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Washington, DC

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WITNESSES

FRIDAY, JULY 29, 1994

Briefing on Nagorno-Karabakh

Friday, July 29, 1994

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

Washington, DC

The briefing was held in room 2359, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC, at 10 a.m.

Present: Samuel G. Wise, Staff Director

Also present: Ambassador John J. Maresca, Ambassador Rouben Shugarian, and Ambassador Hafiz Pashayev

Mr. **Wise.** Good morning. Welcome to a briefing, another briefing by the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Helsinki Commission. Our Commission, as you may know, is an independent government commission which is charged by law with monitoring and fostering compliance with the Helsinki Accords and the subsequent accords that have been developed in the years since the Helsinki Final Act was signed.

Our Chairmen, Senator DeConcini and Representative Hoyer, have asked me to conduct this briefing this morning, and I will be glad to do it. We have a good, interested audience which, I think, will make for a good morning.

This is the fifth in a series of briefings and hearings the Helsinki Commission has held since 1988 on the Nagorno-Karabakh. It is sobering to think that this bloody conflict has been going on so long. In fact, it is the longest running conflict on the territory of the former Soviet Union.

About 15 million people have been killed, and well over 1 million people are now refugees. Much of the beautiful land in that area has been scorched beyond recognition, and perhaps beyond repair.

There is at least one bright spot in this sad story. For the last two months, there have been very few armed clashes, and all the sides have been observing an informal cease fire. In fact, on July 26 the Defense Ministers of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Nagorno-Karabakh jointly noted the success of the cease fire and looked forward to a more comprehensive resolution of the conflict, hopefully during the month of August, next month.

With the guns practically silenced, the focus of attention has shifted to the international diplomatic plane. The CSCE and the Russians have put forward cease fire plans that are similar in various ways, but are competing for the adherence of the contending sides. The ultimate end of both approaches is a broader agreement about the status of Nagorno-Karabakh and making peace in the region.

To discuss the possible framework of a political settlement, we have a uniquely qualified group of experts. For 2 years Ambassador Jack Maresca, John Maresca, was until his retirement from the Foreign Service in April the U.S. negotiator in the CSCE for Nagorno-Karabakh.

No American diplomat is better versed in all the intricate details of this problem than he is, and we are very pleased to be able to offer him this forum to discuss his proposals for resolving the conflict.

I would add on a personal note that I've known Ambassador Maresca for many years and have even had a period where we worked together. I worked under him when he was negotiating the so called Paris Charter of the CSCE, which after the Helsinki Final Act, which he also negotiated, is the other seminal document of the whole CSCE process. So he has been very central to the development of the CSCE from the beginning.

We are also pleased to have here today the Ambassadors of the Republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Rouben Shugarian and Hafiz Pashayev. Obviously, they will have a lot to say about the various aspects of Ambassador Maresca's plan and about the overall prospects for peace.

I appeal to all our speakers to focus their attention on ways to end the conflict and bring peace, and not to justify one or another side's position in the conflict.

After the statements and commentary from the members of this panel, the audience will have an opportunity to ask questions. I make the same appeal to the audience. Let's concentrate on ways today to end the conflict.

I'll turn the floor over to Ambassador Maresca first.

Ambassador **Maresca.** Thank you very much, Sam, and I'd like to express right away my appreciation for the CSCE Commission in organizing this briefing session. I think it's fair to say that over the years the Helsinki Commission has established itself as a very useful forum for informing the public and especially people on the Hill here on current issues, and I think it's a very proud tradition, and I'm glad to have had a lot to do with the CSCE Commission over the years.

I also thank you all for coming. I think the subject that we are going to discuss this morning is urgent. It's urgent, because the situation in the area becomes worse all the time. The last few winters have been truly horrific, I would say, especially in Armenia but also recently in Azerbaijan as well.

So it is urgent to find a way out of this. It is also, I would say, a very tragic problem, tragic because it is a—it is a problem which could be resolved fairly easily if a rational approach could be brought to bear, and tragic also because, unlike many areas of conflict in the world today, this particular area could be prosperous and open to the West in many ways in a very short time, if peace could be brought to the area.

I also think that this is an issue which has not received enough attention in this country and in this city, and it deserves more attention than it's received. The intention of my proposal, more than anything else, is to give it that kind of attention.

Let me say at the outset that I don't expect, don't even—wouldn't even want to have detailed comments on this proposal from my two friends, Ambassador Shugarian and Ambassador Pashayev. That's not my intention, and that would be, I think, a foolish way to try to proceed.

My intention was to put out there something for reflection about what might constitute a political solution eventually for the status of Nagorno- Karabakh. This does not

have anything to do with the current negotiations on a cease fire. I have deliberately stayed away from that issue, because it is currently under negotiation.

If the current cease fire holds, then I think it makes it all the more important to turn next to the problem of a political settlement. Ultimately, that is the challenge.

I would also like to say at the outset that there needs to be a political solution here. Neither side can win this war militarily and, if one side or the other should succeed in imposing its will, what that will do is prolong the instability, prolong the suffering, and put off the day when the region can be prosperous.

Let me start by saying how we got where we are in this process, because it's not a process which is well known. Up until the independence of the countries in this region, what was going on there was really an internal problem within the Soviet Union, and the countries outside of the Soviet Union had little to do with it and little, really, detailed knowledge of what was going on; but beginning at the end of 1991 and the beginning of 1992, these countries became independent. They joined the CSCE and the United Nations and right away, within the CSCE, we saw that this was a problem which needed some international attention.

So in the winter and in the spring of 1992, the CSCE took an interest in this problem, sent some missions to the region, and established a small negotiating forum, which came to be known as the Minsk Group, in order to try to negotiate a solution.

Secretary of State Baker, who was then in office, personally insisted that these negotiations should begin and that all the parties to the conflict should be represented.

He became involved to the extent that he actually established a set of rules on participation which were the basis for participation later, and became known, in fact, in the negotiating process as the Baker Rules, and they are still the rules that guide the fact that all the parties to the conflict are participants in this process.

This effort was unique in many ways, but of particular interest here, it was and is the only conflict on the territory of the former Soviet Union where the United States has a direct role. We have a direct role, because we are one of the negotiating parties in the Minsk Group.

For that reason, this issue and this problem poses a number of tests, which I'll come back to later—certainly, for the Russian role with respect to countries on its periphery, but also for the international community's ability and the American ability to have a constructive role in these conflicts and to do something about it.

The strategy that we followed in the Minsk Group was essentially to, first of all, bring all the parties to the table. That in itself is not easy in negotiations like this, as anybody who is familiar with this type of negotiation knows, to get a negotiation going, to bring about a cease fire, to introduce international monitors or observers, if you will, to stabilize the cease fire, to agree on a number of other stabilizing measures—I mean humanitarian assistance, return of refugees to their homes in safety, lifting of blockades, so that the life in a region would be somewhat close to what is normal, and then to open a political negotiation about the status of Nagorno-Karabakh which was the ultimate goal of these negotiations.

I think we had some major successes in this negotiation. First of all, we did bring together all the parties, face to face negotiations. That, I think, is an achievement which deserves recognition. We reached an agreement on the conditions for a monitoring force, an international monitoring force to operate in the region, and that in turn permitted the

CSCE to conduct detailed planning on a monitoring force which is essentially there ready to go when a cease fire is stable.

This includes funding. It includes voluntary units from a number of different countries, not from the United States, I might say. We have never been talking about the United States becoming involved on the ground in this region.

Detailed plans of where these monitors would be stationed, what they would do and so forth—all of that is there ready to go, and I think that, too, is an achievement of this process.

Also, we developed procedures for dealing with issues, for discussing issues. This kind of vocabulary of solving procedural problems is often a stumbling block for negotiations, and I believe that all of that has been dealt with effectively in this process.

We also encountered very serious difficulties. First, the situation on the ground, the military situation, changed rapidly all the time and, as it changed, it would have an effect on the negotiation. Either one side or the other, depending on whether they were up or down militarily, would be in favor of the negotiations or would be more reluctant about the negotiations.

That was something which see-sawed back and forth throughout this process, made it very difficult to deal with. So that was and, I think, is still a continuing problem.

