

THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNIC INTEREST GROUPS ON U.S. FOREIGN POLICY: THE CASE OF ARMENIAN DIASPORA

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Of the specific groups that have had an impact on the American foreign policy the ethnic interest groups are the oldest and, arguably, the most influential foreign policy lobby. The present study seeks to understand ethnic interest groups and their influence on U.S. foreign policy. The article addresses how diaspora groups can affect U.S. foreign policy debate and influence the policy abroad, using the Armenian-American diaspora community as a case study.

The study examines why and how the Armenian ethnic interest groups influence U.S. policy. The discussion focuses on the specifics of Armenian lobbying institutions in the United States, the main goals and lobbying agendas, as well as mechanisms of influence on the United States' foreign policy.

Key words – *interest groups, diaspora, Armenian-American community, lobbying, U.S. foreign policy*

The number and types of domestic and foreign interest groups involved in American foreign policy are truly numerous. Moreover, in recent years this number increased exponentially due to the expanded foreign policy agenda of the United States. The types of such groups include traditional business groups, labor unions as well as newer groups such as ideological organizations and religious communities that are active in foreign policy. Of the many specific groups that have had an impact on the American foreign policy over the years the ethnic interest groups are the oldest and, arguably, the most influential foreign policy lobby. Hence their efforts to impact political environments in their host countries are of particular interest.

The topic of ethnic interest groups' influence on the United States foreign policy is not new. It has a long history since before World War I, but their efforts became increasingly proactive particularly during World War I and the Cold War. Those periods brought a steady rise in the number and forms of lobbying groups. Nowadays, with the increase in American multiculturalism, when more policy-making involves Congress and the executive branch, more ethnic lobbying groups

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Սույն [հոդվածը/հրատարակությունը] ֆինանսավորվել է ԱՄՆ պետքարտուղարության դրամաշնորհի շրջանակում: Այստեղ արտահայտված են հեղինակ(ներ)ի դիրքորոշումները, որոնց համընկնումը ԱՄՆ պետքարտուղարության դիրքորոշումներին պարտադիր չէ:

are potentially involved in U.S. domestic and foreign policy formation.¹

Despite the growing number of foreign interest groups involved in U.S. foreign policy, the level of involvement and effectiveness of these groups varies. Traditionally, the most active ethnic interest groups in U.S. foreign policy have been the Jewish and Irish diasporas. Over the years, however, Americans of African, Arab, Armenian, Greek, Mexican, Hispanic, Latin American, and Turkish descent, as well as, more recently, Indian Americans, have become increasingly involved in foreign policy.² The main foreign policy concern of these interest groups is American policy towards their country or region of origin, which makes the ethnic interest groups highly concentrated and motivated in their lobbying effort. As Ambrosio puts it, the specific agenda of ethnic interest groups is the well being of members of the self-defined ethnic group, wherever they reside. Accordingly, he defines ethnic lobbies as “political organizations established along cultural, ethnic, religious or racial lines that seek to directly and indirectly influence U.S. foreign policy in support of their homelands and or ethnic kin abroad”.³

The research presented in this paper seeks to understand ethnic interest groups and their influence on U.S. foreign policy. The article addresses how diaspora groups can impact and influence U.S. foreign policy abroad using the Armenian-American diaspora community as a case study. The study examines why and how the Armenian ethnic interest groups influence U.S. policy. First, the analysis will introduce the specifics of Armenian lobbying institutions in the United States formed to promote the interests of Armenian-Americans and the Armenian nation abroad. Next, the study will assess the main goals and lobbying agendas, as well as mechanisms of influence on U.S. foreign policy.

The study is based on the methods of analysis from a qualitative research design. In the research I use a case study historical-comparative and qualitative content analysis research methods. Data collection consisted of information provided by the Armenian-American lobbying organizations, U.S. and Armenian state agencies, articles, newspapers, policy-papers as well as reports and working papers prepared by various institutions and think tanks.

