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Emerging Regional Security Complex in the South Caucasus : regional order in the post- Karabakh War.

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ABSTRACT

The master's dissertation on the theory of the regional security complex, which studies the Second Karabakh War and its impact on the regional order, consists of two chapters and seven sub-chapters. The first chapter examines the South Caucasus in the context of the regional security dilemma. This chapter examines the complex theory of regional security and the geopolitical problems in the South Caucasus in the post-Soviet period. The first chapter also studies the South Caucasus as a battlefield for global and continental powers.

The second chapter examines the Karabakh war and the new regional order. This part of the study discusses 26 years of negotiations and the reasons for the failure of the negotiations. The second chapter also discusses the Second Karabakh War and its consequences for the security of the South Caucasus. This chapter also discusses the elements and prospects of a new order in the South Caucasus after the Second Karabakh War. These elements and perspectives are assessed in the context of the intersecting interests of regional and global powers.

In the paper, deductive qualitative approach was adopted in order to obtain more efficient results. Our research paper starts with a theory and continues with the dynamics of South Caucasus given chronologically and ends with Karabakh war. After this review conclusions are given.

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INTRODUCTION

Subject and scope of the paper. The theoretical part of the paper is Regional Security Complex theory. The central idea of the Regional Security Complex theory is that most threats move more easily over short distances than over long ones; interdependence in security issues determines the tendency towards the formation of a regional cluster, which is the complex of regional security. Securitization processes and the level of security interdependence between actors are closer or more intense within the complex than outside it. Superpowers can “penetrate” security complexes, but the internal dynamics of the complex has a significant level of autonomy in relation to global players.

In this context, our research focuses on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The war that began in 2020 after many years of failed negotiations is the main focus of our research. Title of our paper is emerging regional security complex in the South Caucasus: regional order in the post-Karabakh war. Our paper also includes issues such as regional security complex theory, emerged geopolitical problems in the South Caucasus in the post-Soviet period and South Caucasus as a “battlefield” of global and continental powers. The research of the war happened in 2020 and its consequences is the focus of our paper. Current issues such as the results of the Karabakh war and their classification are included in the scope of our research. In this regard, we research fail of twenty-six-year negotiations, forty-four-day war and outcomes of Karabakh war for the security of South Caucasus.

The importance of the paper. In 2020, very important events took place in the South Caucasus. At the forefront of these, of course, is the Karabakh war. The end of the long-running and unsuccessful negotiations and the destructive attitudes of the Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan resulted in the start of a new war in September 2020. This war is very important for both Azerbaijan and Armenia as a whole. Because after this war, the concept of regional security in the South Caucasus has changed radically and the balance of power in the region has shifted. From this point of view, war is of great importance in the field of international relations. In this

regard, it is very important to research the Second Karabakh War, which resulted in the great victory of Azerbaijan. The war waged by Azerbaijan has been in the spotlight of many international circles. Many countries of the world say that Azerbaijan should be taken as an example in terms of managing the war and the post-war period. Therefore, academic research of war and post-war processes is of great importance in the name of modern Azerbaijani science.

The aim of the paper. Theoretical and practical points are tried to be examined in parallel in the paper. Our paper starts with the presentation of the theory and continues with the regional security situation that occurred after the collapse of the USSR and ends with the last Karabakh war. The aim of our research is to examine the Karabakh war that took place in 2020 within the scope of the regional security complex theory and to analyze its results in the context of regional security.

Scientific innovation of the paper. Approximately 6 months pass after the end of the Karabakh war, which severely affected the security of the South Caucasus. In the past period, necessary research has been done on the war and post-war processes, and the military, political and economic aspects of the war have been the subject of research by both journalists and academicians. The Second Karabakh war, which is of great importance in the context of international relations, is an event that needs to be analyzed within the scope of the regional security complex theory since it directly affects the security of the region. At this point, the scientific innovation of our research is to analyze the Second Karabakh war within the scope of the regional security complex theory. No such study has been done in neither English language nor Azerbaijani language academic literature before.

Research methods of the paper. In the paper, deductive qualitative approach was adopted in order to obtain more efficient results. The method of research by asserting the accuracy of a phenomenon based on more than one condition is called deductive approach. In this research method, general principles are handled and conclusions are drawn about the events one by one. In short, in other words, it is a research method that goes from general to specific. Our research paper starts with a

theory and continues with the dynamics of South Caucasus given chronologically and ends with Karabakh war. After this review conclusions are given.

