

A world at war, from the Balkans to Tajikistan

An interview with Karen Vardanian

Karen Vardanian, a member of Presidium of the Union for Constitutional Rights (Armenia), was interviewed for EIR on Dec. 23, 1993 by Konstantin George and Muriel Mirak-Weissbach. His answers were translated from Russian.

EIR: Everyone in the West is talking about the results of the Russian elections of Dec. 12. What is your general evaluation of the Russian election results? In this context, could you comment on what you expect from post-election Russian policy toward Armenia and both the Transcaucasus and North Caucasus?

Vardanian: First, I would like to talk about the external conditions which accompanied the election. It must be said that direct and clear pressure on Russia by U.S. and international organizations was very much in evidence. This was confirmed by [U.S. Vice President Albert] Gore's visit in Russia after the election and his statement about the International Monetary Fund, his criticism concerning the IMF.

I think that all the necessary preconditions to destroy the Russian economy have been already created, therefore pressure on Russia from the U.S. and international organizations will not be so overt. This pressure will be directed through certain channels, and it will not be so visible from the outside.

As for Zhirinovskiy, his victory as the main result or the main, so to speak, indicator of the election, does not mean that the policy will necessarily change, since Zhirinovskiy was elected with the help of the government, with the help of the people who now rule the Russian state. The television and radio coverage is quite revealing; they were advertising Zhirinovskiy as much as possible before the election, and this goes not only for Russian but also for western media. It is also indicative that Russian radio and television are essentially in the hands of the Yeltsin and Gaidar group, and that this very

radio, television, and press were talking and writing about the fact that Gaidar used American taxpayers' money for his advertising, which means that he could use funds sent from the U.S. to help reforms in Russia, to prepare television commercials for his party. This was a sort of self-discreditation. I do not mean Gaidar, of course, but the forces which stand behind him.

They showed that Gaidar had dirty money—some of it was government money, since many high officials were participating in his party and kindred parties—while in the case of Zhirinovskiy not a word was said about whether his money was clean or dirty. That automatically told people that Zhirinovskiy's and his party's money was clean. This is very important.

Secondly, Zhirinovskiy's image. One has to give him credit: He is a very good performer, and an experienced KGB officer; he has been playing his role very well. He plays the role of an easily recognizable Russian guy with a very tough attitude to life. This is a very recognizable image for an ordinary voter, the easily recognizable features of a simple Russian man.

Besides everything else, the last 70 years in the Soviet Union, and especially the last five years, were marked by self-humiliation, denigration of one's own dignity in Russia and the former Soviet republics, in relation to the West. This is why the necessity to resist, and defend national dignity, appeared. Before the election, Yeltsin stopped the parties which were running on a nationalistic platform and thinking about the Russian state in principle, such as Ilya Konstantinov's party and others, but he allowed the Communists to participate in the elections. All sorts of propaganda was directed against the Communists, but for some reason it was nationalist parties which were banned. As a result, a voter who participated in the election did not have a choice. He



In 1992, these displaced Croatians, returning to Lipik, West Slavonia, stare in disbelief at their destroyed homes. "I think that after the recent recognition of Macedonia, the war in former Yugoslavia will get a new push."

was against Gaidar, he was against the Communists since he knew who the Communists were, so he had no other choice, especially since Zhirinovskiy was running on nationalistic slogans—although he has nothing to do with the national strength or national aspirations of Russia; this you can easily see. Voters do not understand the ins and outs, so as a result they voted for Zhirinovskiy.

What can be said about a change of policy? I am sure that Russia does not make its internal and foreign policy from one day to the next. In any case, the forces which shape Russian policies do this a few years beforehand, sometimes ten years in advance. So I do not think that something will change in political terms—the strategy, the goals; their goals will not change, although it is difficult to discern them exactly. The election showed that the tactics will change. Zhirinovskiy will be used as a pretext for changes in policy, but these will be, of course, tactical changes. For one thing, Zhirinovskiy will help the government to extract as much money as possible from the West. And apparently western countries are also interested in this, at least people in governments or governments. Since it would be difficult for German, French, British, or American governments not to know what mechanisms are functioning in Russia and yet they continue to help, it may be assumed that these funds are somehow divided and part of them stay in the West or are transferred to the West. Because in Russia everything is being looted; that is now clear to everyone. Somebody is making big money on this.