Secondly, beginning at the beginning of 1993, we were faced with a competing Russian effort to develop its own plan, cease fire, involving Russian forces which was in competition with the international offer to provide international forces, despite the fact that Russian, of course, was a member of the Minsk Group.

So you had this peculiar situation where the Russians were both participating in the international community negotiations, signing onto the proposals that were made, and then the very next day going out and making proposals of their own, which in many cases were quite different. So that the parties for the conflict were faced with this kind of competition.

This, I think, inevitably leads to what I call forum shopping where one party or another can look for a better deal here or there and essentially work the two negotiations against each other. That was, and continues to be, a very serious problem which is related to the Russian role in all of the countries on their periphery, and I might come back to that if there is time.

Thirdly, I think we had another problem beginning with the arrival as the Chairman of the Minsk Group the representative of Sweden. Sweden simply had different plans for conducting these negotiations which laid a greater stress on a kind of shuttle diplomacy conducted by the Swedish Chairman himself rather than on the negotiating group.

The effect of this was, of course, to seriously reduce the United States role, because our only role was in the negotiations, and also the role of the group and of the face to face negotiations which had been built up.

I think that was a mistake, still think it was a mistake, and it, unfortunately, had the side effect of underscoring the kind of competition between the two mediating efforts, because you had the Russian going back and forth and the Swede going back and forth and so forth.

I might say that throughout this long period that I was involved with these negotiations we made an effort, and I personally made a rather big effort, to involve the Russians positively in the international effort. I made sixteen trips to Moscow, just to do that,

sought meetings directly with the senior officials of the Russian Defense Ministry, proposed to them all kinds of arrangements; but I have to say that my impression was that the Russians were deliberately avoiding any reasonable cooperation, any reasonable cooperation, and I think that can be documented. I can't do it here, but it certainly ca be documented.

It's clear to me that—and this has been endorsed, I believe, by the Defense Minister Grachev, Kozyrev, and by Yeltsin himself, that Russia wants to solve this problem itself and keep the international community out. That is a deliberate effort which, once again, relates to the broader issue of the Russian role throughout this area.

Meanwhile, I think that the United States now is, in a way, standing aside. This, I think, is something the United States should not be doing, and I'm hoping that, as a result of bringing more attention to this issue, the United States will take a stronger role. I'll come back to that, too.

Right now we have a situation where the Russian offer is really to introduce a Russian so called separation force into Azerbaijan as a separation between the forces, the Armenian ethnic forces. Those of you who picked up the little map outside can see the area I'm talking about.

So the Russians would come in and become a separation force, and that plan has been under consideration for some months. The Azeris have not accepted it. I think it's fair to say they don't want Russians back in, and so there has been a kind of a stalemate there.

Meanwhile, there is an international proposal which is sponsored by the CSCE which would—if there is a stable cease fire, would introduce international monitors into the same area.

While all of this is going on, of course, there is enormous suffering all around, and it isn't only on the Azeri side. Some of you, I know, have an interest in Armenia, and some of you probably have visited there recently. For those who have not, let me tell you that the winters in Armenia are very, very grim.

This is a country where families chop up their pianos in order to have firewood in the winter, where intellectuals burn their books. It's a country where on winter nights there is literally no light in the streets of Yerevan. So that you physically bump into people if you're walking about at night.

One of the things that impressed me most deeply, I must say, on some of those winter nights is the fact that there are roaming packs of wild dogs in the city, and you often hear gunfire. So this is a very grim situation.

The situation, I think, has improved a little bit in Nagorno-Karabakh itself. The times when I went there the suffering there was very great, too. At that time, they were literally under the guns of Azeri forces who were near enough to shower them with artillery shells. That is no longer the case, but still the situation is grim in Nagorno-Karabakh as well.

On the other side, on the Azeri side, there are now a million refugees. They have passed through one winter, many of them in unheated tents. At least one of the big refugee camps is run by Iran and is heavily propagandized.

In addition, the situation is complicated by the international aspects. There is a continuing temptation for intervention from outside by Russian, by Turkey, by Iran. There

are a number of foreigners involved in the fighting in various ways. There's not time to go into the details of that, but it is a fact.

I think also Russian ambitions in this area are now very clear. The Russians would like to reestablish their bases in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is the one country in the territory of the former Soviet Union outside of the Baltics where Russian forces have been removed at the insistence of the Azeri government.

There is a radar station in northern Azerbaijan that is still manned by Russians, but the troops have all left, and the Russians would like to get back in there. They also, in a separate effort, have been trying to reestablish their control of the Azeri frontier with Iran all along the Araks River, which is shown on your map.

The forces are different, because those of you who know the Russian system, the border forces are different from military forces. So this is a separate objective.

I think that Russian objectives with respect to the oil potential of the whole Caspian Sea area is now clear as well. They would like to have a share of these resources and also to be able to control the route through which they are shipped to the West. All of that, I think, is now out in the open and well known.

A question arises, what, if anything, should the United States do in this kind of a situation? I think the "if anything" is a valid question. This is a distant area about which we know little, where we are not deeply involved over time.

One possibility would, of course, be to leave this thing to the Russians to settle. I don't believe that is a possibility, because I simply don't believe the Russians can settle this by themselves. In fact, I believe those who are familiar with the area have to recognize that a part of the problem is the Russian and Soviet legacy which was left behind after ruling the area for about 200 years.

If Russian troops go in there, I believe they will very soon become targets once again. They've had this experience before. In fact, Russian generals that I have talked to have said we're not going there again; too many of our boys got shot in the back last time we were there.

I believe that, ultimately, they are so controversial that, if Russian forces go in, that will happen again. So I don't believe that the Russians by themselves can solve this problem. On the other hand—and by the way, there is a very serious debate in Moscow about whether they should do this or not.

On the other hand, I think that an international effort is also not very credible unless the U.S. support for it, involvement in it is visible and strong. That, I think, is where the weak point lies right now with respect to the international effort. It has to be endorsed by the United States, has to be seen to be a priority of the United States, and so that it is given some kind of credibility.

So my conclusion is that, whether we see it as working with the Russians to find a cooperative path or seeking to oppose Russia from imposing a solution by themselves, whether you see it one way or the other, a U.S. role is a necessary element in finding a solution.

If that is, in fact, the conclusion, then I—the next question is, what can the United States do? I believe the thing we can do most easily, and I hope people here would generally support me on this, whether or not they're on one side of the issue or the other, is to have a senior, full time special envoy assigned to this problem.

This should be a person who can't be ignored, someone who can't be ignored in Moscow, who can't be ignored in the area, and who can't be ignored in this town. I think that is something which I would cite as perhaps the first objective and my most important objective in raising this issue at all.

This does not mean that we should get involved on the ground in the Caucasus. The model I would prefer is something like the Cyprus coordinator which has been an established position for years.

We have never been involved on the ground in Cyprus, shouldn't be, and yet our Cyprus coordinator, and I was a Cyprus coordinator for a while, has had a lot of influence on the negotiating process. I think that is a good model, and that's the model I would support.

If we are to do this, we need to have an obvious impartiality. Here is where I do believe that the section of the Freedom Support Act which prohibits aid to Azerbaijan should be removed. This is not, to my mind, the most important issue.

It's more important symbolically than anything else, because in fact we do give aid to nongovernmental organizations who use it in that area. So we do give a lot of humanitarian aid which is applied in Azerbaijan, but symbolically I think it's very important. I'll explain why.

First, to have a role in finding a solution we must be seen to be impartial. It doesn't matter what other countries are doing. The United States policies have to be impartial.

Secondly, it's very difficult to press other countries to lift blockades on humanitarian aid if they themselves can then turn around and say you're doing the same thing. I spent two years urging Turkey to permit humanitarian aid to flow to Armenia, and every time I raised the issue this is what they would say to me in reply. So unless our skirts are clean on this, it's very difficult to make this argument.

In any case, I believe that the United States is the kind of a country that should not block humanitarian aid anywhere, and I think that is a tradition in U.S. policy. So I don't regard this as the most important issue.

