable part of discussion participants accepted the possibility of restoring transport communication between Armenia and Azerbaijan. But at the final stage, in case of considering such preliminary conditions as demilitarization of the regions adjacent to the railway in the conflict zone and deployment of peace forces there, assessments changed. In the overwhelming majority of opinions, either doubts as regards expediency of such measures or refusal to establish communication under such conditions are expressed. At the same time, another proposal by the discussion participants is considered urgent – concerning necessity of signing a joint agreement on refraining from the usage of force in Karabakh problem settlement.

Although the majority of Armenian experts note that after election campaigns of 2003 in Armenia and Azerbaijan, the relations between the two countries will not undergo obvious changes, and the parties to the conflict will not withdraw from their radical claims, nevertheless, according to the discussion participants, the process of rapprochement should start from the steps mentioned above.

Given the absence of the atmosphere of trust, the expert forecasts for 2004 also do not foresee any substantial positive shifts in Armenian – Azerbaijani relations, however, it is mentioned that there is a high probability of activating OSCE Minsk group mediatory mission. In this respect, a considerable level of uncertainty over the fact that application of «peace enforcement» mechanisms will promote quest for political alternatives of Karabakh problem settlement becomes prominent.

*Alongside this, among the experts from Armenia agreement index is high as regards:*

- Ø *discussion of legal, historical, political or other aspects of Karabakh problem in a reputable international forum (UN, OSCE and others) may be useful for peaceful settlement of the conflict;*
- Ø *the conflicting sides themselves will overcome standstill in negotiations also through involving Mountainous Karabakh in the dialogue. (Direct negotiations between Baku and Stepanakert are viewed as useful in a parallel process in which humanitarian issues may be considered and solved.)*
- Ø *at the same time, discussion of the methods of problem settlement divided the group of experts into three equal parts: a) those opt for «package» alternative; b) those uncertain and c) proponents of «stage-by-stage» approach.*

Discrepancy is revealed in the prevailing positions of the experts from Mountainous Karabakh and Armenia on certain issues. In contrast to the colleagues from Armenia, the majority of Karabakh discussion participants doubt that the sides themselves will overcome standstill in negotiations also through involving Mountainous Karabakh in the dialogue. They have a rather positive than negative attitude to the idea that application of «peace enforcement» mechanisms will promote quest for political alternatives of problem settlement.

The assessments and conclusions of the discussion participants in Armenia and Mountainous Karabakh overall coincide on the majority of positions.

## ***A JOINT ARMENIAN – AZERBAIJANI CONCLUSION***

### ***(on the results of Delphy examination on the possibility of settling the Karabakh problem)***

During the Delphy examination, its participants had a chance to familiarize themselves with the results of the previous research on the Karabakh problem conducted by the Yerevan and Baku Press Clubs, as well as with the generalized results of each stage of discussions on the problem. The Armenian and Azerbaijani experts, before answering the questions put to them, could take account of the opinions and arguments of their colleagues and make corrections to their position. The following conclusions were made according to the results of the three stages of discussions.

1. Although the experts, realistically evaluating the current situation, do not expect a breakthrough in settling the Karabakh conflict in the near future, it is a positive fact that the absolute majority of the experts think it important to continue efforts directed at searching for a peaceful solution to the problem.
2. The proposal to conclude an agreement on not using force, which looks attractive for the Armenian side, did not cause a positive response among the Azerbaijani experts who said that it was possible only after returning the territories outside Nagorno-Karabakh.
3. The experts see eye-to-eye in understanding the need to create an atmosphere of trust between the sides, without which there is no point in hoping to achieve compromises and mutually acceptable decisions. In this connection, the proposal to take coordinated measures to restrict the propaganda of mutual hostility and hatred was supported by them. Although the experts suppose that the media themselves should solve this problem independently.
4. On the whole, the experts supported the idea of speeding up Armenian – Azerbaijani contacts at the level of public organizations. At the same time, the experts from Baku expressed an opinion about the restricted possibilities of «people’s diplomacy» as long as the peaceful settlement process is in a dead end.
5. The proposal to set up state and public structures to help people solve humanitarian problems was almost unanimously supported by the participants in the discussions: searching for and clarifying information about missing people, restoration of lost documents for receiving pensions, social allowances and so on.
6. The Armenian and Azerbaijani experts agree that the development of democracy and the improvement of the human rights situation will have a positive influence on the settlement of the Karabakh conflict. Proceeding from this, some experts suppose that since Armenia and Azerbaijan are run by leaders whose legitimacy is questioned by the opposition because of the violations that took place during the elections, the possibility of adopting responsible decisions on concessions in the peaceful settlement is becoming more difficult.
7. A difference in position was also observed in the issue of establishing economic cooperation. While most of the Armenian experts think that the joint participation of the sides in regional institutional projects (TRASECA and so on) is a positive factor for the Karabakh settlement process, the Azerbaijani experts almost unanimously postponed this possibility until tangible progress is made in settling the conflict. In issues related to the joint implementation of projects in the environmental and transport spheres, the experts of the sides preserve their different approaches, although the difference in positions on this issue is much lower than on economic cooperation. We can suppose that if the conflicting sides and mediators make

- appropriate efforts and if public opinion is appropriately prepared in this direction, it is possible to find mutually acceptable decisions.
8. The Armenian experts point out the fruitlessness of the mediatory mission of the OSCE Minsk group and contrast the fruitlessness of direct bilateral high-level talks to a smaller extent than the Azerbaijani experts. However, they both do not see any real alternative to these formats.
  9. The Azerbaijani experts see the international mechanism of «enforced peace» as an effective method of speeding up the peaceful settlement process. The Armenian experts are sceptical about it on the whole. Karabakh experts took a position close to the position of the Azerbaijani experts. However, if the Azerbaijani experts see Armenia as the object of pressure, the Karabakh experts see Azerbaijan.
  10. Among the experts, there was a high degree of agreement on the proposal to organize discussions on historical, legal, political and other aspects of the Karabakh problem at an authoritative international forum (OSCE, UN).
  11. The experts suppose that the conflicting sides themselves will find a way out of the negotiating impasse. However, if the Armenian experts think that it is necessary to include representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh in the negotiations, most of the Azerbaijani experts object to this, although they said it is possible during discussions on the specific parameters of Nagorno-Karabakh's status.
  12. When choosing methods of a peaceful solution to the Karabakh problem, the Azerbaijani side described the «stage-by-stage» plan as more realistic. The opinions of the Armenian experts split into three equal parts: those who are in favour of the «package» solution: those who are not sure and those who prefer the «package» solution.

***Thus, the joint Delphi examination showed that although the views and approaches of the Armenian and Azerbaijani sides are opposite on many issues, certain potential was nevertheless discovered for bringing their positions closer in order to make tangible progress in the peaceful settlement of the Karabakh conflict.***

**Summary Table<sup>ü</sup>**  
**Data on Final Stage of Delphi Method Examination**  
**Concerning Karabakh Problem Settlement Possibilities**

<b>1. Conflicting sides themselves will overcome standstill in negotiations also through involvement of Mountainous Karabakh in the dialogue.</b>			
	Azerbaijan	Armenia	MK
Strongly agree / Agree	6.6	66.6	20
Neither agree, nor disagree	40	26.6	80
Strongly disagree / Disagree	53.3	6.6	0
<b>2. Application of international «peace enforcement» mechanisms will promote quest for political alternatives of Karabakh problem settlement.</b>			
	Azerbaijan	Armenia	MK
Strongly agree / Agree	80	20	40
Neither agree, nor disagree	20	53.3	40
Strongly disagree / Disagree	0	26.6	20
<b>3. In the course of negotiations a «package plan» may be formulated which will be acceptable for the parties and will move the process of Karabakh settlement out of a deadlock.</b>			
	Azerbaijan	Armenia	MK
Strongly agree / Agree	46.6	33.3	40
Neither agree, nor disagree	13.3	33.3	40
Strongly disagree / Disagree	40	33.3	20
<b>4. The parties to the conflict may work out a «stage-by-stage» plan that will be mutually acceptable and will move the process of Karabakh settlement out of a deadlock.</b>			
	Azerbaijan	Armenia	MK
Strongly agree / Agree	80	40	20
Neither agree, nor disagree	6.6	26.6	60
Strongly disagree / Disagree	13.3	33.3	20

<sup>ü</sup> **Footnote:** Differentiated scale (Likert scale) is applied to reveal agreement/disagreement degree in opinions. The highest numerical indicator – index, expressing full agreement of all the experts on a definite issue, amounts to **100** points, the lowest – **6.6** – corresponds to the opinion of a single participant of examination. In MK column, the minimal index corresponding to single opinion amounts to **20**, since the number of experts from Mountainous Karabakh was three times less than that of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