Structure of the paper. The paper consists of introduction, two chapter and seven subchapters, conclusion and reference list.

CHAPTER I. SOUTH CAUCASUS IN REGIONAL SECURITY DILEMMA

1.1. Regional Security Complex Theory

Security is a concept that is widely used in international relations studies, often without a clear conceptualization. In Buzan's words, security is a "debatable and highly ambiguous concept just like the concepts of love, freedom, and power" and so there are many theoretical debates and unresolved controversies over its meaning¹. McSweeney also supported the argument that security is a difficult concept to define, explaining it as "a term that can be associated with a number of other concepts such as peace, honor, justice, but resists being defined. Baldwin, on the other hand, chose to call it "controversial" by questioning various conceptualizations of security, but rather "a concept that can be easily confused and not adequately explained²." According to Baldwin, security can be more easily defined by answers to two fundamental questions: "security for whom?" and "for what values is security?". Despite this ambiguity in the definition of the concept of security, in the most general terms, security can be defined as "the absence of threat against core values³". Besides, many researchers make a distinction between objective and subjective security, arguing that the concept is meaningless when there is no "other" or "threat⁴". For example, according to Wolfers, security means the absence of any threat to an objectively owned value, whereas subjectively it means the absence of fear that this value will be attacked.

Just like the International Relations discipline, international security studies is a field that originates from the West and has its foundations mostly in North America, Europe and Australia. This field of study, as we use it today, aims to protect the states from the destructive effects of the war after the Second World War. Before

¹ Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver. 2003. *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 11.

² Barney Walsh. 2020. 'Revisiting Regional Security Complex Theory in Africa: Museveni's Uganda and Regional Security in East Africa', *African Security*, 13:4, 300-324, p. 303.

³ Walsh. 2020, p. 305.

⁴ Walsh. 2020, p. 305.

the war, security was studied under the titles of "war studies", "military studies" and "strategy"; After 1945, it has become a separate study area. In this process, academic literature on security has shown significant developments and changes in many aspects. An important break with the past is the use of security, not "defense" or "war", as the key concept at these times. This situation contributed to the demilitarization of security work from the military security monopoly⁵.

Since the beginning of the Cold War, the Realistic School-based approach, which takes the state as the main reference object and security provider, has dominated security studies. This approach is today called the "traditional approach". In the traditional approach, military threat is understood as a security threat; The survival of the state appears as the most important value to be protected. Since the early 1970s, new perceptions and approaches have started to emerge. These new voices were born out of the dissatisfaction arising from the fact that security is being worked in a narrow area as a result of the military and nuclear obsessions imposed by the Cold War period⁶. In the 1970s, "Peace Studies" emerged as a criticism of mainstream strategy studies and complained that these mainstream studies did not make self-criticism about the moral consequences of state-based perspectives in nuclear conditions. Moreover, some concerns, other than military issues, have started to be among the "high-quality politics" issues on the international relations agenda. Economic and environmental issues are just two of the major issues that add to military security concerns. In 1983, Richard Ullman, in his article titled "Redefining Security", argued that security should expand to include environmental and economic issues⁷.

The concept of the regional security complex was first introduced by Barry Buzan in a book published in 1983, and later this concept was further developed by Ole Waever and Barry Buzan and theorized as one of the security approaches of the

⁵ Paul Midford. 2018. 'Decentering from the US in regional security multilateralism: Japan's 1991 pivot', *The Pacific Review*, 31:4, 441-459, p. 443.

⁶ Dennis Rumley, Timothy Doyle and Sanjay Chaturvedi. 2012. 'Securing the Indian Ocean? Competing regional security constructions', *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, 8:1, 1-20, p. 3.

⁷ Midford. 2018, p. 443.

Copenhagen School as the theory of regional security complexes. The fact that the theory of regional security complexes was formulated and developed within the Copenhagen School and its main arguments were built on the assumptions of this School makes it necessary to briefly touch on the basic approaches of the Copenhagen School on security studies before examining this theory in detail⁸. The foundations of the Copenhagen School were laid with the implementation of the European Security Working Group's project titled "Non-Military Dimensions of European Security" at the "Peace and Conflict Research Center" established within the University of Copenhagen in 1985. Today, the Copenhagen School consists of scientists such as Jaap de Wilde, Morten Kelstrup, Pierre Lemaitre and Elzbieta Tromer, who work on security at the Peace and Conflict Research Center. After the 1980s, the school has emerged as an attitude against the traditionalist / realistic approach that sees the state as the sole security actor in the field of security studies between traditionalists / realists and innovators / expanders and focuses only on military security. However, in this debate, they also positioned themselves as a third way between realists and adherents of the broad security agenda, rejecting the approach of the expansions to characterize anything that could affect the existence and well-being of individuals as a security issue. According to them, considering every issue as a security problem will make that problem the priority of politicians and will pave the way for a series of urgent measures that the state does not implement in normal political processes, and will open the door to a constant state of alarm and repressive and interventionist policies⁹.