In fact, if we don't have a special envoy dealing with this issue, then this point is meaningless, because we will have no role; but if we are to play a role, then this, I think, is an important small point of interest here on the Hill, and I think we should fix it.

Then I think we need to regain a leading role. I think we did have one. We don't have one right now. This means that the negotiating process has to be revived, and it means we have to have a position out there. This is where I think perhaps a political proposal is a good idea. That's why I proposed this plan.

Now this plan is not a competitor with the existing proposals for a cease-fire. I don't deal with the cease-fire at all. What I'm suggesting is a compromise set of arrangements for a political status for Nagorno-Karabakh which will permit the area to move ahead into a period of prosperity together and which will, hopefully, stabilize the situation in that area.

That, I think, is something which the sides need to reflect on. As I said earlier, I don't think that either side can win this militarily. So, ultimately, some kind of a political solution needs to be found.

I'm hoping that this proposal will be considered, will be used as a point of reference. Ultimately, the sides will have to agree together on what's possible. You can't come in from outside and impose a solution, in any case.

I won't—Because I've spoken for quite a long time here, I won't go into the details of this proposal. I would be happy to answer questions on it. You can read it yourselves and study it. There are some important details on it. If there is any misunderstanding about the details, I would be happy to try to correct that misunderstanding and I'm available for that, but I don't think there's time for me to do that right now.

So with that, I think I would just thank you for your attention and turn the floor back to our Chairman. Thank you very much.

Mr. **Wise.** Thank you very much, Ambassador Maresca. You've given us some very interesting and stimulating ideas. Now we'll turn to our two ambassadors here in Washington, first Ambassador Pashayev of Azerbaijan.

Ambassador **Pashayev.** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a genuine pleasure to appear before the Helsinki Commission today to address the proposal of Ambassador Maresca for settlement of conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh.

Let me say initially that certain principles must be recognized in approaching this issue. First, we must recognize that this conflict did not start in 1988 but goes back to history. Both sides can cite historical facts to justify their objectives. It just depends on how far back in history one wishes to go.

As a result, we must recognize the historical component of this matter on both the Azerbaijani and the Armenian side.

Second, there are at least four distinct sets of relationships that must be worked out: The armed conflict on a state level between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia; the conflict between Azerbaijan and the ethic Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh; the conflict between Azerbaijani refugees of Nagorno-Karabakh and ethnic Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh in the Republic of Armenia; and last, the conflict between Azerbaijani refugees who were expelled from Armenia itself and the Republic of Armenia.

All of these conflicts must be taken into account and resolved before there can be any real solution to the problem.

Third, no settlement of this issue is possible without some degree of balance. Some observers believe that because Armenia currently has the upper hand militarily, it can dictate the settlement. Remember, there are 100 years of history to the conflict, and the relative position can change with time.

Azerbaijan's government could not, even if it wanted to, accept dictated settlements that destroy its sovereignty. An unjust or unbalanced settlement would merely postpone the conflict to a later time, in much the same way that dictated settlement of World War I set the stage for World War II. Both sides must compromise or conflict will continue.

Fourth, despite the long history of this conflict, any permanent settlement requires that both parties look to the future rather than the past. If we remain obsessed by perceived or real grievances of the past, we will never be able to look to the future of cooperation and mutual progress for our people. We cannot forget the past, but we cannot remain mired in the past.

Before commenting on specific aspects of the proposal, let me first say I totally agree with Ambassador Maresca on the need for active involvement by the United States and the rest in efforts to settle this conflict. The fact is that the United States is the only remaining super power in the world and, as such, bears a special responsibility to provide leadership in matters such as this.

No one is asking for American military involvement, but we do need the active, consistent and full time diplomatic involvement of the United States. Inherent in the proposition that the United States should assume a strong role in these negotiations is the requirement that the U.S. be even-handed in its approach.

In this connection, I was very pleased with Ambassador Maresca's earlier recommendation that Section 907 of Freedom Support Act, which prohibits having humanitarian assistance of Azerbaijan, be repealed. Azerbaijan also appreciates the forthright opposition to Section 907 by the Clinton administration.

We understand and appreciate that there is a large Armenian diaspora in the United States, but that is no excuse for a great power like the United States to prevent Azerbaijan from receiving the same kind of humanitarian relief that is being supplied in Rwanda, Bosnia and Somalia.

Just think about this fact. Even the illegal government in Haiti receives humanitarian relief from the United States, but not Azerbaijan. The U.S. and Congress, in particular, should be ashamed of such policy.

Now I would like to briefly comment on several aspects of Ambassador Maresca's proposal. First, we are in total agreement with Ambassador Maresca and the United States government that the solution and monitoring and enforcement of that solution should be carried out under the auspices of Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Azerbaijan, which is experiencing true independence for the second time within this century, is naturally concerned about its long term independence. We have a long and complicated history of both cooperation and conflict with our neighbors, but we do not want to be dominated or dictated by any other country, whether it be Russia, Turkey, Iran or anyone else.

For that reason, we think it is in the best interest of Azerbaijan and everyone in the region that the solution to this conflict be an international one, and the logical mechanism for that is the CSCE proposal which Azerbaijan has already agreed to and signed.

Azerbaijan has suffered too long and hard for independence to place it at risk in the settlement of this tragic, unfortunate conflict. So we believe peacekeepers or observers should be international in make-up and under international command and control.

Second, while Ambassador Maresca did not address the issue of withdrawal of forces because that matter is currently under negotiation, we believe this is an essential ingredient of any settlement. Armenian forces currently occupy more than twenty percent of Azerbaijan, including seven major regions outside of Nagorno-Karabakh.

No settlement is possible unless it's agreed that those occupation forces will withdraw from those regions with adequate safeguards that they will not resume their aggression in an effort to influence later negotiations on Nagorno-Karabakh. This position is consistent with United Nations resolutions, international law, and United States policy.

Next, we agree with the Ambassador that in any settlement Nagorno-Karabakh should remain within and freely associated with sovereign Republic of Azerbaijan. The exact status of Nagorno-Karabakh in terms of local autonomy is, of course, subject to discussion and negotiation.

President Daliev has indicated on many occasions that Azerbaijan is prepared to be flexible and forthcoming in providing the maximum amount of local autonomy, but we cannot grant total independence which would amount to dismantlement of sovereign

nation that is recognized by the United Nations, the United States, CSCE and every other international body or institution.

By the same token, I would have to take issue with Ambassador Maresca's suggestion that Nagorno-Karabakh maintain permanent representatives in certain foreign capitals. I do not believe such action could be taken without infringement of sovereignty of Azerbaijan.

Settlement of issues of sovereignty must be consistent with international law, but I would remind you that there was a great deal of local autonomy in Nagorno-Karabakh before the conflict began, and we are prepared to agree on further steps.

I ask you, would the United States agree to give independence to a state like Texas that wanted to join up with Mexico? Of course not. In fact, the United States has already faced that issue in your Civil War, and we know what the answer was.

Next, we agree with Ambassador Maresca that refugees and displaced persons should be allowed to return to their homes and villages and towns, and that most definitely includes Azerbaijanis who were forced to leave Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as any Armenians who left Azerbaijani territory.

Azerbaijan is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious society, and we intend to remain so. In fact, one of the first laws enacted after our independence was one to guarantee the human rights of all ethnic minorities.

Today we have about 1 million refugees in Azerbaijan, one of every seven citizens in the country. We cannot accept the solution to this conflict that doesn't allow those people to return to their homes and to their villages and towns. Right now, the world's attention is rightly focused on the refugees of Rwanda, but we also have a major refugee crisis in Azerbaijan.

We also strongly agree with Ambassador Maresca that any agreement should be accompanied by international guarantees under CSCE and U.N. Security Council. We have lost count of the number of times that we have agreed to cease-fires that have been promptly broken. As a result, we cannot place our faith in the hands of mere promises. There must be international guarantees.

Last, Azerbaijan could easily agree on a treaty of mutual rights and access free trade agreements in similar measures once the fighting has stopped and all parties agree to peace. As I said before, we are a multi-ethnic society and will remain so. We also desire friendly relations with all our neighbors, including Armenia.