<b>5. Discussion of legal, historical, political and other aspects of Karabakh problem in a reputable international forum (UN, OSCE and others) may be useful for peaceful settlement of the conflict.</b>			
	Azerbaijan	Armenia	MK
Strongly agree / Agree	73.3	66.6	80
Neither agree, nor disagree	20	6.6	20
Strongly disagree / Disagree	6.6	26.6	0
<b>6. Development of democracy in Armenia and Azerbaijan, improvement of situation with human rights and civil freedoms in both countries may facilitate conflict settlement and place Armenian – Azerbaijani relations in positive context.</b>			
	Azerbaijan	Armenia	MK
Strongly agree / Agree	66.6	100	100
Neither agree, nor disagree	33.3	0	0
Strongly disagree / Disagree	0	0	0
<b>7. Local media of Armenia and Azerbaijan are capable of taking coordinated measures on restricting propaganda of mutual enmity and hatred, thus promoting atmosphere of trust between the peoples.</b>			
	Azerbaijan	Armenia	MK
Strongly agree / Agree	46.6	73.3	100
Neither agree, nor disagree	20	26.6	0
Strongly disagree / Disagree	33.3	0	0
<b>8. State and public commissions need to be established for joint solution of humanitarian problems – search and verification of information on missing people, assistance to refugees in restoring the documents for getting pensions, social benefits, etc.</b>			
	Azerbaijan	Armenia	MK
Strongly agree / Agree	80	100	100
Neither agree, nor disagree	13.3	0	0
Strongly disagree / Disagree	6.6	0	0
<b>9. The Karabakh problem still unresolved, it is possible to implement joint environmental projects on conservation of boundary and transboundary rivers from pollution, prevention of environmental damage to flora and fauna in the conflict zone.</b>			
	Azerbaijan	Armenia	MK
Strongly agree / Agree	46.6	73.3	60
Neither agree, nor disagree	13.3	20	40
Strongly disagree / Disagree	40	6.6	0

<b>10. The conflict still unresolved, there are prospects for joint participation in regional institutional economic projects (TRASECA and other) paving the way for cooperation after settlement of Karabakh problem.</b>			
	Azerbaijan	Armenia	MK
Strongly agree / Agree	6.6	80	100
Neither agree, nor disagree	20	6.6	0
Strongly disagree / Disagree	73.3	13.3	0
<b>11. To restore transport communication between Armenia and Azerbaijan, it is essential to demilitarize the regions adjacent to railway in the conflict zone under the condition of deployment of peace forces and international observers in that zone.</b>			
	Azerbaijan	Armenia	MK
Strongly agree / Agree	13.3	13.3	0
Neither agree, nor disagree	40	40	40
Strongly disagree / Disagree	46.6	46.6	60

**MONITORING OF MEDIA COVERAGE OF  
KARABAKH CONFLICT RESOLUTION  
(2001-2003)**

## INTRODUCTION

*The monitoring of media of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Mountainous Karabakh was conducted during five months - since March 1 till July 31, 2003, under the project of Baku and Yerevan Press Clubs «Possible Resolutions to the Karabakh Conflict: Expert Evaluations and Media Coverage». The project was supported by the Network Media Program of the Open Society Institute. In Mountainous Karabakh Stepanakert Press Club was involved in the implementation of the project.*

*Monitoring was aimed at determining the attention extent of the media towards the problem of Karabakh conflict resolution by obtaining and analyzing quantitative data. The object of the study was all publications/TV pieces on MK issue.*

*Monitoring methodology included:*

- Ø counting of the total number of pieces in each newspaper issue/main newscast with the exception of weather forecast, advertising, classifieds, announcements, TV and radio program schedules, «pure» photos (out of publications and texts), entertaining materials such as crossword puzzles, horoscopes, tests, etc.;*
- Ø determination of the form the theme is present in: the number of newspaper and TV pieces, fully devoted to the MK problem; the number of newspaper/TV pieces, partially devoted to the MK problem or containing mentioning of it;*
- Ø determination of content categories in each newspaper / TV piece;*
- Ø determination of an attitude sign (positive, negative, neutral) to the content categories;*
- Ø determination of the information sources of each newspaper/TV piece;*
- Ø determination of each newspaper / TV piece type.*

*The coverage of the Karabakh problem by the media of Azerbaijan, Armenia and MK was studied for three years (2001-2003) during practically identical time periods. To ensure the comparability of the findings the same media were studied. An exception was made in 2002 for the «Space» TV channel among the Azerbaijani media, which was replaced by «ANS» TV channel. And in 2003 the number of Armenian media monitored was increased to include one more newspaper – «Hayastani Hanrapetutiun».*

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## AZERBAIJANI MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE KARABAKH SETTLEMENT PROBLEM

### *Two television channels and five newspapers were monitored:*

«**AzTV-1**» – is the first channel of the state television company. It was founded in 1956. Its programs are broadcast 16-18 hours a day. Its programs are broadcast throughout the republic. Evening news bulletins and information and analytical programs «*News*» (Monday-Saturday from 22:00 to 22:40), «*Pulse of the day*» (Monday-Saturday from 20:40 to 21:00) and «*Week*» (Sunday from 20:00 to 21:05) were monitored. Over the monitoring period, the mentioned programs broadcast 2,672 stories, of which 251 were dedicated to the theme of the monitoring (107 fully, 144 partly). This makes up 9.4 percent of all the materials broadcast by the channel. A total of 185 were information and 66 analytical stories.

«**ANS**» – is Azerbaijan's first private television and radio company. It has worked since 1992. Its programs are broadcast 16-18 hours a day. Its programs are broadcast to over 80 percent of Azerbaijan. Main evening news bulletins and information and analytical programs «*News digest*» (Monday-Saturday from 21:00 to 21:35), «*Point of view*» (Monday-Friday from 21:35 to 22:00), «*Last week*» (Sunday from 21:00 to 22:00) were monitored. Over the monitoring period, the mentioned programs broadcast 1,515 stories, of which 284 were dedicated to the theme of the monitoring (189 fully, 95 partly). This makes up 18.7 percent of all the materials broadcast by the channel. A total of 164 were information and 120 analytical stories.

«**Khalq qazeti**» – is a government newspaper. It is the mouthpiece of the current affairs department under the Azerbaijani Presidential Administration. It was founded in 1919 (until 1991 it was called Communist). It comes out on eight A2-formatted pages six times a week (except Monday). Its circulation ranges between 5,700 and 7,000 copies. The total number of monitored stories is 4,894, of which 443 were dedicated to the theme of the monitoring (152 fully, 291 partly). This makes up 9.1 percent of all the materials published by the newspaper. A total of 136 were information and 307 analytical stories.

«**Yeni Musavat**» – is an opposition newspaper. Its founder is the chairman of the Yeni Musavat Party, Isa Qambar. It was founded in 1989. It is published seven times a week on 16-24 A3-formatted pages. Its circulation ranges between 9,200 and 15,000 copies. The total number of monitored stories is 8,951, of which 602 were dedicated to the theme of the monitoring (344 fully, 258 partly). This makes up 6.7 percent of all the materials published by the newspaper. A total of 110 were information and 492 analytical stories.

«**Azadliq**» – is an opposition newspaper. Its founder is Gunduz Tahirli (former editor of the newspaper). It was founded in 1989. It is published five times a week (Tuesday-Saturday) on 12-16 A3-formatted pages. The circulation is 5,610 copies. The total number of monitored stories is 5,853, of which 217 were dedicated to the theme of the monitoring (100 fully, 117 partly). This makes up 3.7 percent of all the materials published by the newspaper. A total of 119 were information and 98 analytical stories.

«**Ekho**» – is an independent newspaper. It was founded by a group of journalists in 2001. It is published in Russian, five times a week: four times (Tuesday-Friday) on eight A2-formatted pages with a circulation of 6,000 copies and on Saturday on 32 A3-formatted pages with a circulation of 9,000 copies. The total number of monitored stories is 6,236, of which 578 were dedicated to the theme of the monitoring (148 fully, 430 partly). This makes up 9.3 percent of all the materials published by the newspaper. A total of 222 were information and 356 analytical stories.

«Ayna-Zerkalo» – is an independent newspaper. It was founded by a group of journalists in 1990. It is published in Azeri and Russian five times a week: four times (Tuesday-Friday) on eight A2-formatted pages with a circulation of 4,500 copies and on Saturday on 48-56 A3-formatted pages with a circulation of 11,000 copies (8,000 in Russian and 3,000 in Azeri). The total number of monitored stories is 5,955, of which 138 were dedicated to the theme of the monitoring (101 fully, 37 partly). This makes up 2.3 percent of all the materials published by the newspaper. A total of 78 were information and 60 analytical stories.

### General results

Over the entire period of monitoring, a total of 4,085 stories were registered in evening information and analytical programs of two television channels, of which 535 (13.1 percent) concerned the subject of the monitoring. The number of newspaper publications made up 31,991, of which the subject of the monitoring was raised in 1,978 (6.2 percent) publications.

So, over the five months of monitoring, a total of 36,076 publications / television programs were monitored. The subject of the monitoring was raised in 2,513 stories, or 7 percent of the total.

If we look at the number of stories dedicated to the Karabakh problem in the past three years, we can see that in comparison with 2001, attention of the Azerbaijani media to the problem in 2002 dropped by 2.5 times. The growth observed in subsequent years was rather insignificant.

*Table 1*

Mass media	Total number of stories concerning the Karabakh problem		
	2003	2002	2001
TV	535	664	1,504
Newspapers	1,978	1,577	4,280
TV and newspapers	2,513	2,241	5,784

In 2003, 296 (55.3 percent) television programs were fully and 239 (44.7 percent) partly dedicated to the subject of the monitoring. Unlike TV, there are more stories in the print media that are partly dedicated to the Karabakh problem – 1,133 (57.3 percent). A total of 845 (42.7 percent) publications are fully dedicated to the problem. Therefore, the total number of stories fully dedicated to the subject of the monitoring made up 45.4 percent and partly – 54.6 percent.

If we look at the extent of presence of the theme in media stories, we can note that in previous years the Azerbaijani mass media contained more TV programs and publications that were fully dedicated to the topic, while in 2003 a reverse tendency is observed.

*Table 2*

Extent of presence of the theme	TV + newspapers		
	2003	2002	2001
Fully dedicated	1,141	1,186	2,932
Partly dedicated	1,372	1,055	2,852

All the above figures testify to reduced media attention to Armenian – Azerbaijani relations. Does this mean that the Karabakh problem is gradually losing its acuteness for the public? But a comparative analysis of the quantitative data by months over the three years of the monitoring has produced a different result. It turns out that the interest in the problem is not gradually subsiding, but that there was a «burst» in March-April 2001. In these two months alone, the Azerbaijani mass

media carried 2,700 stories concerning the subject of the monitoring. Even in August of the same year the number of publications and TV programs dropped to 500, which was in line with the figures for August 2002 (422) and July 2003 (500).