Formed mainly as a result of the Ottoman policy of genocide and deportation of Armenians of Western Armenia and Cilicia during World War I, the Armenian diaspora is now represented by many communities in a variety of countries and regions. The Armenian-American diaspora is one of the largest (the second-largest Armenian overseas community) and socially advanced elements of the Global Armenian diaspora, with over one million American citizens.⁴ Despite its small number, the Armenian community in the United States

¹ **Th. Ambrosio and Y. Shain**, *Diaspora Communities: Influencing U.S. Foreign Policy*, drafted by Channa Threat, June 23, 2003, Retrieved from <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/diaspora-communities-influencing-us-foreign-policy>

² **J. McCormick**, “Ethnic interest groups in American Foreign Policy” in **James M. McCormick** (ed.), *The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy: Insights and Evidence*. Sixth Edition. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2012, p. 70

³ **Th. Ambrosio**, “Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy” in **Thomas Ambrosio** (ed.), *Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger, 2002, p. 2

⁴ According to various sources (Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs, *Republic of Armenia: Armenian Diaspora Communities, United States of America, 2022*, Retrieved from <http://diaspora.gov.am/en/pages/3/usa>; **Y. Shain**, *Marketing the American Creed Abroad: Diasporas in the U.S. and Their Homelands*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 64; **Kh. Tölölyan**,

is considered one of the most influential ethnic minority groups in the country along with Jewish and Greek communities.⁵ Although the Armenian American population, estimated at about 0.1% of the total number of the U.S. population,⁶ is relatively small within the United States, it is politically active and involved.

Over time, the Armenians were able to increase their role in the political life of the country and increase influence on the legislative and executive branches as well as form serious institutions of influence on American foreign policy. In addition, being concentrated in some key electoral states (e.g., California, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey) the Armenian ethnic interest groups have been able to utilize that electoral clout to maintain influence.

The main foreign policy goals of the Armenian ethnic interest groups focus primarily on the United States policy toward Armenia and neighboring rival states Azerbaijan and Turkey. The Armenian lobby in the United States plays a significant role in the protection and promotion of interests of the Armenian nation abroad. Specifically, it sought to strengthen American ties with Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh), to achieve universal recognition of the Armenian Genocide as well as the right of Nagorno-Karabakh to self-determination and independence, to lift the transport and economic blockade imposed by Turkey and Azerbaijan, to increase the volume of U.S. assistance to Armenia to promote its economic and democratic development, to suspend the adoption of anti-Armenian documents, and place common-sense restrictions on U.S. military and security assistance to Azerbaijan and Turkey.

The main means of the Armenian-American community to promote Armenian interests are the lobbying organizations and activities of prominent Armenian-Americans, those who have achieved recognition and high status in the country. The principal organizations of the Armenian lobby operating in the United States are the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) and the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA). There are some other Armenian advocacy and interest groups whose members have an active role in advocating Armenian interests on an individual level, such as the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), the Knights of Vartan, the Daughters of Vartan, the Armenian American Political Action Committee (A.A.P.A.C.), the U.S.–Armenia Public Affairs Committee (U.S.A.P.A.C.) and others. Among the prominent Armenian individuals and families who advocated Armenian interests in the U.S. are Kirk Kerkorian, Alex Manoogian, Aso Tavitian, Albert Boyajian, Gerard Cafesjian, Ross Vartian, Paul Krekorian, the Hovnanians, the Mugar, and the Kardashians.

The two lobbying organizations, AAA and ANCA, differ greatly in their origins, structure and modus operandi. The ANCA originates from the Arme-

“Elites and Institutions in the Armenian Transnation”, *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 9(1), 2000, pp. 107–136; United States Census Bureau, *American Community Survey 2020*. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>) the exact number of Armenian-Americans living in the United States varies greatly from 308,000 to 2 million.