We believe there are great opportunities for our mutual economic benefit, such as development of our Caspian Sea oil reserves. We also need the cooperation of our neighbors in building democracy and free markets. None of these proposals for mutual cooperation are out of the question, once the war has been concluded.

Finally, let me commend and congratulate Ambassador Maresca for his proposal and his contribution toward settlement of this conflict. The only hope for solution to human conflicts is hard work by men and women of good will.

Azerbaijan pledges its good faith to go the extra mile to settle this truly senseless war. There are enough dead, enough grieving mothers and fathers, homeless, and destitute refugees and enough impoverished and hungry people on both sides.

History will not be kind to any of us if we do not seize the opportunity to settle this conflict and begin building for the future.

Thank you.

Mr. **Wise.** Thank you, Ambassador. Now it's the turn of Ambassador Shugarian of Armenia.

Ambassador **Shugarian.** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

First of all, I would like to begin from the recognition of Ambassador Maresca's efforts as chief negotiator for United States in the CSCE Minsk Group. I think that there is really no politician or diplomat in the United States that has a better command of the Karabakh issue than Ambassador Maresca, and his tireless efforts during two years were just—It's very hard to really evaluate or to underestimate.

First of all, I would like to say a few words about the current situation as far as the Karabakh conflict is concerned, and this is, of course, something that has been mentioned in passing today, but this something is the agreement on the cease-fire that has been signed not long ago.

It was signed on July 27 between the three parties, Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Armenia. It was signed by Ministers of Defense of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the Commander of the Karabakh army.

So the de facto cease-fire of May 12 now has come into force as a de jure cease-fire. I think it's a historic moment in the Karabakh conflict resolution, and the three parties with the mediation of CSCE and Russia have signed this very important proposal.

Of course, it's just a prelude to a larger agreement which will be an agreement on cease-fire with all the mechanisms of withdrawals, of liftings of the blockades, of the deployment of international observers and peacekeepers.

As far as the plan Ambassador Maresca introduced is concerned, I have several observations. First and foremost, I salute the plan, and I think it would be of best help after the convocation of the Minsk CSCE conference.

Why do I say that? Because despite the fact that Ambassador Maresca mentioned that the plan has nothing to do with the current negotiation process and the discussions of the cease-fire debates, the cease-fire, peacekeepers and so on and so forth, I think it would have been altogether erroneous to, first, predetermine even in this might-have-been way the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, though I really presume that some observations on the status are relevant today, and there are some very good ideas as far as the status that is described here is concerned.

Why do I speak about that? Ambassador Maresca in his introduction has the following lines: "The objective of this proposal is to provide a new impetus to the negotiating process by providing an informed but impartial illustration of what a political settlement might eventually look like, so that each side may reflect on it, and also to instill some confidence that a political settlement need not mean defeat or humiliation for either side. With such an illustration in mind as a point of reference, the sides may be more willing to move forward on the matters currently under discussion."

I think that any certainty on the status discussed today might somehow hamper and hinder the negotiating process on peace. It was the position of the government of Armenia and also the government of the United States that the solution to the problem—and it's not contradicting to what you said in your plan, Mr. Maresca—solution to the problem must come in two stages.

The first stage is the cease-fire under the international supervision; second stage is the status. If we try to discuss the status today, I think that certainty on the status would not help the parties to proceed and to move in the peace process.

The best example of that is when Ambassador Pashayev said today that Azerbaijan would never agree with any status of Nagorno-Karabakh that will place Nagorno-Karabakh outside Azerbaijan.

I can understand him, and I respect his point of view, but it's very difficult to expect from Nagorno-Karabakh representatives to have this in mind today and to move towards peace and to agree on something less than independence. This is the reality of today.

The reality of tomorrow might be different, because negotiations process after the cease-fire is established might bring some new ideas, some compromises, and the direct parties to the conflict, Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan, might really find a common ground with the active mediation of the CSCE group.

There are very really captivating, I would say, points in this summary, both on the status, on the details, on the free trade area, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhichevan, and I want to repeat that this will really be of great help after the convocation of Minsk conference.

Here in the plan there is a point where Armenia and Azerbaijan will sign a treaty on neutral transit rights across each other's territory. Armenia will enjoy transit rights across Azerbaijan's territory to Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, and Azerbaijan will enjoy the same rights across Armenian territory to Nakhichevan.

Rights will include all forms of transport and the building of electrical grids and pipelines. Well, this is a very good point, but by building good roads, by building pipelines, we would not, I think, be safe to guarantee that these good roads and good pipelines will work; because we need real international guarantees first, and then all of this can be implemented.

I understand that this might not include the mechanisms—I mean this proposal—but somehow it sounds a little bit unrealistic to me, though the idea is very, very good.

Refugees will be permitted to return to their homes. Certain villages in Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh will be designated as Azeri villages, and certain villages in Azerbaijan but outside of Nagorno-Karabakh [Shaumayan area) will be designated as Armenian villages.

Well, it is really very easy to designate and to agree on something, but this is a long conflict, a blood curdling conflict, and without elaborated, I think, mechanisms of monitoring and international presence there, we cannot speak today about the return of the refugees, the extent of the displaced persons.

As far as the U.S. role is concerned, I think that United States really played an active role in 1992-1993 within the CSCE, and then I think that there was a certain gap after Ambassador Maresca has resigned and then we waited for three or four months for the replacement.

I think that, really, there was a moment then when Russian and CSCE plans have started to compete with each other. Ambassador Maresca worked very hard at his time to bring these two plans together, two efforts together, and I think we now should work very hard to harmonize and to combine these two plans, Russian and the CSCE plan.

I fully agree with Ambassador Maresca when he says that Swedish leadership more relies upon shuttle diplomacy, and is ignoring to some extent these group meetings, group

work; but at the same time, I would like to remember that with the Italian leadership what we really lacked was the shuttle diplomacy.

At that time—I mean there were only three or four missions of the Italian leadership to the region and, if we compare with other places where conflicts are in place, we would see that it's a very small number of times to have a good command of the situation.

Today, really, there is some tendency of not just competing of the two plans, but of making the two plans come as one plan, and this agreement that was signed two days ago is the best, I would say, manifestation of that; because the agreement signed by three parties to the conflict is sent to Mr. Eliasen and Mr. Kazimirov and Kozyrev and Mr. Grachev, to Russia and to the CSCE.

I speak about Russia and the CSCE, Mr. Maresca, and you can just note that I somehow tried to put Russia outside the CSCE, though Russia is a member of the CSCE, but the fact is that the reality of today is that only Russia is offering peacekeeper's separation forces to the region, and Russia—let's be frank about that—has more interest in this region than any other country, and it's claiming that, well, for 70 years and before it had its interest there and the idea of near-abroad is not the idea we were advocating, but the idea that was very well supported here in this administration.

What we need today with a U.S. role is consistency and work and cooperation with Russia not only within the framework of the CSCE but also outside the CSCE, because I fully agree with you that United States cannot just be a supportive personnel for the Swedish leadership, in some cases.

When we have this precedent today and a de jure cease-fire—there were many cease-fires. I agree with my Azerbaijani colleague, but this one is after a real de facto cease-fire of ten weeks, and this one is signed by three parties, and this one just puts forward a deadline of thirty days for the elaboration of the new agreement on all the technical details.

The position of Armenia on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh—and I have to say that, because we are—the plan has some points about the status—is that Armenia will agree to any solution, compromise solution, that will be reached between the two direct parties to the conflict, Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan, at the Minsk Conference of the CSCE.

We do not have any territorial demands to Azerbaijan, and I think that the Minsk Group really can provide a just and objective solution, political solution, to the problem.

As far as transit accesses are concerned, Nakhichevan and the corridor, Lachin corridor that ties Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, I would not say that these are things of the same value.

First and foremost, it is very difficult to say that Armenia was blockading Nakhichevan during these four years. Technically, it is impossible, because it may sound paradoxical but by blockading Armenia during these four years, Azerbaijan blockaded also Nakhichevan, Republic of Nakhichevan, which is an enclave; and since Armenia was getting nothing, Nakhichevan was getting nothing either.