As for the high level of media attention to the Karabakh problem in March and April 2001, it was caused by detailed discussion of the problem in the National Assembly, as well as a subsequent meeting of the presidents of the two countries in Key West. Afterwards, the intensity of the talks sharply subsided, which led to protracted stagnation in the peace process connected with presidential elections in both countries. Therefore, the focus of media attention turned to domestic political processes.

The monitoring also identified the extent of presence of the topic in newspaper publications and evening television programs. In the five months of 2003, the subject of Armenian – Azerbaijani relations was most often raised by newspapers Yeni Musavat and Ekho (602 and 578 stories respectively). Third was Xalq Qazeti, which raised the subject in 443 publications. Then came ANS and AzTV-1 channels (284 and 251 respectively). The least attention to the subject was paid by newspapers Azadliq (217) and Zerkalo (138). However, if we look at the share of stories dedicated to the Karabakh issue in the total number of stories published or broadcast by media outlets over the entire period of the monitoring, we can see a different picture:

1. ANS	19.4%
2. AzTV-1	9.6%
3. Ekho	9.3%
4. Xalq Qazeti	9.1%
5. Yeni Musavat	6.8%
6. Azadliq	3.7%
7. Zerkalo	2.3%

### **Content categories**

As part of one and the same story concerning the subject of the monitoring, mass media touched upon different aspects of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations and the process of resolving the Karabakh problem. As a result, 2,513 stories dedicated to the theme contained 4,085 such mentions, while television raised the subject in 655 cases (16 percent) and newspapers in 3,430 (84 percent).

**Table 3**

*(the following are percentage indicators of the stories dedicated to the problem. The total exceeds 10.0 percent because the number of different aspects of the problem was, as said above, bigger than the number of stories).*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>TV</b>	<b>Newspapers</b>	<b>TV and newspapers</b>
Ways of resolving the conflict	56.6	68.5	66
Problem of compromises	24.5	6.5	10.4
Connection between domestic political processes in Azerbaijan and the Karabakh solution	3.9	39.8	32.2
Connection between domestic political processes in Armenia and the Karabakh solution	1.1	9.5	7.8
Impact of external factors on the Karabakh settlement	36.2	48.8	46.2

### *Ways of resolving the conflict*

As is seen from Table 3, this category was the most popular in the Azerbaijani media. The same picture was observed before: 67.9 percent in 2001 and 88.2 percent in 2002. However, in comparison with 2001, the number of times this category was mentioned reduced from 3,928 in 2001 to 1,977 in 2002 and 1,679 in 2003.

In 2003, television raised the issue of ways to resolve the Karabakh conflict 4.5 times less often than the print media. For comparison, in 2001 this difference was 2.8 times. The following table reflects media attention to different ways of resolving the conflict.

*Table 4*

<b>Ways of resolving the conflict</b>	<b>TV</b>	<b>Newspapers</b>	<b>TV + newspapers</b>
Through peace talks	46.7	39.2	40.8
Militarily	9.9	30.3	25.2

The figures show that newspapers and television companies discuss peace negotiations more often. It was touched upon in 1,026 stories, while the military solution was considered in 633 cases. The same was observed before. However, a comparison of the three years shows that the share of stories favoring the peaceful option is gradually shrinking: in 2001 by 2.5 times, in 2002 by 1.9 times and in 2003 by 1.6 times. This is seen from the following table:

*Table 5*

<b>Ways of resolving the conflict</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2001</b>
	<b>TV + newspapers</b>	<b>TV + newspapers</b>	<b>TV + newspapers</b>
Through peace talks	40.8	58.8	48.4
Militarily	25.2	29.5	19.5

When touching upon the peaceful option of resolving the conflict in 2003, mass media took a neutral stance (506 cases) or expressed a positive attitude to it (415). A negative attitude was expressed only in 105 cases. This corresponds with the picture for 2001. In 2002, however, positive assessments were most frequent, while neutral ones were second. The positive and negative attitudes towards a negotiated settlement have considerably reduced (by 1.8 and 1.2 times respectively) over the past two years, while the number of neutral assessments has increased by 20 percent.

As for the military option, in 2003 mass media viewed it more positively (337 cases). The issue was presented neutrally in 266 cases and negatively in 30. When comparing these indicators with those of the previous years, we can note that a year ago newspapers and television companies were giving the military option a negative assessment more often (almost by 3.6 times), while in 2001 neutral attitude prevailed.

There is a great difference between the press and television in the way they approach the «peace and war» issue. Television companies talked about the negotiated settlement to the Karabakh problem in more than 82 percent of the total number of times this problem was mentioned. Newspapers, which also paid a lot of attention to this option (57.3 percent), discussed the military

option also quite actively (42.7 percent). Television has a more positive attitude to the peaceful option, whereas newspapers tend to be neutral in this. On the other hand, print media are giving a positive assessment to the military option twice as often as electronic media.

**Table 6**

Percentage indicators of the attitude of mass media towards ways of resolving the problem in 2003 (from the total number of stories on this category)

<b>Ways of resolving the conflict</b>		<b>Positive attitude</b>	<b>Neutral attitude</b>	<b>Negative attitude</b>
<b>TV</b>	Peacefully	74.9	5.3	2.3
	Militarily	11.2	4	2.3
<b>Newspapers</b>	Peacefully	13.9	36.2	7.2
	Militarily	22.3	18.7	1.7
<b>TV+newspapers</b>	Peacefully	25	30.5	6.3
	Militarily	20.3	16	1.8

More than 60 percent of all stories on the «peace and war» topic registered by monitors were published by two newspapers: radical pro-opposition Yeni Musavat and government Xalq Qazeti (597 and 403 respectively). In fact, Yeni Musavat turned out to be the only media outlet to discuss the military option more often than the peaceful one, expressing a positive attitude to the former and neutral to the latter. Russian-speaking newspapers Ekho and Zerkalo discuss the topic least of all (106 and 107 respectively). Ekho is noted for the fact that all its stories on the Karabakh problem except for one case are written in a neutral tone.

As for the breakdown of stories by months, in 2003 there was a steady growth in the number of mentions from 245 in March to 416 in July.

### ***Problem of compromises***

The problem of compromises and the attitude of mass media to them was studied throughout the three years of the monitoring. However, in 2001 and 2002 it was not highlighted as a separate thematic category and was only considered only in connection with some specific issues, for instance, the status of Karabakh. In 2003 the task was even broader. How often do mass media raise the issue of compromises, whose compromises are mostly the subject of discussion and how are the seen?

The survey has shown that over the five months mass media mentioned the issue in 261 cases. In fact, the number of television programs on the topic was the same as the number of newspaper publications. However, if we view the data of electronic and print media separately, we can note that on the average a television channel was mentioning the topic 2.5 times more often than a newspaper. This testifies to «peacefulness» of television companies (see above). There is a direct connection between the frequency of discussion and the number of times a negotiated settlement is mentioned.

**Table 7**

<b>Problem of compromises</b>	<b>TV</b>	<b>Newspapers</b>	<b>TV+newspapers</b>
Mutual compromises	0.2	1.5	1.2
Compromises on the part of Armenia	23.6	4.3	8.4
Compromises on the part of Azerbaijan	0.7	0.7	0.8

The table shows that a vast majority of stories discussed the possibility of compromises on the part of Armenia. Such aspects of the problem as «mutual concessions» and «concessions on the part of Azerbaijan» are discussed three to six times less frequently.

Newspapers and television channels take a generally negative attitude towards unilateral concessions on the part of Azerbaijan.

The option of «mutual compromises» is usually covered from a neutral standpoint and almost exclusively by newspapers. Only on one occasion did ANS TV mention such a possibility and assess it positively. Concessions on the part of Armenia are mainly discussed by television companies and are almost always assessed positively. Newspapers tend to give a neutral assessment to this issue.

**Table 8**

Percentage indicators of the attitude of mass media towards different aspects of the problem of compromises (*of the total number of stories on this category*)

Problem of compromises		Positive	Neutral	Negative
TV	Mutual compromises	0.8	0	0
	Compromises on the part of Armenia	94.6	1.5	0
	Compromises on the part of Azerbaijan	0	0	3.1
Newspapers	Mutual compromises	2.3	16.9	3.1
	Compromises on the part of Armenia	20	41.5	5.4
	Compromises on the part of Azerbaijan	2.3	2.3	6.9
TV + newspapers	Mutual compromises	1.5	8.4	1.5
	Compromises on the part of Armenia	57.5	21.1	2.7
	Compromises on the part of Azerbaijan	1.1	1.1	5

It is interesting to observe the behavior of certain media outlets.

The leaders in the discussion of the «war and peace» topic – newspapers Yeni Musavat and Xalq Qazeti – are very passive in discussing the problem of compromises. Over the five months they raised this aspect of the problem only seven times. Writing about this most often were newspaper Ekho (74), television companies AzTV-1 and ANS (71 and 55). They mainly considered the option of concessions on the part of Armenia. Electronic media assessed this option only positively, while the print media – neutrally.

***Connection between the domestic political processes and a solution of the Karabakh problem***

The presidential elections in Azerbaijan and Armenia, which were accompanied by extensive election campaigns, allowed us to trace a connection between the domestic political processes and a solution of the Karabakh problem. Power in both countries had for many years changed on the wave of the Karabakh movement and this aspect was the main reason for public discontent with the policy of the authorities.

