CONCLUSIONS
The analysis of relations since their origin between Armenia and India illustrates out of the ordinary role of geography in their shaping. Both countries don’t share common borders and even placed at a remote distance. Nonetheless, the key position of India in whole Asia and Armenia’s location on the crossroads between the East and the West created purposeful ground for their continuous interaction, reflected in exchange of commodities and knowledge. Following customary historical patterns, it could be assumed that the role of regions and countries is subject to change in comparative terms due to varying stages of political and economic development. In addition, the account of world economy exposes the trend of geographically shifting of its centers on global scale during course of time, thus being reflected in consequential decline or rise in commercial transactions in this or that region. Trade and commercial routes, linking the two given countries and beyond, remained essential during the course of many centuries. This trade’s volume and vitality was certainly of fluctuating nature, but was not essentially being interrupted, thus endowing with certain consistency. Basically incessant movement of people and goods in that part of the world also testifies towards its strategic character. It should be mentioned that apart from being supply and demand countries, they served in capacity of transit territory and its merchants as intermediaries in international commerce, particularly in Armenia’s case.

Similarly, international trade brought many Armenian merchants, predominantly from New Julfa in Iran, to India on permanent basis. India turned into a hub of the vast Armenian trading network, encompassing continents. If not counting sporadic settlers of early period, the count of regular Armenian settlements in India starts from the beginning of the sixteenth century. In the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries prospering Armenian communities emerged all over the country. The considerate imperial policy of Moghul ruler Akbar the Great attracted a significant wave of the Armenian merchants into India. The Armenians as skilled merchants of fame on international commercial landscape were coming to bring their input in enrichment of India’s economy and trade. A great many of them served also as intermediaries, diplomats, interpreters, gun makers and military. Successful functioning of Armenians in India was stipulated by thorough knowledge of Persian, which was the Mughal court language, as well as local and European languages; relative emancipation of the elite connected with the rise of the Mughal empire, excellent
knowledge of domestic milieu, of itineraries, sources of commercial supply and market conditions; constant exchange of information regarding the evolution of European demand and Asian supply; capacity to adapt to the prevailing economic conditions and crisis situations by moving on to new commercial circuits; absence of any desire to proselytize as Christians.

In the eighteenth century, new migration wave of the Armenians to India started from Iran. Unlike previous commercial motives, in the eighteenth century it was caused by persecution within Iran. The majority of Armenians was relocating to India, where safety, better conditions for living, opportunities in trade and crafts, helping hand of compatriots, no religious persecution at most times and freedom of thought were attracting the Armenians. The Indian elite along with people welcomed the Armenians, frequently showing appreciation. The locals' positive attitude towards the Armenians even became more explicit in comparison with the acts of Europeans, who were openly pursuing aggressive goals in India and often resorting to force.

The Armenian presence became quite noticeable in some parts of the country. One of them was Bengal, where the Armenians gained prominence in the commercial and economic life. As an important trading group, their presence was a common feature in all the prominent centers of trade and manufacture, cities and ports. Thus it is not surprising that the Armenians resided and had strong commercial interest in Saidabad, Hugli, Calcutta, Kasimbazar, Dhaka and Patna with their own localities and churches.

Madras turned into another core community of significance for the Armenians in India. In the second half of the eighteenth century it became a prominent center of enlightenment, cultural awakening, education, literary life and the Armenian national-liberation ideology. Madras Armenian community pioneered in creation of self-governing institutions and produced relevant legal basis for its functioning in the form of community charter. That was the first undertaking of such kind among the Armenian settlements of India and one of the first in the whole Armenian Diaspora.

Several factors stipulated turning the country of India into the center of pan-Armenian liberation movement and enlightenment. Ruling Ottoman and Persian regimes in Armenia used to suppress any kind of manifestations of liberal and national ideas. Given that circumstance, the center of national-liberation movement had to be located
abroad. In India, the Armenian dynamic communities were tiny in size and cohesive by nature societies. They accumulated significant wealth and were highly organized. Their trade in the West and their business with English, French and Dutch East India Companies had enriched their social, educational, economic, and political understanding. Even the ideas of American Revolution and political freedom reached them in India and served as a strong impetus. In the meantime, the Indian history, philosophy and culture also had their adequate impact. The experience of anti-colonial struggle had an awakening effect on Armenians. Many of them took participation in it. As an example, cloth merchant Grigor Harutyunian, known by the name of Gorgin Khan, became Commander-in-Chief of Nawab Mir Kasim’s Bengal Army from 1760-1763.