I think that once the blockade of Armenia is lifted, the blockade of Nakhichevan, the de facto blockade, will be lifted as well. We showed some examples of that last year when President Ter-Petrossyan actually participated in providing the assistance to Nakhichevan from the United States, humanitarian assistance.

As far as the Lachin corridor is concerned, of course, it should be the subject of special negotiations and conversation. Of course, this or another way that should be monitored by international forces.

I would say also a few words about 907, though while we refrain from doing so, but I fully agree that perhaps to have an influence upon the region and the country, you need to show an even handed approach. That is, provision of humanitarian assistance in this case.

I would say that the Republic of Azerbaijan has received $35 million of humanitarian assistance from United States through nongovernmental organizations. This is one thing. The other thing: We do not tie it, actually, to the Azeri blockade, but Ambassador Maresca himself said about his efforts to negotiate with Turkey on the lifting of the blockade of Armenia, on lifting of the blockade of humanitarian assistance that is coming from the United States to Armenia, why not to tie these two things together, and why not to—I do not want to say that there should be a quid pro quo thing, but why not to view it in one skin?

While humanitarian assistance of the United States will pass without obstacles through Turkey to Armenia, then why not to lift the ban on Azerbaijan?

In conclusion, I would once again express my gratitude on behalf of my President and Foreign Minister to Ambassador Maresca for his efforts, and I hope that he will continue his efforts as far as the Karabakh conflict is concerned, the resolution of this conflict; and I would also like to thank Helsinki Commission for inviting me here today. Thank you.

Mr. **Wise.** Thank you, Ambassador. Thank all of you for a very interesting beginning to our briefing today.

I don't know whether Ambassador Maresca has any immediate comments or whether we can go to questions. All right.

Ambassador **Maresca.** Those who have seen me in negotiations will know and can confirm this, but whenever I've put forward a proposal in the past, I've always advised the sides, now don't—now don't accept this. Don't accept this, because if one side accepts it, of course, then the other side immediately rejects it on the theory that there must be something in it that they've missed.

So I'm always more satisfied if the sides take a cautious approach to a proposal than if they would immediately jump on it and say all of that is just right. So I was very satisfied to hear this kind of cautious approach from these two sides.

Mr. **Wise.** All right. We'll go to questions from the floor now. There are three microphones. I ask as I recognize you that you go to one of the microphones, and before asking your question, to identify yourself.

Before taking the first question, I would note that one of our Commissioners, Representative Frank Wolf, is here today, and former Congressman Dennis Eckert who was also head of a U.S. delegation to a CSCE meeting in Warsaw has joined us, too.

I wonder if Congressman Wolf has any questions to begin or should I—not right now? All right. I'll ask this lady in the corner then, please.

Ms. **Beecher.** Joan Beecher, Voice of America. I was wondering whether Ambassador Maresca and perhaps the other two Ambassadors as well could clarify a point with regard to the CSCE and the Russian plans.

Just recently—I guess it was July 26—Mr. Kazimirov, the Special Envoy, said that the CSCE project, in fact, doesn't even exist. There is only one, and that's the Russian

one. He also, of course, makes the point, as the Russians have made in the past, and I wonder if this is really correct, that the CSCE plan, such as it is, does not provide for the most essential thing, which is a peacekeeping force. It speaks only of rightless monitors. Is that indeed the case?

Secondly, from the very beginning the Russians did say they were not looking for a purely Russian force, peacekeeping force. They have tried to engage the other members of the CIS. Of course, they bitterly complain that no one else will supply forces. They also said they were agreeable to neutral parties like Finland to participate in such a force, if there were one. Could you also clarify that?

Just one final question, which is really, basically, unrelated: Your proposal for a Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh. The Russian negotiator, Mr. Kazimirov, has again said that he is for the reestablishment of an autonomous Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, simply going back to the old, basically, situation. How does yours differ from that?

Thank you.

Ambassador **Maresca.** I'm not sure I can answer your question in detail, at least not the first part, because as usually happens in these matters, there's a lot going on, and there are people traveling around, and statements are made and so forth. It's not that easy to keep up with them all, and I think one has to continue to try to understand the underlying concepts and not think that everything changes just because somebody made a statement and so forth and so on.

I do think that the Russians have been more openly contemptuous of the international effort as time has gone on. I would say at the beginning of our negotiating process—that is, 1992—that full year, I think the Russians were genuinely working with us cooperatively, trying to find a solution together with the international community; but at the beginning of 1993, as a part of a broader shift of Russian policies which are not the subject of our discussion, but I think one can't be ignorant of that—as part of this broader shift, the Russians gradually built up this effort of their own as a competitive effort.

Now the essential difference—and that's why I say I'm not going to try to go into the details, but the essential difference between these two cease-fire proposals is that in the case of the Russian proposal it would include the introduction of a Russian force, either as a Russian force or as a CIS force which would be clearly dominated by Russians; whereas, the CSCE proposal foresees an international team of monitors

Now the two differences between those two proposals are: One is international, and the other is Russian; and the other difference is that one is a monitoring force, and the other is a so called peacekeeping force. What is the difference?

Monitors are assigned to watch and see that the sides themselves are adhering to the cease- fire provisions. The cease-fire provisions are binding on the parties, and the monitors go around to ensure that they are abiding by those provisions. Monitors are like observers. They are normally not armed, and there are limited numbers of them, because they do their work in essentially spot check fashion, although they have certain hot spots where they would be located.

Now peacekeeping is a different type of operation. Peacekeeping is more like what you've seen in former Yugoslavia, except for one point, and that is that the Russians have a very different understanding of peacekeeping than we do in the West.

The essential difference between their understanding of it and our understanding of it—There are many differences, but the essential difference is that they foresee the use

of force beyond self-defense. The phrase they use is suppression of cease-fire violations, but it is basically a kind of suppression of violence type of operation, in their litany.

Now this is the—you know, their instructions that they give to their military people. You know, we know these. It's not something that is an interpretation. That is, in fact, what they do. So they are more heavily armed. They go in with a different kind of mandate, and the mandate does include the use of force.

There are other differences, too. I mean, historically, we've seen over and over again that they are not so interested in a stable political solution. They are more interested in suppressing the violence.

So I think the Russian understanding of peacekeeping—and I cite some recent articles on this subject for you. There was a very good article, I think, on the op. ed. page of the Wall Street Journal about a month ago, 22nd of June. I can't remember the author's name, but you look for it, which explains the differences.

There is a very good article in the summer edition of the Washington Quarterly which does the same thing. So I don't have to go into it, but these are clear differences in meaning and intention, etc. So those are the differences between these two proposals, if you will.

Now your last question about a republic: First, one has to note that the word republic does not in itself mean a lot. It's a word which is used widely in the former Soviet Union and is still used widely within the Russian Federation, in fact, itself.

Nakhichevan, for example, the exclave of Azerbaijan is called a republic, and has been. So this is a word which is used to describe many different types of things. I think it is an important word to use here, because of what Ambassador Shugarian noted was the ambitions and the current mentality the people up there in Nagorno-Karabakh, and I think something has to be recognized there.

Now the underlying meaning of my proposal is something beyond autonomous. What I am suggesting is something a bit beyond autonomy, because I'm trying to find a mid-point between the type of autonomy which Azerbaijan is prepared to accept—We noted that this morning, and I think that's been their position all along, and which existed before, by the way—and the kind of independence which Ambassador Shugarian is referring to and which is the ambition of the people there.

You have to find—if you're going to find a compromise, you have to find something in between. What I'm looking for is something in between. So what I suggest is what I call self-government, and there are plenty of models of that around as well.

It means something more than just autonomy. It means you take care of all of your business unto yourself. So that's the kind of mid--point I'm trying to find. All of this is subject to further discussions and so forth. This is just a point of reference, as I said earlier, but that is what I'm suggesting.

Now it isn't the same as the Russian suggestion that we just go back to the previous autonomous situation. As everybody knows, this was an autonomous oblast or region under the Soviet system. So it had autonomy in certain aspects, but they were limited.

I think that going back to—Simply going back to that situation will not solve the problem politically. It will not find agreement, basically. So one has to be creative and find some mid-dle point which could be agreed and which, I think, doesn't threaten the essential interests on either side.