In 2003, the monitoring showed that the theme is still topical but is not dominant. It holds the third rating position among all thematic categories covered by the monitoring.

Mass media mention a connection between domestic political processes in Azerbaijan with a solution of the Karabakh problem in 809 stories. The impact of such processes in Armenia is much smaller – 195. In both countries newspapers are paying more attention to the issue than television channels.

**Table 9**

<b>Content category</b>		<b>TV</b>	<b>Newspapers</b>	<b>TV + newspapers</b>
Connection between domestic political process in Azerbaijan with a solution of the Karabakh problem	Connected	3.9	39	31.5
	Not connected	0	0.9	0.7
Connection between domestic political process in Armenia with a solution of the Karabakh problem	Connected	1.1	8.7	7.1
	Not connected	0	0.9	0.7

It is evident from the table that the connection between domestic political processes in Azerbaijan and Armenia and a solution of the Karabakh problem is almost beyond a doubt.

However, the impact of the political situation in Azerbaijan on the settlement to the conflict (and vice versa) is considered to be bigger and much more attention is paid to it. Mass media are confident that it will be much easier for a stable, economically strong and democratic Azerbaijan to resolve the Karabakh problem.

On the other hand, the prospect of resolving the conflict is also connected with such issues as free and fair elections and the legitimacy of the future president. This idea is behind the fact that almost 80 percent of cases when this thematic category was mentioned fell to the radical opposition newspaper Yeni Musavat and the government newspaper Xalq Qazeti (535 and 254 respectively). Ekho newspaper, which comes third, published 113 such stories, while other media much fewer.

The monthly breakdown of stories dwelling on a connection between domestic political processes in Azerbaijan and a Karabakh settlement was quite stable, while the second aspect of the issue saw a sharp increase in the number of mentions in April, after the presidential elections in Armenia and a deterioration of the domestic political situation in the country, which overlapped with the start of the parliamentary election campaign: more than half of all mentions of this theme fell to this month.

#### ***Impact of external factors on a Karabakh settlement***

The topic of the Impact of external factors on a Karabakh settlement was mostly registered in stories dedicated to Azerbaijan's cooperation with world superpowers and international organizations, the country's involvement in transnational projects, the activity of the OSCE Minsk group and the Council of Europe.

It was discussed a total of 1,161 times, which is more than the Connection between domestic political processes in Azerbaijan and Armenia and a solution of the Karabakh problem.

**Table 10**

<b>Content category</b>		<b>TV</b>	<b>Newspapers</b>	<b>TV + newspapers</b>
Impact of external factors on a Karabakh settlement	Observed	32.1	46.6	43.5
	Not observed	4.1	2.3	2.7

The results of the monitoring show that the Azerbaijani mass media consider that the impact of foreign factors on the Karabakh solution is very significant. Mentioned most often among such factors was the position of the USA, Russia, the OSCE Minsk group, the Council of Europe, which is preconditioned by their geopolitical and economic interests, as well as the Iraq war.

The degree of media interest in this topic is about the same as the interest in a Connection between domestic political processes and a Karabakh solution; newspapers discuss the issue much more actively than television; newspapers Xalq Qazeti and Yeni Musavat raise the topic most often (299 and 305 stories respectively), then comes Ekho.

However, there are interesting differences as well. It appears that from the standpoint of the Karabakh solution, all mass media except for Yeni Musavat consider the theme of foreign impact more topical and raise it much more often than the issue of domestic political processes. Particularly obvious is the eight-fold difference in the number of such television programs.

The monthly breakdown of stories dedicated to this thematic category was uneven, with slight ups and downs by months, depending on how active foreign factors were.

### *Sources and types of information*

The 2,513 stories dedicated to the subject of the monitoring in 2003 used 4,058 sources of information. In 2002, a total of 3,675 sources of information were registered and in 2001 – 8,353.

In 2003, as in 2002, the Azerbaijani media outlets used both their own and the sources of other Azerbaijani mass media. It is worth saying, however, that the number of mass media's own sources considerably reduced to 2001, which is explained by the reduction in the number of stories dedicated to the problem.

If we compare the results of the three monitoring surveys we can note a slight increase in the use of Armenian and Karabakh sources by the Azerbaijani media in 2002. There has also been a sharp increase in the use of foreign sources in 2002, which continued in 2003, and of official sources. The last indicator has contributed a lot to facilitating access to official information.

**Table 11**

Sources of information	TV+newspapers		
	2003	2002	2001
Own information	58	57.3	65.7
Other Azerbaijani sources	23.2	23.7	25.4
Armenian sources	4.9	5.8	3
Karabakh sources	0.2	1.8	0.05
Foreign sources	11.3	10.8	5.4
Official sources	2.4	0.7	0.6

The monitoring confirmed the tendency observed in 2001 that television channels' own information on the Karabakh problem steadily increases (94 percent in 2001, 99.6 percent in 2003) and, consequently, the share of all other sources considerably reduces, in 2001, for instance, the share of information coming from other Azerbaijani sources to television companies totaled 0.3 percent, from Armenian sources – 2.7 percent and foreign – 1.4 percent, while in 2003 other Azerbaijani sources were used only once (0.2 percent) and Armenian and foreign sources were not used at all.

Over the monitoring period, 349 (65.2 percent) of follow-up and 186 (34.7 percent) analytical stories were registered on television. In newspapers, the number of follow-up stories made up 665 (33.6 percent) and analytical 1,313 (66.4 percent). Thus, in five months of the monitoring mass media provided 1,014 (43.7 percent) follow-up and 1,499 (59.6 percent) analytical stories.

If we compare the types of stories over the entire three-year period of the monitoring, we can note a considerable increase in the number of analytical stories in 2003. This even led to the fact that analytical stories exceed follow-up ones by 1.3 times. In 2001 and 2002, a reverse picture was observed, as follow-up stories outnumbered analytical ones by 1.8 and 1.5 times respectively. The following table provides percentage indicators, which show that the proportion of follow-up and analytical materials has changed over the three monitoring surveys.

*Table 12*

Type of information	TV+newspapers		
	2003	2002	2001
Follow-up (information)	40.4	60.5	64.2
Analytical	59.6	39.5	35.8

## Conclusion

In general, mass media have continued discussing Armenian-Azerbaijani relations. A seventh of all television stories and a sixteenth of all newspaper publications are fully or partly dedicated to the Karabakh problem.

At the same time, in comparison with 2001, the number of stories on the Karabakh issue in 2002 and 2003 has decreased by about 2.5 times. Besides, the number of stories only partly dedicated to the problem was bigger than that of fully dedicated stories. This means the attention to the problem has subsided, which is mainly explained by a lack of any progress in the conflict settlement, including a long pause in negotiations.

Among the stories that raised ways of resolving the problem, publications and television programs dedicated to a negotiated settlement to the conflict are still dominant, though if we compare these results with those of previous surveys, we can note that the interest in this aspect of the issue has reduced. In general, when speaking about a peaceful solution of the conflict, the Azerbaijani mass media mainly took a neutral position in 2003, while in 2002 positive assessments of this aspect were dominant. In the 2002 and 2003 monitoring surveys, mass media mentioned a military solution 1.6-2 times less frequently than a peaceful solution. Nevertheless, the attitude to it was mainly positive.

Touching upon the problem of compromises, television supports compromises on the part of Armenia. Newspapers are paying much less attention to this issue, mainly covering it from neutral positions. In general, it is not surprising at all that the issue of compromises in the circumstances of a protracted pause in the process of negotiations is unpopular.

A solution of the Karabakh problem, according to the Azerbaijani media, is more connected with the solution of domestic political processes in Azerbaijan than in Armenia. However, the role of foreign factors in the conflict settlement is considered to be even more important. This issue enjoys much more attention than any other aspect of the problem, except for the «peace and war» topic.

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## ARMENIAN MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE KARABAKH SETTLEMENT PROBLEM

The Armenian media monitoring focused on 2 TV channels – the Public Television of Armenia (PTA) and «Prometheus» TV company, the broadcast area of which covers the whole territory of the country, and 6 national newspapers.

**«Prometheus»:** private TV company, founded in 1998 by «ZakNefteGazStroy-Prometheus» open joint-stock company. The air time periodicity is 18 hours daily. The main newscast of the TV company, «Lraber», was studied. «Lraber» is aired five times a day on week-days, and once a day on Sundays. The issues at 23:00 on week-days and at 20:00 on Sunday were monitored, their total number making 149. Within the monitoring period a total of 1,843 pieces was studied. Of these, 60 pieces were devoted to the problem of Mountainous Karabakh – 19 being fully devoted to the issue, and 41 containing a mentioning of it.

**Public Television of Armenia:** public TV company, founded in 2001. The managing body is the Council of Public TV and Radio. The air time periodicity is 18 hours daily. The study focused on the PTA «Hailur» newscast and «Agenda»/«Sunday Hailur» information and analysis program. «Hailur» was aired 6 times a week (Monday-Saturday) five times a day. The «Hailur» newscasts of 21:00 were monitored. «Agenda»/«Sunday Hailur» was aired once a week, on Sundays, at 22:00. During the study period 157 issues of «Hailur» and 11 issues of «Agenda»/ «Sunday Hailur» were aired. Within the monitoring period a total of 2,244 pieces was studied. Of these, 77 pieces were devoted to the problem of Mountainous Karabakh – 31 being fully devoted to the issue and 46 containing a mentioning of it.

**«Aravot»:** daily (issued five times a week), founded in 1994. The founder is «'Aravot' daily newspaper» LLC. The standard volume is 8/A3 pp., the claimed circulation is 5.000 copies. During the monitoring period 108 issues were published, 10 of them having been published in 12/A3 pp., and 1 – in 16/A3 pp. Within the monitoring period a total of 3,870 publications was studied. Of these, 130 publications were devoted to the problem of Mountainous Karabakh – 53 being fully devoted to the issue and 77 containing a mentioning of it.