Of course, the outward regulation of policies will change, in the direction of direct Russian participation in local wars most probably, and Zhirinovskiy will help in this very much. Although it is difficult to say what the internal political situation in Russia will look like, how high Zhirinovskiy will go in the near future.

What changes will occur in the policy toward the Transcaucasus, and accordingly also in the North Caucasus? It seems that the situation in the Transcaucasus is changing significantly. The wars in and around this region are spreading, and their influence on the world is increasing, and it looks as if in some time, maybe within a year, Russia will participate more directly in politics in the Transcaucasus. The emergence of Zhirinovskiy is also a lever for changing the mentality both in Russia and in the West with respect to Russia—how much may Russia be allowed to do, so to speak?

EIR: In an exchange of views with participants from Russia, Ukraine, Armenia, and Georgia, hosted by *EIR* recently, you developed in a very coherent way the grave danger that the present war in former Yugoslavia and the wars in the Caucasus could in the future merge into one vast regional conflict embracing all the Balkan states, Turkey, the Caucasus, and Iran, and also involve directly or indirectly the superpowers, putting the world on the verge of a Third World War. Could you elaborate that for our readers?

Vardanian: I would like to draw an analogy with the First and Second World Wars. In both wars, the basic problems were connected with key points which had to be controlled. Today, in my mind, the most important points are the Balkans and the Transcaucasus. We see that war is going on in both those regions. and there is also an intensifying war in Tajikistan. It would be desirable, therefore, to investigate the connection among those wars. Both of these wars are of great interest to Turkey. Accordingly, Turkey has concentrated its troops in those two directions: in the direction of the Balkans in its European part, and in the direction of the Transcaucasus.

At present, war is being waged in Kurdistan and in the western part of Armenia, the part which underwent the genocide and which has been a part of Turkey since the Russian-Turkish Treaty was signed on March 16, 1921. So there is a war going on there, and it is interesting that the mass media are not very much concerned with this war, and do not cover it too much, not to any extent commensurate with the scale of the war. In reality, this war is a very serious war; hundreds of thousands of people are involved. This is going on very close to the Transcaucasus.

As far as the Balkans are concerned, Greece is the only barrier separating Turkey from the theater of war. I think that Greece will in some way get involved in these conflicts during the next year; at first this may be with diplomacy, but it seems that Greece will not be able to avoid direct participation. What makes me think this way? I think we all remember that after Croatia was recognized by the western countries, the war in the Balkans greatly intensified. I think that after the recent recognition of Macedonia, the war in former Yugoslavia will get a new push. Macedonia is the element which directly connects Greece to the Balkan war.

Thus, from the Balkans to the Caucasus we have all the countries involved in one way or another in the Balkan or Transcaucasus conflicts. Of course, we should not forget about Syria and Iraq, about the Cyprus problem or about the Russian-Ukrainian division of the [Black Sea] fleet. In my opinion, the problem with dividing the fleet is connected to the possible use of this fleet, in the event of the wars in those two regions expanding, as well as the Turkish front.

There is a process of expanding war under way. If we trace these wars back two or three years, we can see how, gradually, they have become connected to each other.