⁵ **Z. Brzezinski**, “A Dangerous Exemption: Why Should the Israel Lobby Be Immune from Criticism?”, *Foreign Policy*, 155(July/Aug), 2006, p. 63–64

⁶ **F. Bass**, “U.S. ethnic mix boasts German accent amid surge of Hispanics”, *Bloomberg*, 2012, March 05, Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2012-03-06/u-s-ethnic-mix-boasts-german-accent-amid-surge-of-hispanics.htm>; United States Census Bureau, *Ancestry: 2000*. 2000 Census Brief, Issued June 2004, Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/c2kbr-35.pdf>

nian Committee for the Independence of Armenia (ACIA), the organization that since 1918 has lobbied for the interests of an independent Armenian Republic, led by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF). The ANCA was finalized in 1983 in Washington, D.C. The organization's head office is in Washington. In addition, ANCA has regional branches in Watertown, Massachusetts, and Glendale, California. ANCA effectively advances the interests of the Armenian nation on a wide range of issues through working with U.S. government agencies, labor, and human rights organizations as well as the Greek, Cypriot, Kurdish, and Lebanese communities.⁷

The second principal organization for promoting Armenian interests in the United States is the AAA established in Washington in 1972. Notably, the creation of two parallel socio-political lobbying organizations represents another manifestation of the political and ideological schism of the Armenian diaspora and another milestone in the confrontation between pro-ARF and anti-ARF forces in the United States. The key founding members of the AAA have been affiliated with the AGBU, a well-known anti-ARF organization. Along with its head office in Washington, D.C., the organization has regional branches in Los Angeles, California, and Yerevan, Armenia. To effectively advance the interests of the Armenian nation, the AAA has established several organizations and developed some youth, academic, and other programs. Over the years, the AAA has also developed strong ties with the United Nations and the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. to raise awareness of genocide issues.⁸

At the same time, although there is a significant share of differences in the distribution, structure, cooperation associations and approaches to resource mobilization of these lobbying groups, their general goals and programs of outreach to members of the community and the general public have certain similarities. Despite the existing disagreements between the AAA and ANCA, their programs of assistance and support to the Armenian state and the public on general issues related to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh, economic assistance and development of Armenia are generally similar.⁹ Furthermore, the fact that both lobbying organizations created parallel structures, such as research institutes, NGOs, youth programs, recruitment programs, and publications, has undeniably doubled the resources of the Armenian community in the United States in advancing the interests of Armenians through existing competition, mobilizing and attracting various resources as well as attracting more participants. Its own media and publications are key means of outreach and mobilization, and they are used to inform and influence public opinion by both lobbying organizations. In addition, Armenian lobbying organizations make extensive use of e-mail, newsletters, alerts, their websites and social networking platforms to inform government officials, members of the Congress, academics, experts and analysts on

⁷ H. Gregg, *Divided they Conquer: The success of Armenian Ethnic Lobbies in the United States*. (MIT Working Paper No. 13, 2002), pp. 10-13, Retrieved from MIT website: https://dspace.mit.edu/bitstream/handle/1721.1/97604/13_divided.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-15

⁹ Armenian Assembly of America, *Policy Agenda*, 2022, Retrieved from <https://www.armenian-assembly.org/policyagenda>; Armenian National Committee of America, *About ANCA*, 2022, Retrieved from <https://anca.org/about-anca/profile/>

foreign policy issues and, in general, representatives of the Armenian diaspora on issues of importance to Armenians. The two lobbying organizations also place great importance on the mobilization of young people and their active participation in political, cultural, academic and sports activities. For this purpose, various summer and Sunday schools, youth clubs, camps, exchange programs, various scholarship programs, internship programs, Olympic Games and other events have been organized.