**«Azg»:** daily (issued five times a week), founded in 1991. The founder of the daily is «'Azg' daily newspaper» LLC. The standard volume is 8/A3 pp., the claimed circulation is 3.000-5.000 copies. During the monitoring period 106 issues were published. Within the monitoring period a total of 3,847 publications was studied. Of these, 112 publications were devoted to the problem of Mountainous Karabakh – 36 being fully devoted to the issue and 76 containing a mentioning of it.

**«Golos Armenii»:** newspaper (issued three times a week), founded in 1991. The founder of the daily is «Golos» LLC. The volume is 8/A2 pp., the claimed circulation is 3.500 copies. During the monitoring period 66 issues were published. Within the monitoring period a total of 3.789 publications was studied. Of these, 221 publications were devoted to the problem of Mountainous Karabakh – 117 being fully devoted to the issue, and 104 containing a mentioning of it.

**«Haikakan Zhamanak»:** daily (issued five times a week), founded in 1997 by «Dareskizb» LLC. The standard volume is 8/A3 pp., the claimed circulation is 4,500 copies. During the monitoring period 97 issues were published, 21 of them having been published on 12/A3 pp. Within the monitoring period a total of 2,879 publications was studied. Of these, 83 publications were devoted to the problem of Mountainous Karabakh – 35 being fully devoted to the issue and 48 containing a mentioning of it. The daily closed for vacation on July 20.

«**Hayastani Hanrapetutiun**»: daily (issued five times a week), founded in 1990. The founder of the daily is «Hanrapetutiun» CJSC. The standard volume is 8/A2 pp., the claimed circulation is 6,000 copies. During the monitoring period 110 issues were published, 24 of them had a volume of 4/A2 pp. Within the monitoring period a total of 4,565 publications was studied. Of these, 132 publications were devoted to the problem of Mountainous Karabakh – 33 being fully devoted and 99 containing a mentioning of it.

«**Hayots Ashkhar**»: daily (issued five times a week), founded in 1997. The founder of the daily is «Edition of ‘Hayots Ashkhar’ daily newspaper» LLC. The standard volume is 8/A3 pp., the claimed circulation is 3,500 copies. During the monitoring period 108 issues were published, 13 of them having been published on 12/A3 pp., 21 – on 16/A3 pp. and 1 – on 24/A3 pp. Within the monitoring period a total of 4,040 publications was studied. Of these, 184 publications were devoted to the problem of Mountainous Karabakh – 58 being fully devoted to the issue and 126 containing a mentioning of it.

During the monitoring of TV channels a total of 4,087 pieces was monitored. Of these, 137 pieces (making about 3.4% of the total number of pieces) were devoted to the problem of Mountainous Karabakh: 50 (36.5%) – fully, and 87 (63.5%) – partially.

During the newspaper monitoring a total of 22,990 publications was studied. Of these, 862 publications (3.7% of the total number of pieces) were devoted to the problem of Mountainous Karabakh: 332 (38.5%) – fully, and 530 (61.5%) – partially.

In total, during the monitoring 27,077 pieces of print and broadcast media were studied, of which 999 (3.7% of the total number) were devoted to the problem of Mountainous Karabakh: 382 (38.2%) – fully, and 617 (61.8%) – partially.

The appropriateness of comparing the media attention degree towards the Karabakh problem during three years is also pre-conditioned by the fact that in 2001, 2002 and 2003 the total number of publications/TV pieces in the media studied was practically equal (somewhat greater for the print media in 2003 – due to the replenishment of the newspapers monitored by «Hayastani Hanrapetutiun»).

The table below (1) shows the frequency of media references to the subject in question (*in absolute values*):

**Table 1**

Mass media	Total number of pieces, devoted to MK issue		
	2003	2002	2001
TV	137	458	660
Newspapers	862	1,262	2,328
TV and newspapers	999	1,720	2,988

A significant reduction in the references to the subject by both print and broadcast media is obvious. The coverage of the Karabakh problem decreases year by year: it decreased twice in 2002 versus 2001 and three times – in 2003. Moreover, in 2001 and 2002 the TV and newspaper pieces, fully devoted to the problem, exceeded the proportion of pieces, containing a mentioning of it. In this study the picture has reversed: the pieces, partially devoted to the subject, are prevailing.

The reduction of the interest can be explained by a number of objective reasons. During the monitoring period of 2001 the negotiations processes were activated and therefore, the inflow of up-to-date information, comments, related to the meetings of the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan,

their personal representatives, the activities of the OSCE Minsk group, etc., increased. This resulted in intensification of discussion on the MK status, the format of the negotiations, the «package» or «stage-by-stage» options of problem resolution, etc. Year 2002 was a slowdown, while 2003 represents stagnation in the negotiations processes, and is primarily marked by the presidential and parliamentary elections in Armenia that kept the focus of media attention. The priorities in the coverage of pre- and post-election situations were at the same time economic, social and inner political issues, etc. «Karabakh factor» was almost unused or little used in both the pre-election debate and in the confrontations of authorities and opposition.

As to the indicators on individual media, in 2003 they devoted almost equal and insignificant attention to the issue of Mountainous Karabakh. The newspapers «Golos Armenii» (5.8% of the total number of pieces published) and «Hayots Ashkhar» (4.6%) are followed by the Public Television of Armenia (3.4%), «Aravot» daily (3.4%) and «Prometheus» TV (3.3%). Three other newspapers – «Haikakan Zhamanak», «Azg» and «Hayastani Hanrapetutiu» devoted to the subject 2.9% of publications each.

Should these data be compared with those of the last year, «Aravot» is the only medium having retained the old level of coverage (3.5% – in 2002). The interest of other investigated newspapers to the subject in question reduced almost by half. Thus, «Golos Armenii», having taken the second line in 2002 (12.6%), did become the leader of the table in 2003, but with twice less coverage. The gap is even greater for the TV channels: the attention to the Karabakh issue of the last year leader – «Prometheus» TV company (12.7%) reduced almost fourfold. PTA still retained the third place, however, it paid three times less attention to the problem (10.1% in 2002).

During all the studies the consideration of the options for Karabakh conflict resolution by media was traced.

The table below (2) presents the annual dynamics of discussion of the possible solutions to the conflict by peaceful talks and military action (*herein the percentages from the total number of pieces on Karabakh issue are presented*):

**Table 2**

Solutions to the conflict	2003		2002		2001	
	TV	Newspapers	TV	Newspapers	TV	Newspapers
Peace	19	21.2	49.6	25.1	42.4	30.9
War	5.8	3.8	3.3	4.8	16.2	17.3

Comparison of data on this thematic category demonstrates the reduction of publications considering the possible military resolution of the conflict in 2002-2003 versus 2001. The positive attitude towards the peaceful resolution is recorded in 30.4% (of the total number of peaces on this thematic category), the negative connotation is in 1.6% and only in three media («Hayots Ashkhar», «Golos Armenii», PTA). The negative attitude to the military solution to the problem of the same level (1.6%) is recorded only in «Hayots Ashkhar», «Haikakan Zhamanak» and «Hayastani Hanrapetutiu» newspapers. The military action is positively spoken of in 4.4% and only in the pieces of «Golos Armenii» and PTA.

Overall, the media tone is neutral. When narrating the positions quoted from Azerbaijani sources or in the pieces, considering the military solution as possible should the political resources of resolution be exhausted, the media do not resort to emotionally colored assessments and epithets.

The findings of the present research show that similarly to 2001-2002, «the peace and war» subject remains to be one of the most actively discussed ones both for the broadcast and print media. This subject, in general, received the greatest coverage among others in all the media studied, but for «Haikakan Zhamanak» and «Hayots Ashkhar», paying somewhat more attention to the interrelation of the inner political processes in Azerbaijan with the solution of MK problem. A special place is here taken by «Golos Armenia» newspaper, 43% of the coverage of which (of the total number of pieces on Karabakh issue) referred to the possible solutions of the conflict. The Public TV addressed the methods of the resolution of the problem in 29.9%, «Hayastani Hanrapetutiun» – in 25%, «Azg» – 24.2%, «Prometheus» – 18.4%, «Haikakan Zhamanak» – 18.1%, «Hayots Ashkhar» – 16.9%, «Aravot» – 11.6%.

The next category, «The Problem of Compromise» was defined by the presence of the consideration of mutual and unilateral concessions by Armenia and Azerbaijan in the publications (*table 3*). And if in 2001-2002 the media were actively discussing the compromise options, linking them to the MK status, the territory exchange, the idea of «common state», etc., in 2003 the issue of compromise was of no priority to the media and was rated the last among the thematic categories studied.

*Table 3*

<b>Problem of compromise</b>	<b>TV</b>	<b>Newspapers</b>
Mutual concessions	2.2	4.1
Concessions by Armenia	0.7	2.4
Concessions by Azerbaijan	0	0.5

As it can be seen, among the subthemes quoted above the media were most frequently discussing the possibility of mutual concessions, evaluating them positively in 17.2% (of the total number of pieces on this thematic category) and negatively in 4.7%. The compromise by Armenia was discussed in the newspapers and where only once referred to by «Prometheus» TV channel. In 6.3% of publications the press assessed them positively, and in 4.7% – negatively. The media mostly retained neutral tone when speaking about compromise and concessions of the Armenian party. The concessions by Azerbaijan were mentioned in few publications of only two media – «Azg» and «Golos Armenii».

