

**Stability and Peace in the Caucasus:
The Conflict in Nagorny Karabakh by Way of Example**

Outline of an International Workshop
jointly organized by the Protestant Academy of Loccum
and the Development and Peace Foundation (SEF), Bonn,
to be held from 2 to 4 May 2001 in Loccum

1. The Issues

The collapse of the Soviet Union triggered a geopolitical reorganization that has led to numerous conflicts. The territorial integrity of many states has been called into question both from within and from without. In some conflicts that were being played out by violent means, negotiation-based efforts and external peace-missions have helped put a stop to the armed dissension. But this has brought us no nearer to solving the political conflicts and building up a stable peace-order. In this situation of 'frozen' conflicts, illegal, mafia-like economies and economies based on violence have emerged which can also be used as bases from which to secure political power. However, because the Caucasus possesses an enormous potential of oil and gas reserves, the interests of external actors (Russia, the USA, the European Union member-states, Turkey, Iran) also come into play. These actors are trying to help overcome the conflict and foster development in the region, but in doing so they sometimes play an ambivalent role, oscillating between intervention and stabilization.

The danger that one or more of the parties could in future resort to military means to push through their interests and claims in the Caucasus, and that this could precipitate dangerous crises and violent conflicts, is still considerable. No long-term solution can ever be expected from a military approach. The only constructive starting-points lie in intensive economic and political co-operation between all the parties involved. The countries in question find themselves in deep crisis in terms of development; but with its wealth of the already mentioned resources, the region offers good prospects for development and growth.

In the coming years, the southern Caucasus could emerge as a proving ground where the earnestness of German and EU policies of prevention and stability are put to the test. The region falls within the sphere of interest not only of the USA, Russia, and the regional powers Turkey and Iran, but also, to no small degree, of the European states. In the region itself, there are high hopes that the European Union might help promote stability and peace and exploit the opportunities for development and growth.

2. Aims and Content of the Meeting

The purpose of the International Workshop is, on the one hand, to analyse the causes of the conflict, its realities, and the obstacles to peace, and, on the other, to further the discussion as to what options for peace and development exist within the region, and what the Europeans might do here to promote stability and peace. In this connection, the meeting will need to discuss the options for action and schemes of the EU and its member states and of the civil-society actors.

In order to crystallize out the basic issues in a policy-oriented form, two key areas will be demarcated:

First, the meeting will discuss whether it would be a good idea, borrowing from the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, to develop an EU stability pact or common strategy for the Caucasus region. The conflicts over Abkhazia, Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh are bound by a complex web of interrelations. On the one hand there are problems specific to each situation, which call for individual answers; on the other hand, the Caucasus region as a whole will only regain its stability and security if proposed solutions encompass all three conflict-regions. We therefore need to consider what tasks a stability pact would have to fulfil and how these tasks should be tackled in practical terms. The following points in particular would therefore need to be discussed:

- stabilization of the security situation through co-operation and confidence-building
- development of a constructive political culture and improvement of the rule of law and the human-rights situation in the countries in question
- promotion of intensive economic co-operation at both intra- and extra-regional levels
- creation of platforms bringing together all the central actors in the region.

It seems that a stability pact can clearly only be the first step. It is more important that local actors are prepared and willing to cooperate on an intra-regional level and to negotiate compromise solutions. Furthermore, the institutional weakness of the concerned countries has to be tackled.

Secondly, the reflections on effective and coherent means of dealing with the conflict should be tied into a concrete example. This method has proved its value—in meetings of the most varied kinds—as a means of getting beyond general models and bringing in real actors, negotiations, and processes of conflict as they exist on the ground. Most experts consider that the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh plays a key role in this connection. This autonomous region belongs to Azerbaijan but is populated chiefly by Armenians. In 1991 the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan led to war, and this subsequently extended to the question of the affiliation of the Azerbaijani region of Nakhichevan. The OSCE has been engaged in a search for solutions here for a long time, within the framework of the Minsk Group, but finding a settlement that will satisfy all ethno-political actors in the region has to date not proved possible. An approach needs to be found in which resistance will remain within calculable limits. In addition, it is vital that embryonic attempts at understanding and exchange between the sometimes hostile ethno-political communities be bolstered.

The workshop will discuss how structures of war and violence in Nagorno-Karabakh, and in the relationship between Azerbaijan and Armenia, can be overcome and political settlements arrived at.

In this connection, we shall look, on the one hand, at the role of official diplomacy: What have been the successes and failures of conflict management by the OSCE and the various nation-state actors involved in the situation? What openings exist for extending and intensifying these efforts? What mandates are required for this, and what schemes and instruments might be of use?

We shall also ask what peace-promoting structures have emerged within society and the economy, how these can be further developed and strengthened, and what contribution can be made to this process from outside. Consideration will be given both to a variety of 'second-track initiatives' and to attempts by development co-operation to build up peace-promoting structures and to facilitate understanding at the civil-society level. Finally, the meeting could divide into small groups to discuss selected aspects of a possible peace-settlement:

- political status and options for governance / power sharing / distribution of competencies
- peacekeeping
- socio-economic reconstruction-programmes and the prospects for development.

3. Participants

Invitations to the International Workshop will be made on an open basis.

We are particularly keen to enlist experts from politics, the administration, international organizations, the academic world, the churches, political foundations, non-governmental organizations, and the media—both from the crisis regions themselves and from the industrialized countries.

Jörg Calließ, Evangelische Akademie Loccum

Burkhard Könitzer, Stiftung Entwicklung und Frieden