Interestingly, the interests and goals of the Armenian lobby do not always coincide with those of the Armenian state. Over time, there have been several instances in which the diaspora has expressed its disagreement with the domestic and foreign policies pursued by the Armenian government.¹⁰ In particular, this concerns the Armenian-Turkish settlement, opening borders and Turkey's recognition of the Armenian Genocide. This can be explained by the fact that the Ottoman Empire's policy of genocide and deportation of Armenians was the main reason for the emergence of the Armenian diaspora, and the topic of genocide is particularly sensitive and painful for members of the community. In this vain, the official recognition of the 1915-1923 Armenian Genocide by the U.S. government and globally has been the highest priority of Armenian lobbying organizations. At the same time, despite this discrepancy, the Armenian state and the diaspora largely agree on the goals to be pursued and the national interests to be advanced.

Another specific feature is that the activities of the Armenian lobby are mostly based on grassroots movements: they are not funded by the Armenian government, unlike Azerbaijani or Turkish lobby organizations, which have a stable cash inflow from the state and use professional PR companies as well as employ prominent Americans as lobbyists to promote their national interests.¹¹ Moreover, the Armenian lobby organizations in the United States do not rely upon support from the Armenian government to lobby more directly the Executive branch or the Congress, unlike the Turkish or Azerbaijani lobbies.

The Armenian lobby is active in Congress, as well as in the Presidential administration and the U.S. government to a lesser degree. Lobbying structures organize meetings with senators and round tables with the participation of various officials and send letters to the U.S. President and senior government officials, providing a great deal of information to members of Congress and other branches of government and NGOs.

An important achievement of these Armenian lobbying organizations was the creation of a bipartisan "Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues" in January 1995 by Democrat Frank Pallone and Republican Edward Porter. The Caucus provides yet another mechanism for conveying the needs and aspirations of the Armenian people and Armenian-related issues to the U.S. political leaders and the public. The main objectives of the Armenian Caucus have been

¹⁰ **A. Mejlumyan**, "Armenia diaspora faces waning influence on Turkey, Azerbaijan negotiations", *Eurasianet*, Jun 22, 2022, Retrieved from <https://eurasianet.org/armenia-diaspora-faces-waning-influence-on-turkey-azerbaijan-negotiations>

¹¹ **J. McCormick**, "Ethnic interest groups in American Foreign Policy" in **James M. McCormick** (ed.), *The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy: Insights and Evidence*. Sixth Edition. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2012, p. 77

to advance legislative initiatives on Armenian issues as well as to strengthen and maintain Armenian-American relations.¹² In addition, the Armenian American Democratic Leadership Council and the Armenian American Republican Council were established in Los Angeles in 1997 to address Armenian-American issues in Congress. The Armenian diaspora has also lobbied Congress through key Armenian-oriented senators, most notably Senator Robert Dole, Head of the Senate Finance Committee, and Congressman Adam Schiff, Chair of the House Intelligence Committee.

One of the priorities of the Armenian lobbying organizations was to ensure the provision of the U.S. federal aid to the newly established republic, particularly in view of the post-Soviet drastic socio-economic situation exacerbated by the blockade policies of Azerbaijan and Turkey. Since its independence from the Soviet Union, thanks largely to the efforts of the ANCA and the AAA, Armenia received nearly \$2 billion in U.S. government aid, making it the second largest per capita recipient of U.S. assistance after Israel.¹³ The Armenian lobby was also successful in obtaining direct U.S. assistance for Nagorno-Karabakh.

Through the efforts of the Armenian lobby, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has garnered considerable attention from the American authorities and media.¹⁴ Largely thanks to the efforts of both organizations in promoting recognition of the independence of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, from 2012 to 2021 11 U.S. States recognized the sovereign status of the Artsakh Republic by passing resolutions in favor of the right of the people of Artsakh to self-determination.¹⁵

An important success of the Armenian lobby was the condemnation by the U.S. Congress of the blockade imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh by adopting Section 907 to the “Freedom Support Act” and the “Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act”. Section 907 was enacted in 1992 as an addendum to the Freedom Support Act, expressly prohibiting Azerbaijan from receiving U.S. financial and technical assistance until the Azeri hostilities towards Armenians stopped and the illegal blockades against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh ended.¹⁶ It remained in force until 2001, despite a fierce campaign by opposition lobbies, including pro-Azerbaijani and pro-Israeli lobbyists, the Turkish Caucus and oil companies, requiring the removal of Section 907 restrictions for the full implementation of the Silk Strategy Act.