Furthermore, let's look at Iran, which has big problems with Azerbaijan—I am talking about so-called southern Azerbaijan, which is part of northern Iran, where you have 20 million ethnic Turks (Azerbaijanis). This represents one more dangerous element which could destroy Iran from within, and Iran is one of the stablest countries in the Middle East. U.S. policy toward this region provides the basis to say that the policy of exploding Iran from within will continue. For example, a few months ago, U.S. and British forces wanted to transport natural gas from Kazakhstan through Azerbaijan; they wanted to separate a part of Armenia—including Sisian and other regions—and connect it with Nakhichevan, and through Nakhichevan reach Turkey and the Mediterranean Sea. After this, however, Armenian forces took over four regions south of Karabakh and established a 200 km border with Iran, which created an obstacle to the American and British oil transport plans.

I think that the United States has switched to the second scenario for the region, and will continue efforts to destroy Iran from within. The first plan—connecting Azerbaijan and Turkey—was for encirclement of Iran. Since that did not work out, I think now the plan will be to blow it up from the inside.

We all know the situation in Afghanistan and the related Tajikistan situation, and the war going on there. According to official data, Russia is covering 70% of Tajikistan's expenditures and 57% of Armenia's. If we ask why, the answer is obvious. Russia is maintaining its influence in those regions by understanding (or planning) that soon the situation there may get really hot.

We see a huge region starting from the Balkans and ending on China's borders, which is involved in war—a war with tanks, aviation, with all weapons systems except nuclear and chemical means of mass destruction—although many of the surrounding countries have that option as well. Does this mean we can talk about the onset of World War III? I think it does, because the conditions for World War III, or at least for its onset, are different from World War I and II, when direct military or political actions by the superpowers played a role.

Now the situation has changed, and the mentality. The propaganda machines of the Soviet Union and the United States, as well as Europe, have changed direction. For the few last decades, there has been a campaign for non-interference, meaning that borders are inviolable and cannot be changed, and so forth. The superpowers should be held chiefly responsible for this campaign, since they have run it, and now they do not want to participate directly in any military actions. This is very important and changes the whole environment. In today's world war, the superpowers and international organizations want to act through puppets, through indirect, so to speak, participation, through the blood of other countries and other nations. This is the main distinguishing feature of World War III, and the main danger.

Why is this a danger? Because a puppet country is influenced by several forces. Besides the external war, those small countries face also a dangerous situation from within, they are being destroyed from within, the economy collapses. The people of those countries lose control over the situation, for all intents and purposes, and it also gets out of any control by the international community. I mean normal people in the international community.

Therefore, I think we can say today that World War III has started, although the question of how to stop it has not been answered yet by any of the approaches existing today.

EIR: Let us return to the Russian elections. An interview with Vladimir Zhirinovskiy was published by the *London Times* on Dec. 21. Zhirinovskiy emphasized that Russia needs good relations with Turkey and with Afghanistan. He did not mention Iran, which of course lies between Turkey and Afghanistan. Was he hinting at some important side to Russian foreign policy that's not public? To be specific, how do you, and how does Russia in your opinion assess the prospects of today's adversary relationship between Turkey and Iran? Is Russia interested in stability or exploiting problems between Turkey and Iran?

Theater of war stretches from Balkans to the Chinese border



Vardanian: Do we have to take seriously Zhirinovskiy's statement concerning Turkey and Afghanistan? And why does he always forget about Iran, the biggest country in this region, and a country that has one of the oldest traditions of statehood in the world? What is the meaning of this? I think that Russia and Iran continue the line they drew as the basis for their relations when they signed the treaty in the 19th century. To this day, they basically have been trying not to pressure each other and not to interfere in each other's affairs. We can talk about a certain sort of neutrality pact between Russia and Iran during the last 150 years.

Why is this forgotten, in regard to the question of whether Russia will try to worsen relations between Turkey and Iran? Perhaps Russia will be interested in stability in Iran. I think that it is unlikely that Russia will destabilize Iran; it seems that the Turkish-Kurdish war serves Iranian interests and everything seems to indicate that Russia and Iran together will use all possibilities for transferring Kurds and weapons and so forth, through Iran to Turkey.