I believe that the essential point for Azerbaijan is to maintain sovereignty in principle over this whole area. I think that's the essential point without which an agreement can't be found, and on the Armenian side—I mean the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh—I think the essential point is to be able to take care of their own business, to not have outside interference, and to ensure that their community will survive.

So I think this suggestion meets those essential points, and that's why I suggested it.

Mr. **Wise.** Do either of you want to speak on the subject?

Ambassador **Pashayev.** Basically, I agree.

Mr. **Wise.** Next question, please, in the back there.

Mr. **Keef.** My name is Tom Keef from Congressman Reed's office, and I was wondering how any of the proposals on the table address the religious difference and whether there is any mention of religious tolerance; because it's my understanding that's a major factor.

Ambassador **Maresca.** I don't believe that the cease-fire proposals, either the Russian or the CSCE cease-fire proposal, address this point, simply because that's what—They are cease-fire proposals, which provide for arrangements of pull-backs of forces, introduction of monitors, and that sort of thing. So they don't address a political solution.

Now I have, I think, addressed this in a way in my plan for a political solution. I haven't addressed it in terms of religion, because, in fact, the religious differences in this area—the principal religious differences go along with ethnic differences.

That is to say, the Armenians have the Armenian Christian Church of their own, and the Azeris are principally Muslim. So that the religious differences coincide in this particular area with ethnic differences. That's not true in Bosnia, for example, but it is true here.

So I have addressed this issue in my plan in terms of the ethnic differences, and what I've done is to include a phraseology that says that the rights of these ethnic minorities in each case would be respected. That would be written into the law.

In fact, I think it is written into the law in these countries. It's just that the violence has gotten out of hand, and there's been retribution and vengeance sought and so forth and so on. So that the laws have not always been respected, but I think that's the way to address these things.

Frankly, I don't think that religion is the number one issue here, principally because under Soviet rule religion was generally suppressed. Generally, it was ignored. So the main differences here are not based on religious differences as much as they are on territorial, ethnic, if you will, differences.

Mr. **Wise.** Ambassadors?

Ambassador **Shugarian.** I fully agree that religion is not a factor here in the conflict. It is a factor, of course, but it's—well, it's not coming first. It's not even coming second or third.

It's not a religious conflict. It's not even a territorial conflict, as the position of Armenia is that it's the conflict just between the two basic principles as people's rights to self-determination, on one hand, and territorial integrity on the other hand.

Ambassador **Pashayev.** I very well understand where this question is coming from. This young gentleman, I believe, read all newspapers in the United States. This is

exactly—I am now in the United States more than one and a half year, and I remember when I came to this country all headlines in newspapers mentioned that this religious Muslim country suppress Christian country.

It was some sort of propaganda aim to create in this country some image of Azerbaijan which will then very much hurt us. Exactly 907 Amendment is a result of this misperception. I think right now it's obvious to admit that it's not religious conflict, and everybody now is admit, but I just wanted to say to you that before, it made some wrong, create bad image of Azerbaijan.

Mr. **Wise.** Yes, in the back there?

Mr. **Mollazade.** Jayhun Mollazade, Cambridge Energy Associates. His Excellency, Ambassador Shugarian, told us that Armenia—that it's wrong to predetermine now the status of Nagorno-Karabakh while the cease-fire arrangements is going on, and he also said that the Republic of Armenia doesn't have any claims to the Republic of Azerbaijan; but the reality is that in 1989 the parliament of Republic of Armenia passed a resolution or decision of law on the incorporation of Nagorno-Karabakh into Armenia, and in 1992 the parliament of Armenia again adopted a decision that Armenia will never sign any international agreement recognizing Nagorno-Karabakh as a part of Azerbaijan.

Isn't that a predetermination of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh outside of Azerbaijan, and don't you think that the elimination of this—or if anything changed in Armenia, I would like you to comment, because from your words, I understood there is some shift. So if there is some shift, do you think that the elimination of this decision may help to foster the peace process?

The second question is that we got reports from top CSCE Minsk Group, diplomats, that Armenian principals accepted CSCE proposal but asked for Russia's blessing. Is it true and, if it is true, is it that Russia is putting pressure on Armenia and such an Armenian approach restricts Armenian sovereignty and independence?

Thank you.

Ambassador **Shugarian.** OK. First and foremost, the 1989 resolution on the incorporation of Nagorno-Karabakh into Armenia was adopted not in the Republic of Armenia but in the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia.

After that, there was a referendum in Nagorno-Karabakh held on national independence. So it is not necessary to repeal this resolution, because Nagorno-Karabakh itself has proclaimed its independence and has held a national referendum on that.

In 1992, you're right, there was a discussion in the Armenian parliament on the fact that Armenia will never accept any status outside that will be placing Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan. That was a reaction to the CSCE February and March documents that tried to predetermine the status of Nagorno-Karabakh as a part of Azerbaijan.

Now the fact is that the position of the Republic of Armenia, and I am speaking on behalf of the President and my Foreign Ministry, that we will accept, as I put it already, any status of Nagorno-Karabakh that will be agreed upon between the two parties, direct parties, Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan within the CSCE Minsk Group.

As far as your second question is concerned about the fact that we signed the CSCE proposal, yes, we signed the CSCE proposal, and by that, I think, we once again demonstrated that we are an independent country with an independent foreign policy.

Of course, we consult not only with Russia but with all the members of the CSCE Minsk Group, while the result was that the agreement was signed, and Armenia put its

signature not only under this document but under all the peace plans that were proposed during the last year.

Thank you.

Mr. **Wise.** The gentleman over here.

Mr. **Rotrunov.** My name is Sergei Rotrunov. I am Professor at Moscow University, currently visiting Georgetown University.

My question is: If the CSCE plan is accepted, if there are not peacekeeping forces with a mandate to suppress armed violations but only unarmed monitors to observe the situation, what will be the mechanism of persuasion, of enforcement of the agreement and the separation if it is violated not by government forces, not by armies but by separate field commanders or armed guerrilla troops or any other minor force, which is so often the fact?

Thank you.

Ambassador **Maresca.** There is a provision which I assume still exists—Although the proposals have gone through many iterations over time, I assume this provision still exists. There is a provision in the proposals for a kind of self- policing aspect under which any groups which may violate the cease-fire should be brought under control by the authorities responsible for that area.

That is to say, if there is an Armenian group which refuses to abide by the cease-fire but continues shooting or attacks or whatever, then it is up to the Armenian authorities to bring them under control, if necessary through the use of force. The same thing would apply on the Azeri side.

In any case, I think one has to recognize that a cease-fire will not work if the sides are not ready to accept it. Now in this type of conflict—and we've seen quite a few similar conflicts now in the last few years. So one can now speak of general lessons that you draw out of these conflicts—it is often the case that you have renegade commanders or particularly extreme commanders who, for one reason or another, don't want a cease-fire.

Wars are surrounded by scoundrels. All wars are surrounded by scoundrels. So to try to impose a peace sometimes threatens military commanders or suppliers of weapons who have made their career or their bank accounts through this war, and there will be many, and there are always many people like that who refuse and don't want a cease-fire, don't want to see a compromise.

Why? Because they are profiting from the war, either by making their own careers or by filling their pockets, and there are lots of those involved in this war, too, on both sides, sad to say. So there will be incidents of the kinds that you describe, have been, and will be.

It will be very difficult for the sides to get over that. If there is an attack by one side or another, the other side will feel obliged to respond. However, I do not believe that the answer to that is the suppression of such attacks by outsiders. Why? Because then the outsiders become a part of the fighting.

We've seen it before. It's not the first time the Russians have gone into this area. They sent a peacekeeping—so called peacekeeping force in about a year and a half ago, and right away they were shot at. They had to bring them out within a month, because they were being shot in the back.

A force which goes in there and starts using force becomes an element of the struggle. That's the way it works, and so you want to have a stable cease- fire which is respected

by both sides, but it is also not helpful to send a force in there which then engages in combat, because they become an element in the struggle.

This is not an easy problem, but the solution which has been proposed depends on coming to a stable cease-fire, which the sides are prepared to respect, including the suppression of elements on their own side who refuse to accept the cease-fire, and I think that's the only way you can go that will bring you to something that's stable.