It was only in October 2001 that the Senate passed a bill allowing the President to withdraw Section 907 if he decided that it was in the interests of U.S. national security to do so.¹⁷ In the same year Congress included a Section

¹² Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, Retrieved from <https://cqcengage.com/aaainc/caucus>

¹³ **J. McCormick**, “Ethnic interest groups in American Foreign Policy” in James M. McCormick (ed.), *The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy: Insights and Evidence*, Sixth Edition. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2012, p. 78

¹⁴ **F. Hill**, *Pipeline Dream in the Caucasus*, (SDI Project, 1996, Caucasus and Caspian Seminar Transcripts), Retrieved from <https://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/2369/pipeline-dreams-in-the-caucasus.html>

¹⁵ MFA of the Republic of Artsakh, *The recognition of independence of the Republic of Artsakh*, 2022, Retrieved from <https://www.nkr.am/en/international-recognition-of-karabakh>

¹⁶ Freedom Support Act, S 2532 – 102nd Congress (1991-1992): Freedom Support Act, Retrieved from <https://www.congress.gov/bill/102nd-congress/senate-bill/2532/text>

¹⁷ Armenian National Committee of America, *Senate Votes to Allow Presidential Waiver of*

907 waiver in the FY2002 Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act. Starting with president George W. Bush in 2002, both Republican and Democrat U.S. presidents have waived Section 907 annually ever since, despite the continued blockade of Armenia by Azerbaijan and Turkey and intense protests by the Armenian community.

In cooperation with the Greek and Kurdish lobbies, the ANCA also successfully lobbied Congress to stop U.S. economic and military assistance to Turkey through the “Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act”, which prohibited the provision of U.S. federal aid to countries, obstructing the delivery of U.S. humanitarian aid to third countries,¹⁸ as well as the Code of Conduct Act, which restricts the sale of arms to countries where human rights are violated.¹⁹ In addition, the Armenian lobby actively fought to prevent U.S. assistance in the construction of the Caspian oil and gas pipelines, which would bypass Armenian territory, thus aggravating the regional isolation of the landlocked state.²⁰

The same lobbying groups were instrumental in blocking those candidates for the post of Ambassador to Azerbaijan and Armenia who were not favorable to the interests of Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. The most striking case was the blocking of the nomination of Matthew Bryza, appointed by President Barack Obama as the U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan.²¹

However, the official recognition of the 1915-1923 Armenian Genocide by the U.S. government was the top priority of Armenian lobbying organizations. Through the efforts of Armenian lobbying organizations, every April a Congressional resolution honors the victims of the Armenian Genocide. Moreover, every year on April 24, the President of the United States appeals to the Armenian people in memory of the tragic events. At the end of 2019 the Armenian community and the ethnic lobby achieved U.S. House passage of Resolution 296²² and the unanimous Senate passage of the Resolution 150²³ that acknowledged the mass killings of an estimated 1.5 million Armenians in the Ottoman Empire as genocide. Two years later, thanks to the considerable efforts of the Armenian-American diaspora for many years, President Joe Biden officially recognized the massacres and deportation of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire

Section 907, Under Pressure from State Department, Senate Rejects Calls from Armenian American Community and President Robert Kocharian to Maintain Section 907 in its Current Form, 2001, Retrieved from <https://anca.org/press-release/senate-votes-to-allow-presidential-waiver-of-section-907/>

¹⁸ Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act, S-2378-103rd Congress (1993-1994): Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act. Retrieved from <https://www.congress.gov/bill/103rd-congress/senate-bill/2378?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Foreign%5C%5C%22%2C%22Relations%22%5D%7D&s=1&r=45>