The possibility of a destabilization of Iran still exists, although it has become much smaller since the Armenian takeover of the Fizuli, Agdam, and Jebrail regions [of Azerbaijan]. The danger has diminished because of that, but it also does not have a real chance of becoming a serious problem right now, if only because Azerbaijanis do not have appropriate structures in Iran, which has a great tradition of governing a multinational state.

EIR: Looking ahead into 1994, what do you see as the prospects for Armenia and the other nations of the Transcaucasus—Azerbaijan and Georgia? Is the recent brutal condemnation of Armenia by [Russian Foreign Minister] Kozyrev a

signal that Russia is working out with America, through Turkey, a new push in favor of Azerbaijan? Is the recent renewal of Azerbaijani attacks on Karabakh, which began on Dec. 18, another sign in this direction?

Vardanian: Concerning prospects for the Transcaucasus, I think that there has not been any fundamental change in Russian policy toward Armenia recently. Kozyrev's *démarche* was connected mainly with the Russian elections, I think; he wanted to show that he is a pro-Russian and anti-American leader. He found himself a target—the Armenian government, which in comparison with other states of the former U.S.S.R. is probably the most pro-American. Thus it was, in my opinion, a pre-election *démarche*.

Will the policy toward Armenia change in the near future? I think that military activities are intensifying on the Karabakh front, of course, but fundamental changes are doubtful. Such changes may be introduced next spring or into the summer, when the Karabakh front will have stabilized after these actions. As a result, it seems that the front will move in the direction of Nakhichevan and Turkey, in which neighborhood military activities are going on now, and it seems some conflicts will be provoked on the Armenian-Nakhichevan and Armenian-Turkish borders.

Why is Georgia being destroyed? It seems to me that the main reason for this is the fact that Russia wants to have full and absolute control over the railroad going through Georgia to Armenia.

Why is Azerbaijan being destroyed and its territory divided? I think that the main reason for this is an effort to restrain Azerbaijan as a political factor in the ongoing war.

EIR: Azerbaijan President Heidar Aliyev is now in Paris,

The Transcaucasus



on a state visit to France. He is asking for large French investments in oil, etc., in Azerbaijan. He also made a declaration that Karabakh is "an integral part" of Azerbaijan, and could have a "special status," but only within Azerbaijan. How do you assess the Aliyev visit to France? How do you assess French, and in general western policy toward Azerbaijan, toward Armenia?

Vardanian: The visit of the Azerbaijani President, Heidar Aliyev, to Paris is, of course, very important, since Paris is one of the main centers shaping policy for the Transcaucasus. His project for French investments in oil will have, I think, the same result as in [former Azerbaijani President] Elcibey's negotiations for British investments.

As for the fact that he declared Karabakh an integral part of Azerbaijan and said it might receive a special status within Azerbaijan—I think that "this train has already left the station." The propaganda ballyhoo around the impossibility of changing borders, the Helsinki Act, etc., really does not affect the Transcaucasus since it was signed with postwar Europe in mind, although even in postwar Europe we have seen changes of borders in the case of German reunification and the situation in the Balkans.

So, I think that Aliyev's statements were meant more for a domestic audience in Azerbaijan than for the outside world, since today nobody in the rest of the world thinks that Karabakh is a part of Azerbaijan, everybody considers it to be part of Armenia, where Armenia runs its own policy. Aliyev is repeating the policy of the CSCE [Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe] and its approach to the Karabakh

problem, which was defeated with the takeover of the Fizuli, Jebrail, and Agdam regions by the Armenians.

Will the CSCE also continue in this spirit? The immediate future will show, since it would seem that it would have to change its policy fundamentally. What is our attitude toward France as one of the centers of world policy? I think that present and also past events prove that countries that wanted to run policy in certain regions very rarely worked constructively; basically they aimed at destruction and control by means of destruction. I think, in this area, France does not differ from Russia, Great Britain, the U.S., Germany, in its *approach* to politics—I do not mean concrete actions, but the approach. Although at first glance, it seems that France has the most positive attitude in Europe, I do not think there is any real long-term basis for this. Maybe there is some short-term basis.