Ambassador **Shugarian.** I think that the conflict has reached a point where the introduction of peacekeepers is a must, and when we signed the CSCE proposal one of the remarks we made or one of the proposals we made was the introduction of peacekeepers.

This agreement we signed with Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh also envisages international peacekeeping forces. It has really reached a point where it's impossible to guarantee that the cease-fire will hold if the peacekeepers are not introduced there, because it's a 6 years' war, and it's a serious war, and there we have a de facto cease-fire. De jure we need a real guarantee that the military activities will not start again.

Of course, I understand that there are some doubts about the Russian peacekeepers. Azerbaijan has some doubts, and Mr. Maresca also came forward with some examples; but no other country or no international organization has put forward any proposal on the peacekeepers.

We are trying now to negotiate it very hard within the framework of the CSCE, and I think that the leadership of the CSCE has the understanding that peacekeepers are the necessary element of the guarantees of the cease-fire. Thank you.

Mr. **Wise.** The gentleman here?

Mr. **Fattahi.** Yes. Omid- Fattahi with Representative Bill Thomas' office.

I was wondering, what are the prospects of getting the Russians to move away from their peacekeeping force plan and back into the CSCE plan with the monitors.

My second question was: Do we know the position of representatives from Nagorno-Karabakh on the issues of greater autonomy versus total independence?

Ambassador **Maresca.** I think it must be a continuing objective of the United States and also the West in general to engage the Russians in a positive way in support of a joint plan. That is a must, simply because Russia is in a position to be very helpful or to be a real problem in that area. They still very much dominate many aspects of the situation.

All the weaponry in the area is Russian, all the ammunition, the language. The ruble controls the financial situation, etc. So I think it must be a continuing objective to get them involved in a positive way.

I had always thought, and I still think this is possible, that the Russians should play a major role in an international effort. They are in a position, for example, to handle logistics in a way that nobody is, and things of that nature, plus they have the language, obviously, and things that other countries' units going in there would not have.

So I had always thought that was an essential component of an organization which would really work, also for many of the reasons that Ambassador Shugarian has cited, and I worked very hard to achieve that and made proposals that I thought should be very attractive to them.

They never accepted, in fact mainly ignored all of these ideas. So I can't be positive in replying to your question. I do think that the Russians, for whatever—I mean, one can—One knows what the reasons are. I think they have determined that this is something they do not want the international community to resolve, that they specifically want to resolve this themselves in their own way.

I believe that is a determination which they have come to, probably first and primarily within the military, but also approved up to the highest levels of the Russian government; and for that reason, I think it may be that we can never get them to join in an international effort.

I think that is very unfortunate. I regard this as a litmus test, both for Russian intentions with respect to the so called near-abroad and for the reaction of the West and, particularly, of the United States to that role, because it is unique in so many ways.

The Russians have been removed. They have to come back in. The people involved don't want them in. Two successive, very different governments of Azerbaijan have made it absolutely clear that they don't want Russians coming back in. So we know that. It's public.

Another point is that this is the only case where there is a valid alternative. It may not be as forceful as the Russian suggestion, but it is, nonetheless, a valid international alternative, which is there on offer. So that, too, is unique.

On the whole of the territory of the former Soviet Union, that's the only case where that does exist, and it is also, as I said earlier, the only case where the United States has a direct role. So I believe it is the litmus test, both for the Russians' intentions and for our, and by our I mean the United States and also the West—our willingness and ability to find a constructive response.

So I think it's unfortunate that, up until now anyway, there has been no sign that the Russians really want to find a cooperative thing. I believe it would be better for them. I think it is a great mistake for them to be launched back into a neo-colonial role in this area.

Mr. **Wise.** The gentleman in the back.

Mr. **Hayloor.** Thomas Gorguissian Hayloor from News Agency.

First of all, I want to thank Mr. Pashayev for—Ambassador Pashayev for stating that it's not a religious war, because I heard a lot of voices in Islamic world mentioning that there was by Nagorno-Karabakh trying to create a new Israel in the Islamic world.

My question to Ambassador Maresca: You are mentioning about Russian international role and near-abroad. Do you think, first of all, that a different role can be played by Russia, different from that role that it's playing in Georgia, for example, first?

Second, Mr. Goble mentioned before—I think that most of the people know Mr. Goble, because he was playing the same role, more or less, and he mentioned that the government, U.S. government, chose CSCE and not U.N. in order to exclude Iran from that process.

Mr. Maresca, Ambassador Maresca, do you think that, if Russia is trying to be there, Iranian presence or Turkish presence in that area can kind of mediate or buffer that Russian presence or desires to extend this near-abroad?

Ambassador **Maresca.** First of all, as I said earlier, I do believe there is an alternative role for Russia which would be much more constructive. I think what the Russians

perhaps fail to understand is the special sensitivities of a period of decolonization, which is what's happening.

The so called near- abroad is an area that was colonized by Russia, and it is now going through a period of decolonization. We've seen plenty of instances of decolonization in the past. So I think one can draw some lessons from that as well.

I think what they have failed to understand is, as I say, the special sensitivities of the role of the mother country in a colonial situation when the colonial areas are working for their independence, and that is—make no mistake about it. That's what's going on now. These countries are trying to establish their independence.

That's why it's—for example, it's quite different, I think, from a Rwanda or a Haiti, for that matter. It's—that colonial relationship, that immediate colonial relationship, doesn't—isn't there.

This is why, I think, the Russians should see an advantage to themselves from a practical point of view, from a point of view of their image, from their ability to cooperate with the West, to work with the international community, bolster its efforts, have a prominent role in such efforts, but to be a part of that rather than to seek their own dominance.

So that, I think, is the alternative role which, I think, would be clearly in Russia's interest. They're just a little bit too wrapped up in their own things to see that right now.

Now as for Iran, first, I don't think—frankly, I don't think there was a conscious choice within the U.S. government to handle this in the CSCE or, for that matter, to exclude Iran. The fact is that the issue was broached in the CSCE before it was broached anywhere else. We didn't broach it.

It was broached, in fact, by the British. In the first meeting of the CSCE after Armenia and Azerbaijan had become members, they suggested that there should be a mission to the area to look into the problem. So it was broached in the CSCE and continued to be considered there, which is quite—which was perfectly in keeping with the role of the CSCE, which has these countries as members, where there are certain principles, excluding use of force, and so forth.

So it was perfectly logical to deal with it there, and we continued to deal with it there. Nobody—I was involved in this from the beginning. There wasn't any conscious decision that Iran should be either in or out.

Parallel with that, of course, the issue was also being taken up in the U.N., and you will find I don't know how many Security Council resolutions which recognize the CSCE Minsk Group effort as the primary place where this problem should be dealt with.

So there was constant support from the U.N. for this effort as well, in fact, in a way, more active even than the support we got from the CSCE.

Further on Iran, I'm not sure that involving Iran in the process would be helpful. Why? First of all, let's face it, Iran is a country that operates under very a different set of principles.

Any country that has the main street of its capital city named after a prominent assassin, which is the case in Tehran—it's named after an assassin, a known assassin. So, obviously, a country like that is operating under different rules from at least what I hope we as a member of the international community operate under.

Secondly, Iran has very specific, complicated problems with respect to the countries that we're discussing. There happen to be almost 20 million ethnic Azeris living in Iran,

as opposed to the 7 million who live in Azerbaijan, and that is a very difficult problem for these countries to look at and think about.

So I'm not sure that it would add anything. It probably would complicate things to have Iran involved in this thing. The body which has been established as perfectly competent for dealing with this, if there is any will among the parties to find a solution—in fact, I would even go farther. Anybody, anybody at all, any forum at all which was dealing with the issue would be perfectly competent to deal with it if there was any willingness at all among the parties to the conflict to find a solution.

We happen to be dealing with the CSCE. There's no point in changing that.

Mr. **Wise.** The gentleman in front here.

Mr. **Akinci.** I am Ugur Akinci with Turkish Daily News. How could Turkey best contribute for the settlement of this problem, either within a CSCE monitoring context or an international peacekeeping operation context?