Since the monitoring period coincided with presidential and parliamentary elections in Armenia and preceded to the pre-election race in Azerbaijan, it was important to monitor to what extent the media relate the inner political process in the neighboring country to the solution of Karabakh problem. The data obtained (*Table 4*) show that Armenian media, particularly the newspapers, placed more emphasis on Azerbaijan than on Armenia. The inner political processes in Armenia were correlated (or not) to the solution of MK problem in 10% of newspaper publications (of the total number of publications on the monitoring subject) and in 2.9% of TV pieces. For Azerbaijan these indices are somewhat higher – 14.1% in print media and 8.1% in broadcast media. At the same time in both cases the media are to a greater extent inclined to believe the inner politics of the countries is related to the Karabakh resolution than to the contrary.

**Table 4**

Content category		TV	Newspapers
Relation of inner political processes in Armenia with the solution of MK problem	Related	2.9	7.4
	Non-related	0	2.6
Relation of inner political processes in Azerbaijan with the solution of MK problem	Related	6.6	12.2
	Non-related	1.5	1.9

More than half of the publications that see parallels between the inner political situation in Armenia and the issue of Karabakh dated March – the period of elections of the RA President and after the elections. At the beginning of the official election campaign for RA National Assembly in April, the number of these publications reduced by half, and during the subsequent monitoring months (May-July) reduced to individual references.

Against the background of active coverage of the confronting pro- and anti-presidential forces, the establishment of pre-election blocs the interest of the media to the problem of Mountainous Karabakh was weakened. This is primarily pre-conditioned by the fact that Karabakh issue was little used in the pre-election race. The political forces do not emphasize it, narrating their positions on MK issue among other political, social, economic and other problems. The opposition, expressing its discontent with the results of the presidential elections, also uses the argument that the questionable legitimacy of the President can weaken the positions of Armenia in the conflict resolution.

The peak of coverage of the association of inner political process in Azerbaijan with the solution of MK problem is recorded in July, when the preparation for the elections of AR President starts. Among publications on Azerbaijan the pieces where the health condition of President Heydar Aliev, the upcoming elections, the possible change of power in the country and other questions are considered also in the context of their impact on the process of Karabakh resolution, prevail. The media also speak about the destruction of Armenian historical monuments in the territory of Azerbaijan.

The thematic category of «The influence of external factors on the solution of MK problem» incorporated the pieces on the activities of OSCE Minsk group, PACE, the Council of Europe, discussions of the situation in Armenia and Azerbaijan in Strasbourg and Brussels and other publications on the position that other countries have on the issue – also the countries having interest in the region (Turkey, Iran, etc.)

The print media were much more active in exploring this theme than the broadcast ones, sticking to the opinion that external factors did affect the Karabakh resolution process (*table 5*).

**Table 5**

Content categories		TV	Newspapers
Influence of external factors on the solution of MK problem	Observed	2.2	10.2
	Not observed	2.9	1.7

The media informed about the visits of the NATO Secretary General Lord George Robertson to Armenia and Azerbaijan, his meeting with the President of Armenia Robert Kocharian. Fears were expressed that close cooperation of Azerbaijan with NATO will allow this country to enjoy an advantage in the resolution of MK problem. Similar fears were expressed also with regard to Azerbaijani support to the USA position in the Iraq issue. The visit of PACE rapporteur on Mountainous Karabakh. Terry Davis was covered. The media reproduced practically with no comments the interview of the former President of Turkey Suleyman Demirel to the «Turkish Daily News» on the Karabakh resolution, where Demirel mentioned that the USA, France, UK, Iran, Turkey must help the Governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan to find compromise solution of the MK problem. The media also produced the view point of another Turkish newspaper «Hurriyet» on the meeting of Armenian and Turkish Foreign Ministers in Madrid during which opinions on MK were exchanged – again with no comments.

The issue of external influence on the MK problem was most actively explored in July (more than half of the publications). The election fever had ceased and the media started to come back to issues of long-term importance.

In general, the reduced attention of the media to the MK problem during the monitoring of 2003, naturally complicates the consideration of the dynamics of separate themes by outlining characteristic trends in their development.

The attention of individual media to the each of the problem aspects during the monitoring period can be seen in table below (6).

*Table 6*

Themes	Prometheus	PTA	Aravot	Azg	Golos Armenii	Haikakan Zhama-nak	Hayastani Hanrape-tutiun	Hayots Ashkhar
<b>Solutions to the conflict</b>	18.4	29.9	11.6	24.2	43	18.1	25	16.9
<b>Problem of compromise</b>	3.4	2.6	8.5	8.1	8.6	4.8	5.3	5.4
<b>Relation of inner political processes in Armenia with the solution of MK problem</b>	3.3	2.6	9.2	8	10.4	15.6	6	11.4
<b>Relation of inner political processes in Azerbaijan with the solution of MK problem</b>	3.3	11.7	8.5	10.7	17.6	19.3	6.1	19
<b>Influence of external factors on the solution of MK problem</b>	6.6	3.9	11.6	14.3	15.4	12	6.1	10.8

During the monitoring of 2001-2003 certain established trends of media use of sources and information types were recorded.

In print media practically equal proportion of self-produced information and use of other Armenian sources is still present. In 2003 the newspapers used their own sources in 69.7% of the

total number of pieces, devoted to the Karabakh problem, and other Armenian sources in 26.9%. Similar data are recorded in the researches of 2001 and 2002.

The share of Azerbaijani sources remarkably increased in the newspapers as compared with 2002 (4.4%). These are mostly reprints from «Zerkalo», «Echo» newspapers, communications of «Turan» news agency, etc. The press used information from foreign sources a bit more frequently. At the same time, if this indicator be compared with that of 2001, it has reduced threefold (2.2% – in 2003 versus 6.9% – in 2001). Official documents were completely absent from the last year research. In monitoring of 2003 their share amounted to 1.4%. These were mostly the texts of addresses, the pre-elections programs of participants of the presidential and parliamentary elections on the issue of MK. In general, for all this indicators, but for the foreign sources, the picture of use of various information opportunities by print media in 2003 is similar to that of 2001.

And finally, the share of the Karabakh sources in the press remains unchangeably small during the past three years (0.2% in 2003, 0.5% in 2002 and 0.3% in 2001). The explanation to this is the availability of information channels in Karabakh to the mainstream Armenian media.

In the present research the trend for steady increase of self-produced information on the TV channels, observed since 2001, was finally confirmed (83.3% – in 2001, 94.8% – in 2002) as well as the reciprocal trend for reduction in other sources. Thus, in 2001 the information, received from other Armenian sources, on the TV channels amounted to 14.4%, while in 2002 it made only 2.2%. In 2003 the broadcast media studied reported only self-produced pieces, which used other information channels only for reference, quotations, etc.

The analysis of the data received during the three studies by the type of material presentation by the broadcast media show the permanent domination of event-oriented information. The share of the latter had increased radically in 2002 and the significant difference continued into 2003. As to the print media, the picture is quite different here (*Table 7*).

*Table 7*

Type of material	TV			Newspapers		
	2003	2002	2001	2003	2002	2001
Event-oriented (news)	94.9	91.7	69.7	67.4	43.6	54.2
Analytic	5.1	8.3	30.3	32.6	56.4	45.8

If in 2001 the information and analytical pieces in the newspapers were almost evenly distributed, and in 2002 the press gave more room to the analysis, in the present research the event-oriented information is twice prevailing (appropriately, 67.4% and 32.6% of the total number of pieces on Karabakh issue). This confirms the conclusion that «Karabakh card» in the pre-election campaign was little used, since obviously, the presentation of the positions of political forces calls for the increase in the analysis and comment publications.

Besides, the aspiration of print media to present the pure facts to the audience, refraining from making evaluations and comments, was recorded also by another media monitoring, conducted by us parallelly. The hypothesis of adoption of basics of modern journalism by Armenian media was voiced in the research of 2002. It is confirmed by the findings of this study. Yet, this hypothesis holds mostly for the subjects that are not political priorities. The Karabakh resolution was among this category during the first half of 2003. Touching upon the subject, actively used in the inner political confrontation, the media still get carried away by evaluations and comments, protecting the interests that are closest to them.

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## MOUNTAINOUS KARABAKH MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE KARABAKH SETTLEMENT PROBLEM

*The media monitoring in Mountainous Karabakh focused on 1 TV channel and 2 newspapers.*

**Artsakh Television:** public TV and radio company, founded in 1988. The company was transformed into public since January 1, 2003. The managing body is the Council of Public TV and Radio Company. The airtime periodicity is 1.5 hours daily. The newscast of Artsakh Television «Lratu» and «Open the Parentheses» information and analysis program were monitored. «Lratu» is aired once a day for six days a week (Monday-Saturday) at 18:30. «Open the Parentheses» is aired once a week (on Sundays) at 18:30. During the study period 129 issues of «Lratu» and 22 issue of «Open the Parentheses» were aired. Within the monitoring period a total of 1,520 pieces was studied. Of these, 259 pieces were devoted to the problem of Mountainous Karabakh – 142 being fully devoted to the issue and 117 containing a mentioning of it.

**«Aparazh»:** newspaper, issued twice a month, founded in 1991 by Artsakh Central Committee of «Dashnaksutiun» party. The volume is 8/A3 pp., the claimed circulation is 1,000 copies. During the study period 8 issues were published. Within the monitoring period a total of 192 publications has been studied. Of these, 41 publications were devoted to the problem of Mountainous Karabakh – 14 being fully devoted to the issue and 27 contained a mentioning of it. The newspaper closed for vacation in July.