EIR: Armenia and Karabakh have been victims of a war that has lasted for five years and shows no signs of stopping, and equally important, victims of a blockade imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey. Wars and blockades produce terrible human tragedies. Unfortunately the scale of the tragedy in Armenia and Karabakh is not well known in the West. Could you please detail the suffering of the Armenian people, which was especially terrible last winter, and we can assume this winter as well?

Vardanian: The consequences of the war in the Transcaucasus and the conditions in Armenia are as follows. After the beginning of the Karabakh movement in early 1988, we received the first group of refugees from Sumgait, where pogroms against Armenians had started, and also from other regions of Azerbaijan. By the end of 1988, all Armenian inhabitants were expelled from the regions which were historically part of Karabakh—not from the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast itself, but from these other settlements.

At the end of 1988 we had already a few hundred thousand refugees. In 1988, a strong earthquake affected one-third of Armenia. It killed thousands of people and left about 600,000 homeless. After this, the flood of refugees from Azerbaijan continued until there was not a single Armenian left in Azerbaijan. We accepted about 500,000 refugees from Azerbaijan.

I was talking about how the great powers have conducted a policy aimed at destroying the Armenian economy. I would like to mention the IMF's plans for the destruction of the Armenian economy. Those plans have basically already succeeded, and today only 5% of Armenia's industrial capacity is operational.

Today, we have hyperinflation, the banking system is destroyed, and we have a very low standard of living, with a minimum wage of about 50¢. During the winter it is about 7°C [44°F] indoors, and that is only in the better apartments, those which have some heat.

We also have very high unemployment, in reality about 80%. Not to mention the families of those who were killed,



In June 1991, Schiller Institute representatives Anno Hellenbroich and Michael Vitt visited Armenia, and spoke to refugees who had been forcibly expelled from their villages in Azerbaijan, which were historically part of Karabakh.

children left without parents, war refugees, etc.

These are, in short, the results of the war. I would say that the economic problems of the war are not the most dangerous, because in principle it would be possible, although difficult, to rebuild the economy, but the psychological results are very alarming and dangerous, because people have developed a feeling of hopelessness; they do not see a solution, and do not know what to do.

This reduces them to passive waiting and non-resistance, as a result of which, those who want to continue the destruction in Armenia have an easier job.

EIR: In a previous question we referred to Heidar Aliyev. He was the former Communist boss of Azerbaijan and in June returned to power in a coup. What forces were behind that coup? Does the past career of Aliyev in the Soviet KGB still have an importance today?

Vardanian: Heidar Aliyev is one of the most dangerous figures in the former Soviet Union today. What does he represent? Well, what could a KGB general represent, a man who ran security in such a region as the Transcaucasus? He is a well-trained person, cunning and smart; a man who has wide connections in Russian political circles, and as a result those circles have a great influence on him. They are members of the same team, despite the fact that he is formally a head of state.

Already during the Soviet era, Heidar Aliyev was running operations in which the former Soviet Union was used as a transit point in drug trafficking. Also he controlled the drug market and was one of the leaders of the drug mafia in U.S.S.R. I think that he has not ceased to be one at the present time.

As for his attitude toward other countries and his connections, I do not think there will be fundamental changes in

Azerbaijan's policy, as there were none during the past five years. Apparently, this situation is similar to the case of Shevardnadze. When Russia decided that Gamsakhurdia was not adequately carrying out the task of destroying Georgia, Shevardnadze was brought to power.

Today, when [ex-President] Elcibey did not destroy Azerbaijan well enough, Heidar Aliyev was brought to power. Apparently, Moscow has serious tasks in Azerbaijan, if they use a KGB general in such a small place.