¹⁹ Armenian National Committee of America, *ANCA Position Papers: Cutting U.S. Aid to Turkey*, 2001, Retrieved from https://www.anca.org/resource_center/position_papers.php

²⁰ **H. Gregg**, *Divided they Conquer: The success of Armenian Ethnic Lobbies in the United States*. (MIT Working Paper No. 13, 2002), p. 25, Retrieved from MIT website: https://dspace.mit.edu/bitstream/handle/1721.1/97604/13_divided.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

²¹ Both Barbara Boxer and Robert Menendez Placed “hold” on Bryza’s Nomination, *NEWS.am*, 2010, September 23, Retrieved from <https://news.am/eng/news/31922.html>

²² Affirming the United States record on the Armenian Genocide, H.Res.296 - 116th Congress (2019-2020), Retrieved from <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/296>

²³ A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that it is the policy of the United States to commemorate the Armenian Genocide through official recognition and remembrance, S.Res.150-116th Congress (2019-2020), Retrieved from <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-resolution/150/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22armenian%22%5D%7D&r=2&s=3>

in 1915-1923 as genocide, becoming the first U.S. president to use the word “genocide” in an annual presidential speech.²⁴

At the same time, current events in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh are the focus of attention of the Armenian-American diaspora. Both Armenian lobbying organizations and a number of Armenian-American NGOs, including the “Armenian-American Chamber of Commerce”, the “Armenian Engineers and American Research”, the “Analysis, Research and Planning for Armenia” and others, actively worked with the Congress, Presidential administration and business structures in promoting modern political and economic interests of Armenia. In this connection, a number of economic forums and exhibitions were organized to encourage direct investment and development of the economic potential of Armenia and direct U.S. financial assistance to Artsakh.

The 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, which ended in Armenia’s near-total defeat, with a Russian-brokered ceasefire agreement finalized on November 9, galvanized the Armenian diaspora considerably and mobilized the community to vigorously defend the Armenian cause during the conflict. The Armenian-American community, with the support of Armenian lobbying organizations and prominent Armenian-Americans including Cher, Serge Tankian, the Kardashians, and others, were holding protests, lobbying, and briefing the U.S. Congress and the media to raise awareness on its long-running dispute with Azerbaijan and the ongoing war, to hold Baku and Ankara responsible for their war crimes and ongoing hostilities, and to encourage the U.S. government to take concrete steps to protect the security and political rights of the people of Artsakh. However, despite tireless efforts, the community failed to achieve any tangible results from the Trump administration to prevent Armenia’s crushing military defeat.

Especially in the active phase of collisions the Armenian lobby and some Democratic Senators urged the U.S. government to enforce Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act and stop U.S. military assistance to Azerbaijan. Given Azerbaijan’s massive use of Turkish Bayraktar drones in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, Armenian lobbying organizations also called for tightening export controls on Turkish drones and restricting the sale of certain U.S. weapons to Turkey, in particular the F-16 fighter jets.²⁵

Nonetheless, despite ongoing Azerbaijani aggression against Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, the number of POWs held in Azerbaijani prisons, and other war crimes committed by the Aliev regime, the Biden administration waived Section 907 restrictions on U.S. aid to Azerbaijan in May 2021. The president’s decision drew condemnation from the Armenian-American community and Congress has voiced concern. To overturn President Biden’s waiver on July 29, 2021, the House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly to amend HR 4373 to restrict foreign military funding and U.S. training assistance to Azerbaijan, thereby passing a bipartisan amendment backed by the Congressional Armenian Caucus Co-Chair

²⁴ Statement by President Joe Biden on Armenian Remembrance Day, The White House, Statements and Releases, April 24, 2021, Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/04/24/statement-by-president-joe-biden-on-armenian-remembrance-day/>

²⁵ Armenian National Committee of America, *Action Alerts*, Retrieved from <https://marchtojustice.org/action-alerts>