**«Azat Artsakh»:** newspaper, issued three times a week in Armenian language and once a week in Russian. The newspaper was founded in 1998 by the National Assembly and the government of Mountainous Karabakh. The volume is 8/A3 pp., the claimed circulation is 1,500 copies. The Armenian-language issues were monitored. During the study period 66 issues were published. Within the monitoring period a total of 1,144 publications was studied. Of these, 276 publications were devoted to the problem of Mountainous Karabakh – 142 being fully devoted to the issue and 134 containing a mentioning of it.

Out of the total number of pieces of Artsakh TV, studied during the monitoring period, 17% were devoted to the Mountainous Karabakh problem, of which 54.8% were fully devoted and 45.2% contained a mentioning of the issue.

In the course of newspaper monitoring a total of 1,336 publications was studied. Of these, 317 publications (23.7% of the total number of pieces) were devoted to the issue of Mountainous Karabakh, 156 (49.2%) being fully devoted and 161 (50.8%) containing a mentioning of it.

In total, during the monitoring 2,856 TV reports and newspaper publications were studied, of which 576 (20.2% of the total number of pieces) were devoted to the issue of Mountainous Karabakh – 298 (51.7%) being fully devoted and 278 (48.3%) containing a mentioning of it.

Similar research on MK problem were conducted also in 2001 and 2002. This allows drawing comparison between the coverage of the MK problem by Karabakh media in the course of three years.

The *table 1* below presents the number of pieces on the MK problem in the dynamics for three years (*in absolute values*):

**Table 1**

Mass media	Total number of pieces on MK problem		
	2003	2002	2001
Artsakh TV	259	337	481
Newspapers	317	256	337

If the print media keep the attention to the problem on approximately the same level, the trend for its reduction on TV is evident. Thus, in 2002 the MK problem on Artsakh TV was covered in 22.1%, in 2003 – in 17% of the total number of pieces studied. For «Aparazh» newspaper, on the contrary, significant intensification of interest is recorded: from 12.9% in 2002 to 21.4% in 2003. The coverage of the problem by «Azat Artsakh» remains almost the same: 21.3% in 2002 and 24.1% in 2003.

At the same time in the current research for the first time the dominance of the pieces fully devoted to the MK problem in the Karabakh media is registered. The findings of the studies in 2001-2002 revealed a reverse picture: the portion of the pieces where the problem was only mentioned prevailed.

Overall the media of Karabakh display steady attention and a greater interest in the subject in question (20.2% of the total number of pieces), than the media of Azerbaijan and Armenia, where this indicator is much lower. Thus, as compared with 2001 in 2002 the MK coverage in the media of two countries became 2.5 – 2 times less. In 2003 in the media of Azerbaijan the attention to the subject of monitoring remained practically unchanged (6.1% – in 2002 and 7% – in 2003), whereas in the Armenian media the references to the subject have been cut in half (7.7% – in 2002 and 3.7% – in 2003).

The attitude of the Karabakh media to the ways of conflict resolution is also unchangeable. The slant in favor of the peaceful solution was traced in all three studies, as shown in *table 2* below (*herein the percentages from the total number of pieces on Karabakh problem are presented*):

**Table 2**

Ways of conflict resolution	2003		2002		2001	
	TV	Newspapers	TV	Newspapers	TV	Newspapers
Peace	14.3	12.3	22	10.2	76.4	58
War	4.6	7.3	3.9	2.3	22.4	39.7

While the total number of pieces on the subject was somewhat smaller in 2003, it was at the same time a priority among other categories studied. The media devoted to it 19.3% of the total number of pieces on MK problem. At the same time the coverage of other aspects of the problem is presented within the range from 4% to a bit more than 7%.

The distinctly expressed attitude towards the solutions of the conflict is also interesting. Thus, in both 2002 and 2003 the number of emotionally colored mentionings exceeded the neutral ones. And if in 2002, similarly to 2001, against the background of positive attitude to the peaceful resolution of the conflict and the rejection of the military action there were a few pieces with a

negative attitude towards peace and positive attitude to war, in 2003 these are completely absent. In 49.5% (of the total number of pieces on this thematic category) noted positive attitude to the peaceful solution, in 12.6% – a negative attitude to the military solution. In the remaining 37.8% the attitude to both methods of conflict resolution is neutral.

In 2001-2002 the media of Karabakh were actively discussing the issues of MK status, analyzed various options for arriving at agreements, starting from a territory exchange up to the concept of «common state». As a concession the return of a part of territory from «MK security zone» was considered, as well as options, related to the Goble plan, etc.

In 2003 the compromise subject was not among the top ones (*Table 3*). Artsakh TV only gave it 2.7% (of the total number of pieces on MK problem). In the print media (only 5.4%) the compromise options were discussed on the pages of «Azat Artsakh» and only once in neutral context – in «Aparazh» (mutual concessions).

**Table 3**

<b>Problem of compromise</b>	<b>Artsakh TV</b>	<b>Newspapers</b>
Mutual concessions	1.9	3.2
Concessions by Armenia	0	0.6
Concessions by Azerbaijan	0.8	1.6

Concessions by Armenia were never discussed on TV, the attitude to concessions by Azerbaijan was once positive and once negative. The mutual compromise of the two countries were also discussed in neutral context. The colored mentionings are somewhat more numerous in «Azat Artsakh» newspaper. In six cases (three for each) the mutual concessions and concessions by Azerbaijan are assessed positively, in one case negative attitude to compromise by Armenia is expressed.

While Karabakh media were closely following the presidential and parliamentary elections in Armenia, here, similarly to the media of Armenia, the solution of MK problem was little linked to the internal political processes of Armenia, whereas more attention was paid to its linkage with political processes in Azerbaijan. A similar picture is present in the media of Azerbaijan, where the conflict resolution is to a greater extent linked to the inner political situation in the country itself than in Armenia.

Similarly to the media of Azerbaijan and Armenia, the media of Karabakh believe that the MK problem resolution depends on the political situation in both countries (*table 4*)

**Table 4**

<b>Content categories</b>		<b>Artsakh TV</b>	<b>Newspapers</b>
Relation of inner political processes in Armenia with the solution of MK problem	Related	5.4	4.1
	Non-related	0.4	0.6
Relation of inner political processes in Azerbaijan with the solution of MK problem	Related	8.5	4.7
	Non-related	0.4	1.6

The greatest coverage of the interrelation of the inner political processes in Armenia with the MK issue was present in March (the time for the second round of presidential elections in Armenia and the subsequent tension in political life). A similar picture – this time for Azerbaijan – is observed in July (before the election campaign of AR President). The Karabakh media are rather active in exploring this subject in March too – in the context of Armenian presidential elections. It is mostly present in analytical pieces where the possible options for change of power in Azerbaijan were considered.

With the same extent of activity as the Azerbaijani one, the theme of external factor influence on MK resolution is considered by the Karabakh media (*table 5*):

**Table 5**

Content categories		Artsakh TV	Newspapers
Influence of external factors on the solution of MK problem	Observed	5.8	4.4
	Not observed	1.2	3.5

While Artsakh TV is more inclined to believe there is an influence of external factors on Karabakh resolution, the newspapers speak about both the presence and absence of this impact.

The data below (*table 6*) show the distribution of attention of each media studied to the thematic categories:

**Table 6**

Themes	Artsakh TV	Aparazh	Azat Artsakh
Solutions to the conflict	18.9	9.7	21
Problem of compromise	2.7	2.4	5.8
Relation of inner political processes in Armenia with the solution of MK problem	5.8	2.4	5
Relation of inner political processes in Azerbaijan with the solution of MK problem	8.9	4.8	6.5
Influence of external factors on the solution of MK problem	7	9.8	7.6

The present study, similarly to the previous ones, showed that the priority information channel for the Karabakh media was their own sources. And if in the newspapers the self-produced information remained on the level of 70% (of the total quantity of pieces on MK problem), making 71.9% in 2003, on the television the 70% level of 2002 was reduced to 48.6% in 2003, thus becoming almost equal to the figure of 2001.

Most frequently, the second most relied information channel for Karabakh media are the Armenian sources: Artsakh TV in 27.4%, newspapers in 20.8%. As compared with 2003 and 2001 the representation of Armenian sources in 2002 was twice less.

The use of information from other Karabakh sources by Artsakh TV as compared with 2001 has increased fivefold in 2002 and amounted to 11.6% in 2003. The share of other Karabakh sources in «Azat Artsakh» newspaper, on the contrary, has been steadily reducing (from 17.7% – 15% in 2001-2002 to 8.3% in 2003). «Aparazh» did not use other Karabakh sources in 2003 at all, while addressed them during the previous years on the level of 3.9% – 4.5% respectively.

The increase of information from Azerbaijani sources in all media is noteworthy. By the results of the present monitoring it made 13.1% on TV and 8.5% – in print media.

The share of information from foreign sources has also increased in the newspapers – 4.7%. On television there is an abrupt gap between this indicator in 2001 and 2002 (from 18.3% to 3%, respectively). In 2003 the foreign sources have been presented in the same volume on TV (4.6%), as in print media.

The proportion of event-oriented and analytical information in media is as follows (*table 7*):

**Table 7**

Material type	Artsakh TV			Newspapers		
	2003	2002	2001	2003	2002	2001
Event-oriented (news)	66.8	79.8	63.2	55.8	44.5	38.5
Analytic	33.2	20.2	36.8	44.2	55.5	61.5

As it can be seen, due to its specifics, the television gives preference to event-oriented pieces. In print media the trend to annual reduction of analytical publications and the increase of purely news pieces is traced. This, similarly to the case of Armenian media, shows that there are less issues calling for interpretation. Freezing the negotiations while retaining interest towards their subject results in the dominance of event-oriented information. The situation is reverse in the media of Azerbaijan, where in 2003 for the first time the prevalence of analytical pieces is recorded.