EIR: When one looks at the Caucasus one notices that in two of the three newly independent nations, Georgia and Azerbaijan, their Presidents are the same men, Shevardnadze and Aliyev, who ruled them for Moscow during the Soviet period. It is clear that the Soviet-era *nomenklatura* is still in power. Is the same true for Armenia? If not, what if any are the similarities between the Armenian situation and the situations in Azerbaijan and Georgia? Who exactly is President Levon Ter-Petrosian?

Vardanian: I think we see the same kind of situation in Armenia as I described in the connection of Shevardnadze, who is also a former KGB general, and Aliyev with Russian politics. Who is Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosian? It is no secret that his father was an agent of the NKVD and one of the founders of the communist parties in Lebanon and Syria. This already says a lot. He was a well-known figure in the NKVD, and he was involved in important tasks. Ter-Petrosian also had other connections to the *nomenklatura*—his brother was a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia, and headed one of the biggest enterprises of the military complex in Armenia, which he has destroyed.

The question is not only Ter-Petrosian, but also the people who surround him. Most of them went through special

training while studying in Moscow and had connections to the KGB. So did he. They received special training, which they eventually used in their leadership positions in Armenia.

Of course, the *nomenklatura* is still in power, and it would be difficult to suppose that it would be otherwise. The old structures of power are in the process of being dismantled, and new structures are appearing. Connections to the international mafia are becoming closer, as are ties with international organizations. The IMF's policy, for example, makes it possible for the *nomenklatura* to legalize and transfer its capital to the West, and to exploit strategic resources very cheaply, while destroying the economy.

EIR: Could you give us a "map" of the political parties, forces, and their platforms inside Armenia? There is also a large Armenian diaspora, with heavy concentrations in France and the U.S.A. What is the present role of the Armenian diaspora in Armenian politics?

Vardanian: The political map of Armenia is not very diverse. You could say that 80% of parties and 80% of political fights center around the issue of who will stand at the helm of a puppet state and accordingly of who will be the best puppet.

The government party, the party which is in power, is called the Armenian National Movement, but in principle it has nothing to do with being a national movement, and has probably set a record in the *Guinness Book of Records* for producing so many corrupt politicians in such a short time. For brazenness and openness of corruption, this party has no equal in the world; at least, you rarely read about such things in the world press.

What can be said about the politics of the Armenian National Movement? It does not have a program and it is oriented to maximizing pressure; whoever pressures Armenia the most, it will be on the side of that force. This is the key to its invulnerability and the answer to the question of why it is difficult to dislodge. This is because, for any force, it represents the best puppet.

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the second strongest party, came in from abroad, where it had been the main executor of nationalistic ideas. One has to say that this party has a great potential, but, evidently, so far it has not been able to use this inherent potential adequately. It seems that a bad understanding of political processes is the reason for this. I think that, eventually, and soon, this party will start to act in a more radical and responsible fashion, which is the only way political life in Armenia could be changed significantly.

The Liberal Democratic Party also returned from exile. In political terms it is difficult to say what line it is promoting. It is a rather amorphous party, but it has significant power and support in business circles.

One must also point out in this political arena the communist party—the Democratic Party, which consists mainly of

former Armenian Communists who have preserved their outlook on matters. They say openly they want Armenia to be a part of Russia, they say openly that Armenia should do what Russia tells it to do. This political world view is coherent with that of the government, since the government does exactly what Russia says to do, even as the country is being destroyed. In this sense, it is difficult to see any difference between the communists and the government.

There are a few small parties, among which is our party, the Union for Constitutional Rights. Another is the Republican Party, which essentially has the same program. They are the only parties pressuring the government to implement the decisions of Dec. 1 concerning reunification of Karabakh and Armenia. They aim at building a unified state structure on the territory of Armenia reunified with Karabakh.

The main problem here is that outside forces want to exert influence separately on Armenia and on the Karabakh part of Armenia, to use them against each other and for various other purposes. This helps to destroy Armenia's unity, statehood, the psychological motivation of the population, and so forth.