Frank Pallone (D-NJ) and supported by 20 members of the House of Representatives. The Pallone amendment states, “None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act [H.R.4373] under ‘International Military Education and Training’ and ‘Foreign Military Financing Program’ may be made available for Azerbaijan”.²⁶ The report, which accompanies H.R.4373, also calls for assistance of at least \$50 million to Armenia “for economic development, private sector productivity, energy independence, democracy and rule of law and other purposes”²⁷. It also recommends assistance of at least \$2 million for demining activities in Nagorno-Karabakh.²⁸

Moreover, in November 2021, Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Robert Menendez (D-NJ) introduced two of the foreign policy amendments to the National Defense Authorization Act. As the primary vehicle for authorizing defense spending for Fiscal Year 2022, Menendez’s amendments seek to prohibit the continued use of U.S. presidential waiver authority of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, a provision first put in place in 2001, and utilized by successive U.S. presidents. The second amendment calls for a Joint State Department and Pentagon report on Turkey’s unmanned aerial vehicle’s exports since 2018, as well as Turkey’s use of U.S. technology in its Bayraktar drones. A third amendment announced by Senator Alex Padilla from California state mandates the State Department and Defense Department report on Azerbaijani war crimes during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war (mainly the use of cluster bombs, white phosphorous, and other prohibited munitions; the hiring of foreign mercenaries to fight on Azerbaijani side) as well as the use of U.S. technology during the attacks.²⁹

Despite the Armenian lobbying organizations’ ongoing work with the U.S. Senate and the Presidential Administration to restrict presidential waiver authority of Section 907 and nullify U.S. military assistance to Azerbaijan, the Biden administration waived Section 907 restrictions on U.S. aid to Azerbaijan yet again in June 2022.

Thus, notwithstanding the apparent success of the Armenian-American diaspora and the lobbying organizations in influencing the U.S. foreign policy to advance the interests of the Armenian nation, the inability of the community to outweigh the balance in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War and Armenia’s near-total defeat highlighted the limitations of diaspora policy and impact. The outcomes of the war also emphasized the urgency to reassess the community’s policies and strengthen institutions to mobilize the diaspora’s full potential and expand its influence.

²⁶ Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act. (2022). H.R. 4373 – 117th Congress (2021-2022); Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act 2022. July 29, 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/4373/text>

²⁷ Armenian National Committee of America, *U.S. House Raises Alarm Over Biden Waiver of Section 907 Restriction on U.S. Aid to Azerbaijan*, Retrieved from <https://anca.org/press-release/u-s-house-raises-alarm-over-biden-waiver-of-section-907-restriction-on-u-s-aid-to-azerbaijan/>

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Sen. Menendez Introduces Amendment to Revoke U.S. Presidential Waiver of Section 907 Restrictions on U.S. Aid to Azerbaijan, *Armenianweekly*, 2021, November 04, Retrieved from <https://armenianweekly.com/2021/11/04/menendez-introduces-amendment-to-revoke-us-presidential-waiver-of-section-907-restrictions-on-us-aid-to-azerbaijan/>

Therefore, it can be concluded that, despite its relatively small size, the Armenian diaspora is one of the most influential ethnic minority groups in the United States. Over time the Armenian community in the United States was able to create not only cultural and humanitarian institutions to preserve the national identity of Armenian-Americans, but also to form influential groups of political pressure to advance the national interests of Armenians.

The ANCA and the AAA are the most active and efficient Armenian-American socio-political lobby organizations in terms of promotion of Armenia's interests in the U.S. foreign politics. The Armenian lobby is active in Congress, and to a lesser degree in the executive branch of the U.S. government. The Armenian Caucus in Congress and the activities of certain senators and congressmen play an important role in advancing Armenian interests.