## SUMMARY TABLE OF AZERBAIJANI MASS MEDIA MONITORING

(«Yeni Musavat», «Xalg gazetisi», «Azadlig», «Ekho», «Zerkalo» newspapers, «AZTV-1», «ANS» TV companies)

(March - July, 2003)

	Code	Content category	March			April			May			June			July			Total				
			Frequency of occurrence	Attitude			Frequency of occurrence	Attitude			Frequency of occurrence	Attitude			Frequency of occurrence	Attitude			Frequency of occurrence	Attitude		
				Positive	Neutral	Negative																
				(+)	0	(-)		(+)	0	(-)		(+)	0	(-)		(+)	0	(-)		(+)	0	(-)
Extent of presence of the theme	1	Total number of materials in newspaper/TV	6801			7297			7508			6611			7859			36076				
	2	Materials fully concerning the MK issue	230			287			189			153			282			1141				
	3	Materials partially concerning the MK issue	320			303			309			222			218			1372				
		<i>Total</i>	550			590			498			375			500			2513				
Ways of resolving the conflict	5	Peace	173	81	62	30	234	77	119	38	215	98	105	12	178	63	105	11	226	96	115	14
	6	Militarily	72	47	20	5	80	56	16	8	157	99	51	7	134	53	79	2	190	82	100	8
		<i>Total</i>	245	128	82	35	314	133	135	46	372	197	156	19	312	116	184	13	416	178	215	22
Problem of compromises	10	Mutual compromises	11	1	8	2	3	0	2	1	10	1	8	1	3	2	1	0	3	0	3	0
	11	Compromises by Armenia	47	37	9	1	53	41	10	2	20	12	6	2	32	20	11	1	60	40	19	1
	12	Compromises by Azerbaijan	6	1	0	5	6	0	2	4	3	2	0	1	3	0	1	2	1	0	0	1
		<i>Total</i>	64	39	17	8	62	41	14	7	33	15	14	4	38	22	13	3	64	40	22	2
Connection between domestic political processes in Azerbaijan and the Karabakh solution	20	Connected	164			160			170			122			176			792				
	21	Non-connected	2			7			6			1			1			17				
		<i>Total</i>	166			167			176			123			177			809				
Connection between domestic political processes in Armenia and the Karabakh solution	30	Connected	43			100			11			12			12			178				
	31	Non-connected	3			4			5			1			4			17				
		<i>Total</i>	46			104			16			13			16			195				
Impact of external factors on the Karabakh settlement	40	Observed	246			299			202			155			192			1094				
	41	Not observed	4			44			9			2			8			67				
		<i>Total</i>	250			343			211			157			200			1161				
Type of information	50	Follow-up (information)	231			326			148			131			178			1014				
	51	Analytical	319			271			346			242			321			1499				
		<i>Total</i>	550			597			494			373			499			2513				
Sources	60	Own sources	525			548			462			353			464			2352				
	61	Other Azerbaijani sources	189			263			189			125			176			942				
	62	Armenian sources	49			40			26			40			45			200				
	63	Karabakh sources	2			1			1			0			4			8				
	64	Foreign sources	107			123			86			70			71			457				
	65	Official sources	17			13			1			1			67			99				
		<i>Total</i>	889			988			765			589			827			4058				

# SUMMARY TABLE OF ARMENIAN MEDIA MONITORING

(«PROMETHEUS» TV COMPANY, PUBLIC TELEVISION OF ARMENIA,  
«ARAVOT», «AZG», «GOLOS ARMENII», «HAIKAKAN ZHAMANAK», «HAYASTANI HANRAPETUTIUN», «HAYOTS ASHKHAR»  
NEWSPAPERS)

(March - July 2003)

	Content category	MARCH			APRIL			MAY			JUNE			JULY			TOTAL								
		Frequency of occurrence	Attitude		Frequency of occurrence	Attitude		Frequency of occurrence	Attitude		Frequency of occurrence	Attitude		Frequency of occurrence	Attitude		Frequency of occurrence	Attitude							
			Positive	Negative		Neutral	Positive		Negative	Neutral		Positive	Negative		Neutral	Positive		Negative	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Neutral			
		+	-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0						
	Total number of pieces	5608			5556			5579			4838			5496			27077								
<i>Subject presence form</i>	Pieces fully devoted to MK issue	70			88			71			60			93			382								
	Pieces partially devoted to MK issue	140			109			103			86			179			617								
	<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>			<b>197</b>			<b>174</b>			<b>146</b>			<b>272</b>			<b>999</b>								
<i>Solutions to the conflict</i>	Peace	57	8	0	49	65	38	1	26	40	20	2	18	24	6	1	17	23	4	0	19	209	76	4	129
	War	1	0	0	1	9	6	0	3	7	2	0	5	10	3	3	4	14	0	1	13	41	11	4	26
	<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>155</b>
<i>Problem of compromise</i>	Mutual concessions	7	3	1	3	5	3	1	1	11	5	0	6	7	0	1	6	8	0	0	8	38	11	3	24
	Concessions by Armenia	10	4	2	4	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	4	0	1	3	6	0	0	6	22	4	3	15
	Concessions by Azerbaijan	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	4	0	1	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>42</b>
<i>Relation of inner political processes in Armenia with the solution of MK problem</i>	Related	28			22					4				6				8				68			
	Non-related	19			2					0				0				1				22			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>			<b>24</b>					<b>4</b>				<b>6</b>				<b>9</b>				<b>90</b>			
<i>Relation of inner political processes in Azerbaijan with the solution of MK problem</i>	Related	17			22					13				17				45				114			
	Non-related	11			4					0				0				3				18			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>			<b>26</b>					<b>13</b>				<b>17</b>				<b>48</b>				<b>132</b>			
<i>Influence of external factors on the solution of MK problem</i>	Observed	16			8					3				14				50				91			
	Not observed	6			2					1				4				6				19			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>			<b>10</b>					<b>4</b>				<b>18</b>				<b>56</b>				<b>110</b>			
<i>Type of material</i>	Event-oriented (news)	108			130					120				128				225				711			
	Analytic	102			67					54				18				47				288			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>			<b>197</b>					<b>174</b>				<b>146</b>				<b>272</b>				<b>999</b>			
<i>Information source</i>	Own sources	161			147					131				108				191				738			
	Other Armenian sources	42			46					34				33				77				232			
	Azerbaijani sources	10			6					2				5				15				38			
	Karabagh sources	0			0					0				0				2				2			
	Foreign sources	1			1					5				5				7				19			
	Official documents	3			2					3				2				2				12			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>			<b>202</b>					<b>175</b>				<b>153</b>				<b>294</b>				<b>1041</b>			

# SUMMARY TABLE OF KARABAGH MEDIA MONITORING

(ARTSAKH TELEVISION, «APARAZH», «AZAT ARTSAKH» NEWSPAPERS)

(March – July 2003)

	Content category	MARCH			APRIL			MAY			JUNE			JULY			TOTAL								
		Frequency of occurrence	Attitude			Frequency of occurrence	Attitude			Frequency of occurrence	Attitude			Frequency of occurrence	Attitude			Frequency of occurrence	Attitude						
			Positive	Negative	Neutral		Positive	Negative	Neutral		Positive	Negative	Neutral		Positive	Negative	Neutral		Positive	Negative	Neutral				
+	-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0	+	-	0					
<i>Subject presence form</i>	Total number of pieces	581			592				622				531				530				2856				
	Pieces fully devoted to MK issue	55			58				67				46				72				298				
	Pieces partially devoted to MK issue	50			71				67				46				44				278				
	<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>			<b>129</b>				<b>134</b>				<b>92</b>				<b>116</b>				<b>576</b>				
<i>Solutions to the conflict</i>	Peace	15	10	0	5	15	11	0	4	20	15	0	5	6	3	0	3	20	16	0	4	76	55	0	21
	War	2	0	0	2	8	0	2	6	9	0	5	4	5	0	1	4	11	0	6	5	35	0	14	21
	<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>42</b>
<i>Problem of compromise</i>	Mutual concessions	5	1	0	4	2	0	0	2	3	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	4	1	0	3	15	3	0	12
	Concessions by Armenia	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	1
	Concessions by Azerbaijan	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	4	0	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>
<i>Relation of inner political processes in Armenia with the solution of MK problem</i>	Related	11			3				8				5				0				27				
	Non-related	1			0				1				0				1				3				
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>			<b>3</b>				<b>9</b>				<b>5</b>				<b>1</b>				<b>30</b>				
<i>Relation of inner political processes in Azerbaijan with the solution of MK problem</i>	Related	9			5				6				8				9				37				
	Non-related	2			0				0				0				4				6				
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>			<b>5</b>				<b>6</b>				<b>8</b>				<b>13</b>				<b>43</b>				
<i>Influence of external factors on the solution of MK problem</i>	Observed	5			7				5				5				7				29				
	Not observed	4			3				3				1				3				14				
	<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>			<b>10</b>				<b>8</b>				<b>6</b>				<b>10</b>				<b>43</b>				
<i>Type of material</i>	Event-oriented (news)	66			76				84				48				76				350				
	Analytic	39			53				50				44				40				226				
	<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>			<b>129</b>				<b>134</b>				<b>92</b>				<b>116</b>				<b>576</b>				
<i>Information source</i>	Own sources	61			81				87				65				60				354				
	Other Karabagh sources	13			12				11				6				11				53				
	Azerbaijani sources	13			12				15				13				8				61				
	Armenian sources	28			29				23				17				40				137				
	Foreign sources	2			1				8				9				7				27				
	Official documents	0			0				0				0				1				1				
<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>			<b>135</b>				<b>144</b>				<b>110</b>				<b>127</b>				<b>633</b>					