Ambassador **Maresca.** Turkey has a very important role to play in this area and, I think, has to look to its growing international role, it's growing international stature and rise above considerations which I would categorize as smaller and less important.

What can Turkey do? Well, right away it could, as I said earlier, permit humanitarian aid to go to Armenia. There's no question. The only way—if you look at the map, the only way Armenia has easily to receive supplies from outside is from the West, and that has to go through Turkey.

I had talked for—I've been talking—have been—was talking—I should put it in the past tense—with the Turks for two years—Turkish authorities for two years about what they could do, and I think there was a stage there when they were prepared to do quite a lot. Then, unfortunately, there were a couple of massacres in the fighting which greatly excited Turkish public opinion, because they're very close to the Azeris ethnically and linguistically, and it made it impossible for the Turkish government to continue on that path.

They were at that time, for example, I think, prepared to link up their electrical grid with the Armenian electrical grid and provide power during winter, which would be a tremendous boon for Armenia, if that were possible, and there were a lot of minor trade connections across the border at that time, all of which were cut off.

There was a train, for example, that went back and forth, a lot of small commerce. A lot of traders went back and forth. There was a lot of kind of small trade across the frontier. All of that was cut off. All of that could be reopened.

I don't think Turkey politically can do it right now, but I think they should look for the earliest possibility, the earliest excuse for opening up something, starting probably with humanitarian assistance and so forth, but any slight movement.

Hopefully, this kind of a cease-fire would be—would qualify as that kind of an excuse and give them a possibility before their own public opinion to justify making these gestures. I think that's very important. It should happen very soon.

With respect to longer term possibilities like peacekeeping, I don't really think it's a very wise idea for Turkey to be visible in a monitoring or peacekeeping operation. I think it's too much of a provocation for the Armenians, for reasons we all know.

On the other hand, I think that Turkey can play a very important role in support of an international operation of this kind. Once again, logistically, it has bases nearby. It has air space which right now it doesn't permit being used for that purpose, but which

should ultimately be used for the purpose of delivering humanitarian supplies to the area and so forth.

I would see Turkey in that kind of a role, a bit behind the front lines rather than in the front lines, which, I think, would not be a wise idea. I know recently there's been some talk about a prominent Turkish role in a peacekeeping operation. My own suggestion would be to look for a kind of behind the scenes role, which can be constructive and helpful and not provocative.

Mr. **Wise.** Yes, the lady right here?

Ms. **Chorbajian.** My name is Rosalie Chorbajian. I'm with Congressman Frank Pallone of New Jersey.

Ambassador Maresca, you mentioned Section 907, repeal thereof, and you said evenhandedness. Now should that be repealed, it would seem that it would just shift the pendulum to the opposite. All Azerbaijan has to do is lift the blockade, and government to government aid would be available.

They are already receiving humanitarian aid from various organizations. So my comment is to you, but my direct question is to Ambassador Pashayev. Why doesn't Azerbaijan lift the blockade? That would help the peace process tremendously.

Ambassador **Pashayev.** Everybody asks me about this question, especially in this building and Congress. I should first mention that even ethically we cannot do that in condition when too many persons of Azerbaijani territory are under occupation.

For example, one major railroad through Baku to Nakhichevan and then to Yerevan—it's completely blown up in just an area which is Armenian territory. It was made even before the 907 was imposed.

This is on Armenian territory—blown up. Then this—then a big portion of this same railroad also now—right now under occupation, as I said. So opening doors and roads and so forth, I think, should be done in frame of mutual agreement, in frame of just after the cease-fire. It should be done next step.

You are talking about humanitarian aid to Armenia. It's no problem for—Armenia has accesses. You know and I know how much help Armenia is getting from Western countries and particularly from the United States.

I agree, but if you are keeping in mind that Azerbaijan should give fuel to Armenia and this fuel will go back to Karabakh and will fuel tanks and arms and then fight against Azerbaijan, I think it's also understandable that Azerbaijan will never do business as usual in condition when two countries in this—in war, actually.

Mr. **Wise.** Ambassador Maresca might want to comment.

Ambassador **Maresca.** My feeling, not just on this issue but on many aspects of this and other issues as well—my feeling is that the United States in many of these conflicts must lead by example of impartiality within our own policies.

That is to say, our policies shouldn't be designed to offset the policy of another country. Our policies within themselves should be impartial, as a way of setting an example and leading by example.

This is very valuable when you're trying to get other countries to do things, and that's why I think this is the U.S. role. Perhaps having done this sort of thing for thirty years has colored my views, but I do think that the United States takes that position in

the world. That must be the position of this country, not other countries perhaps, but this country. I feel that that applies not just here, as I say, but many other things.

Now I would have to say that I sympathize with those that voted for this amendment when that took place. I visited Nagorno-Karabakh during that time, and it's true, as I said earlier, there was tremendous destruction there, random destruction, artillery barrages from high mountain peaks onto the city without any attention where they were going to fall, hospitals destroyed, so forth and so on.

So I think there was a reaction against that in this country, in the West in general. I think things have changed now. The shoe is on the other foot. The suffering is much more on the Azeri side now than it is on the Armenian side, I believe, in that area.

Whole towns have been destroyed. A million refugees is a lot of refugees, and Azerbaijan is not a country that has a lot of ability to deal with that kind of a problem. We know what a million refugees look like. There are a million refugees outside of Rwanda. So we know what that looks like, and there's a similar problem there, and winters are very severe in that part of the world.

So I think things have changed. So for these two reasons I do believe that the United States should rise above this, take an impartial point of view, and I think that will help also the Armenian side, because it will allow us to play a more influential role in finding a solution.

So that's my view. I mean, others will have other views, but that's my view.

Mr. **Wise.** The gentleman right here. This will have to be the last question, because our time is up.

Mr. **Meyer.** Cord Meyer. Mr. Maresca, what disposition of the oil in the Caspian Sea is best suited to serve the interest of a peaceful solution?

Ambassador **Maresca.** Well, here again, this is—you have to perhaps look for it, but it's in my proposal. I do believe that the oil resources in the Caspian can help the whole area be prosperous, and with prosperity can be a stability which it hasn't known before.

What I would like to see is that Armenia become involved in this, so that Armenia, too, is benefiting from and committed to stability and using of these oil resources. This is why this proposal includes the possibility of building pipelines.

It turns out that the shortest, most economical route for a pipeline from the Caspian to the West would go across Armenia, and I believe that the equation here is rather simple.

Azeri oil plus Armenian territory can equal prosperity and stability for the region. It can help to knit it all together in a way that all of them can benefit. I do believe that, if there was peace tomorrow—I'm not suggesting this is what's going to happen. If there were peace tomorrow, and the pipeline was built, ten years from now people in that area would be prosperous, and they would begin to be able to put all of this behind them.

So that's what I think is the best way to go. Now right now that's not possible. In fact, the only route that is at all stable goes through, you guessed it, Russia which would put Russia once again in control of the resources from the Caspian, because they would control the spigot.

So—By the way, it's also a much more expensive route, much more difficult route, etc., and let's not forget that the Caspian Sea—the resources of the Caspian Sea are about the equivalent of a second Persian Gulf. So we're talking about huge potential here, which would have an effect on the economy of the whole world—that great.

The only problem is getting it out, and the only way you can get it out is through pipeline, and the pipeline right now has to cross either Iran, which banks won't buy, basically, Armenia where there's a war going on, Georgia where there's another war going on, or Russia.

So my answer is I would much prefer to get a settlement of this war and, as a part of the settlement, make it possible for these countries to work together on this, and give them a positive reason for working together in the future through this fashion.

Mr. **Wise.** Thank you. I don't know whether you have any final comments yourself, either of you. I realize there are other questions, and I'm sorry we don't have more time. Maybe the panelists will be here for a minute after it's over, and you can ask your question then.

I thank all of them for being here. I think we've had a very interesting discussion of a possible positive step forward in a situation that, for the moment, seems to hold some promise. Certainly, the civilized comments we've heard here today, both from the audience and from the panelists, I think, augurs well.

I thank you all for coming.

[Whereupon, the briefing was adjourned at 12:05 P.M.]

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