Despite the fact that Armenia occupies a modest place in U.S. geopolitics in the Caucasus and the Middle East, the Armenian lobby has achieved significant results in promoting the interests of the Armenian people by influencing the U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey. Armenian lobbying organizations have become an important moderator of Armenian-American relations and have succeeded in pushing through billions in financial assistance for Armenia. By informing American society about the needs of the Armenian nation and lobbying Congress and the Presidential administration, the Armenian lobby groups have initiated significant pro-Armenian legislative changes and have recently successfully achieved the goal of recognizing the Armenian Genocide at the level of the U.S. Congress and President of the United States.

The success of the Armenian lobby in achieving its goals can be explained not by its importance in U.S. electoral policy, or any large-scale financial injections, or support from the Armenian government, but mainly by its high degree of activity, involvement and organization. To some extent, fragmentation and some competition between the two main lobbying groups also increased the effectiveness of the Armenian lobby. As a result, more resources and alternative lobbying mechanisms were mobilized to ensure the success of the campaigns. Despite differences and contradictions between the AAA and the ANCA, between the lobbying organizations and the Armenian government as well as different approaches to influence decision-making bodies, they basically converge on the main political goals, thus constituting a united front for advancing Armenia's interests in Washington. Collaboration with other organizations and lobbying groups as well as close ties in Congress, including the Armenian Caucus, the Armenian American Democratic Leadership Council, the Armenian American Republican Council and some key members of Congress, also played a significant role in affecting American foreign policy towards Armenia and the region.

At the same time, Armenia's crushing defeat in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war emphasized the urgency to re-evaluate the community's policies and strengthen institutions to mobilize the full potential of the community and expand its influence.

ՆՈՐԱ ԳԵՎՈՐԳՅԱՆ – Էթնիկ խմբերի ազդեցությունը ԱՄՆ արտաքին քաղաքականության վրա. հայկական սփյուռքի օրինակը – Ամերիկյան արտաքին քաղաքականության վրա ազդող բազմաթիվ շահագրգիռ խմբերից ամենահին և թերևս ամենաազդեցիկ արտաքին քաղաքական լոբբիստներն էթնիկ խմբերն են: Ուսումնասիրության նպատակն է քննել էթնիկ խմբերի ազդեցությունը ԱՄՆ արտաքին քաղաքականության վրա: Օգտագործելով ամերիկահայ սփյուռքը որպես օրինակ՝ հողվածում ուսումնասիրվում է, թե էթնիկ խմբերը ինչպես են ազդում ԱՄՆ արտաքին քաղաքական քննարկումների և ռազմավարության վրա: Հետազոտության հիմնական առանցքն են ԱՄՆ-ում հայկական լոբբիստական ինստիտուտների առանձնահատկությունները, լոբբիստական գործունեության հիմնական նպատակներն ու օրակարգերը, ինչպես նաև նրանց՝ Միացյալ Նահանգների արտաքին քաղաքականության վրա ազդելու մեխանիզմները:

Բանալի բառեր - *շահագրգիռ խմբեր, սփյուռք, ամերիկահայ համայնք, լոբբինգ, ԱՄՆ արտաքին քաղաքականություն*

НОРА ГЕВОРКЯН – Влияние этнических групп интересов на внешнюю политику США: на примере армянской диаспоры. – Из множества заинтересованных групп, оказавших влияние на американскую внешнюю политику, этнические группы являются старейшими и, возможно, наиболее влиятельными внешнеполитическими лоббистами. Цель исследования - понять этнические группы и их влияние на внешнюю политику США. Используя в качестве примера армяно-американскую диаспору, в статье рассматривается как диаспоральные группы могут влиять на обсуждения внешней политики США и влиять на конкретную политику страны за рубежом. Дискуссия сосредоточена на специфике армянских лоббистских институтов в Соединенных Штатах, основных целях и повестках лоббирования, а также механизмах влияния на внешнюю политику Соединенных Штатов.

Ключевые слова - *заинтересованные группы, диаспора, армяно-американское общество, лоббирование, внешняя политика США*