By the early 1770s, the political, economic, social and cultural outlook of the Armenian merchants of Calcutta and Madras was considerably altered. Under the colonial power of the English East India Company they were economically weakened, the security of their capital was threatened, and they were subject to discrimination and various types of restrictions. In order to maintain their ethnic identity under a superior power they had started to create closer cooperation, mutual support, and solidarity within their own community. They began to realize the importance of education, to develop a sense of self-awareness and national identity, and to dream about creating an independent Armenia where they would economically flourish again, free from foreign political and social domination. The Armenians enjoyed freedoms in India and their activities were not restricted. Such a state of affairs created fertile soil for Indo-Armenians to carry out national projects.

The Armenian community in India can be singled out within the whole Diaspora according to its certain unique characteristics, relating to sustenance mechanisms. The Armenians created infrastructure for a successful long-distance commerce, having India as the main platform for implementation of trade networking. They had trade houses and merchant settlements, stretched to Manila, Batavia, Surabaya, Penang, Molucca and later on Singapore. Commercial interests compelled the Armenian merchants, residing in India, to conduct a mobile lifestyle. Very often they had to resettle into other countries, thus causing rapid change in community composition and number. Apart from the main social class of merchants, a big number constituted also craftsmen, farmers, scribes, later
on government administrative employees, doctors, teachers, military, architects and lawyers. Frequently people from these classes moved with merchants into other places in search of new employment opportunities. Since the establishment in India and during consequent centuries as community it continuously needed new members, at least to replace the ones who were leaving. The existing population was not sufficient to sustain self-generation within the community. Almost constantly small groups of Armenians were moving into India from Iran and elsewhere. Therefore the Armenian community in India carried a renewable character, depending on “sources of human inflow”.

The global touch of the Indo-Armenian community was expressed through its world-wide philanthropic activities. From Armenia to Italy and Russia, from France to Iran, the Indo-Armenians were financing opening of printing houses, paper mills, libraries, schools and churches.

The Indo-Armenians were able to combine two prevalent in the Armenian nation movements - literary and political, the latter being aimed at liberation of the motherland. They integrated cultural and educational ideas with social, political and national ambitions. With their publications they not only enriched Armenian literature, but they also introduced a national agenda for the liberation of Armenia. Among all the Armenian communities only Indo-Armenian were able to maintain pace with the advanced instruments of spreading literacy and culture: publication of the first Armenian journal; four secular schools of Calcutta, including two for women; number of cultural associations in Calcutta and Bombay; more than ten printed or lithographed journals in Madras, Calcutta and Bombay; almost 200 books – mostly secular in nature – produced by 16 Armenian printing presses in Madras and Calcutta; and the creation of Armenian theater in Calcutta.

The transfer of Indian affairs under full control of the British crown from the East India Company in 1858 and the new requirements of trade with Europe have mostly been responsible for the gradual decline of the Armenian community. The economic recession in India naturally had repercussions on the vitality of the Armenian community. A new urban class emerged that was more sensitive to the political aspirations of the nation but also better and deeper integrated into the host society.
In the framework of Indo-Armenian relations, Soviet period in Armenia is marked by cultural, economic, scientific and educational cooperation. Special importance was attached to the culture as a bridging factor between the two nations. Cultural exchanges and dynamic cooperation in that area became prime source for mutual acquaintance and interaction in practice. Though lacking its independent foreign policy, Armenia was privileged to host Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1976.

After independence of Armenia in 1991, bilateral relations between Armenia and India were elevated to state level and acquired comprehensive nature. Factors of India's significance through the prism of Armenia's external outlook are the following:

- The largest democracy in the world factor made India natural partner of Armenia. The Armenian nation was very much encouraged by the Indian success in democratic state-building. India is also a state that constantly takes principled stand against the use of force and in favor of negotiation and compromise as a way of settling international disputes. For newly independent Armenia, facing numerous threats and challenges, India's international stance was crucial.
- India is a healthy economy with steady high growth, which makes it one of the best indexes in the world. It has colossal capabilities in advanced and high technology. India has a depth of human and material resources matched by few other states.
- Another major factor is India's speedy transition in acquiring the full-fledged status of world power. Demographic, economic and military indicators place India in a very high rank. It is apparent that India is already a major international power, and its foreign policy truly became of global reach.
- India has a distinct civilizational identity, composed of a number of cultural patterns, social structures, and a special view of history. These factors enable it to mobilize its own people around a unique set of values, images and ideas.
- India plays a significant role at the United Nations and the other international organizations. At these fora it has a balanced and considered approach towards vital for Armenia issue of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, thus creating favorable environment for determining accurate understanding and proper ways of
addressing the issue. New Delhi strongly supports the efforts to reach a resolution in that conflict through peaceful negotiations.