EIR: We mentioned before that Armenia has been and remains a victim of war and blockade, a victim of aggression. Aggression almost always involves the intention, among others, to redraw the regional map at the expense of the victim. So far, Armenia has been able to prevent this by its successful military counter-offensives. However, in our view, the danger remains. To be specific, in one such scenario, the West, using Turkish strategic planners as mouthpieces, has proposed an "exchange of territories and populations." In this "model," Armenia would receive Karabakh, but in "exchange" would surrender to Azerbaijan the strip of Armenian territory bordering Iran, which of course would complete the international isolation of Armenia. Have you heard of such plans?

Vardanian: Plans to settle the Karabakh problem and the problem of the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan by trading territory and population are a propaganda trick which has been used since 1988 by certain forces in Moscow and in western countries. They have a very concrete political purpose.

What does the exchange of territories mean? That was first revealed on Dec. 6, 1988 when Starovoitova, Sakharov, Bonner, Batkin, and other so-called "democrats" visited Armenia. They came with the task defined by one of the institutes of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party to discuss a possible exchange of territory, with the leaders of the Transcaucasus republics. For example, Armenia would give to Azerbaijan the Sisian and other southern regions, which means the southern part of Armenia, giving Azerbaijan a direct connection with Nakhichevan; Armenia would receive in return Karabakh, and a part of the Gadрут and Lachin regions. Additionally they wanted Armenia to



Left to right: Levon Ter-Petrosian, the President of Armenia; Eduard Shevardnadze, the President of Georgia; Heidar Aliyev, the President of Azerbaijan. It is clear that the Soviet-era nomenklatura is still in power in the Caucasus.

give away part of Vardenik and Krasnoselsk regions, so that Azerbaijan would have access to Lake Sevan. Such plans have been discussed, also in the press, since Dec. 6, 1988, one day before the earthquake.

It was understood already then that such plans would lead to the isolation of Armenia and its complete blockade, although those who supported the plan were officially considered to be on the side of Armenia; in reality, those plans would work against Armenia. Today, other reasons for this policy have become clear. If we look at the plan to build an oil pipeline from Kazakhstan through the Caspian Sea and Azerbaijan, we will see that today the part of Armenia which they wanted to exchange is an obstacle to building such a pipeline.

Today I think it is doubtful that we could go back to this, since regions south of Karabakh have already been taken over, which makes those plans for territorial exchange impossible. This, I think, belongs to the past and there is no basis for implementation of such a plan. From the present perspective, those plans and policies allow us to understand what the direction of policy was in the Transcaucasus.

EIR: To date, western policy toward Armenia has been miserable. Looking ahead into 1994, do you see any signs that this could change? Which western political leaders or figures, including Lyndon LaRouche, in your view offer the best hope for Armenia? Could you give a country-by-country

assessment concerning the four big western powers: America, Britain, France, Germany?

Vardanian: What can be said about the possible changes in western policies toward Armenia? I think the policy of both the West and the East, i.e., Russia, toward Armenia will not change in strategic terms. It is doubtful that the West would change its mentality in such a short time, although this mentality condemns its policy to failure.

What leaders most of all helped Armenia at that time? Among foreign political figures, I think that the activities of the Schiller Institute, headed by Lyndon LaRouche, helped a lot to understand the IMF policy for destroying nation-states, including Armenia, as well as the mechanisms of this destruction and how to resist it. I think that Mr. LaRouche's work most corresponded to the aspirations of the Armenian people to build a nation-state. I mean the internal structure of a state, the role of infrastructure, the currency system, and so forth.

It is difficult for me to name any concrete western leaders who provide any psychological, ideological, or material support for Armenia. I basically do not see such figures today.

Which are the strongest western countries? I think that for the shaping of a policy toward Russia and the former Soviet republics, France, Great Britain, the U.S., and Germany are the most influential. I think that, at present, German policy toward the former Soviet Union as well as the Balkans is the weakest, the least resolute.