In regard of the political-military upheavals of the South Caucasus India plays a balanced role, promoting regional peace and cooperation. That contributes to erasing of the dividing lines. India’s position on major international and regional issues prevailing coincides with the Armenian one.

In its turn, India’s view of Armenia in terms of building bilateral relations is the following:

- New Delhi was guided by initial pursuit of the objective to establish bilateral direct relations with the newly independent countries of the former Soviet Union, with consideration of developing special type of relations with geographically closer ones. Geopolitical factor was undoubtedly prevailing. The South Caucasus is a strategic crossroads between the East and the West, the North and the South, which stands in the row next to Central Asia.

- India’s perception of Armenia through the prism of the whole region of South Caucasus as of strategic location was also stipulated by strong geo-economic considerations. The region is not only producer of energy resources but also constitutes operational and prospective transit routes to other destinations. India has its own interests in this setting. Of course, Armenia is not an oil or gas producer country, not even a transit country yet, but as a regional state and a regional player represents certain interest. In geo-economic terms, viewing oil and gas rich Central Asia as strategic, it is impossible to discard the options of having the pipelines from there pass via South Caucasus. Often South Caucasus and Central Asia perceived as adjoining entities, which superficially makes it single dimension in certain terms. This perception currently has much less supporters primarily because of differing regional identity shaping processes. Since engagement of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan in the EU’s European Neighborhood Policy, European distinctiveness as a model for regional identity in prospective finds more receptiveness in South Caucasus.
In the process of formation of the New World Order in post-Cold War era, Central Asia - South Caucasus dimension is often appraised globally as space of importance. India comprehension of that factor doesn’t differ much. The historical past testifies that the Silk Road, passing via those regions and its branch roads connecting it with the South were for centuries the major routes linking India with the rest of the world. The modern projects of Silk Road revival in terms of transportation, communication, oil and gas pipeline routes, notwithstanding how realistic they appear currently, inevitably carry prospective strategic importance.

The foreign policy manifestations of Armenia in regard of India since late 1990s contributed to elevation of interest level vis-à-vis Armenia in Indian external policy makers’ circles. Support to India from official Yerevan in relation to Pokhran nuclear tests in 1998, supportive position of Armenia on Jammu and Kashmir issue, and support and advocacy by Armenia for the Indian candidacy for the permanent membership at the United Nations Security Council carried importance for New Delhi. Implications of these actions came to enhance New Delhi’s outlook on Armenia as of partner of rising value.

Both nations appreciate history, and in this light historically formed traditional set of friendly bonds generate favorable public opinion for the enhancement of bilateral cooperation.

Having established diplomatic relations in August 1992, the two countries in a span of just three years “sealed” their relations with the highest level agreement - “Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between the Republic of India and the Republic of Armenia”, signed by President Ter-Petrossian and Prime Minister Rao in New Delhi in December 1995.

While appreciating security concerns of Armenia in the light of regional developments, the Indian side welcomed the efforts undertaken by Armenia towards the establishment of lasting peace in the region. In this connection, the Indian side confirmed its support for finding peaceful and negotiated solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Cultural diplomacy played a distinctive role in enhancing bilateral relation. Cultural exchange programs, performances, concerts, publications were aimed at strengthening mutual ties.
The countries created strong legal bilateral basis for further cooperative efforts, encompassing almost all possible areas of cooperation. Those relations were institutionalized by putting in place since 1997 Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological, Cultural and Educational Cooperation and launching Foreign Office consultations.

Educational-scientific cooperation constitutes one of the fastest growing areas of relations. The presence of 700 Indian students in Armenia is a sound testimony.

Relations between Armenia and India are based on shared interests, full understanding of each others positions and mutual desire to enhance them by means of elevating further the level of interactions as well as enriching the substance of cooperation.

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