According to the regional security complex theory suggested by Buzan, the factors that play a role in the formation of a security complex or the formation of a security system of the countries in the region are as follows¹⁰:

- i. The proximity of the geographical locations of the countries to each other
- ii. The security of the states in the region is interconnected

⁸ Rumley, Doyle and Chaturvedi. 2012, p. 5.

⁹ Buzan and Wæver. 2003, p. 18.

¹⁰ Buzan and Wæver. 2003, p. 20.

iii. Overlapping of geostrategic interests among the countries in the region, and in this context, mutual power relations or competition

iv. The existence of strong relations between the countries in the region that include neighborhood, advocacy, support, suspicion or fear.

Apart from that, the Copenhagen School, which Buzan and his friends are a part of, developed a new adaptation with the securitization theory by classifying the new protection areas of security in five sub-categories in the post-Cold War period. These five sectors are¹¹:

- a) Military Security (force-based repression relations)
- b) Political Security (power, management relations)
- c) Economic Security (trade, production, finance relations)
- d) Social Security (identity-related relationships)
- e) Environmental Safety (human activities and environmental issues on the planet).

The Copenhagen School has introduced three approaches to the security studies sub-discipline, and these three main approaches form the core of the Copenhagen school. These are the concept of securitization, sectoral analysis of security and regional security complexes. Among them, the concept of securitization is the basis of almost all studies and assumptions of the Copenhagen School. According to the securitization approach, security is not an objective situation, but the result of certain social processes. Issues are presented and defined as security threats through certain speech-acts within a social construction process. Accordingly, a problem is defined by the securitizing actor as a threat to the existence of a certain subject whose right to life claim is claimed and turned into a security issue¹². The securitizing actor thus obtains the right to take any necessary extraordinary measures by pulling a particular issue into a private security area, going beyond normal rules and political processes against this threat. By defining security in this way, the

¹¹ Barry Buzan. 2007. *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, Colchester, ECPR Press, p. 16.

¹² Buzan. 2007, p. 20.

Copenhagen School focuses on what issue is secured under what conditions, by whom and when. In other words, security threats for them are not objective facts, but subjective creations secured at the end of the discourse-based social construction process. According to this approach, anything that is not mentioned in the discourse will not be considered a security threat¹³.

Another approach introduced by the Copenhagen School to security studies is that security issues are handled within the framework of a sectoral analysis in terms of their content. Accordingly, security issues are examined in five sectors: military, economic, social, environmental and political. Each sector differs in terms of the content of threats, the threatened object and its security relationships. According to this “military sector, force-based pressure relations; relations with the political sector, authority, management status, and recognition; economic sector, trade, production and finance relations; social sector, collective identity relations; and the environmental sector is concerned with the relationships between human activities and the biosphere of the planet¹⁴.”

The theory of regional security complexes, which is the main subject of this study and which is a third approach put forward by the Copenhagen School, was first put forward by Barry Buzan and the regional security complex was "a group of states whose basic security concerns are closely related so that national security cannot be considered separately from each other. This first definition of Buzan was reformulated by Buzan and Waever in 2003 by expanding it to include non-state actors and other security sectors, as it was very state-centered and military-political oriented. In this revised definition, regional security complexes are defined as “the whole of actors (units) whose basic securitization or de-security processes, security problems cannot be understood or resolved separately¹⁵.”

¹³ Michael C. Williams. 2003. 'Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics', *International Studies Quarterly*, 47/4: 511-531, p. 514.

¹⁴ Buzan. 2007, p. 22.

¹⁵ Buzan and Wæver. 2003, p. 27.

The analysis of security relations at the regional level, and even the systemic analysis of international relations at the regional level in general, was a level of analysis neglected by the international relations discipline for many years. Although it is shown that the structuralist approach of the realist theory focuses on the global dimension and does not give importance to analysis at the regional level among the reasons for this delay, in fact, liberalism and critical theory have focused on the global system rather than the regional system. The first regionalist trend in international relations studies emerged in the late 1960s and early 70s, when US hegemony began to shake as a result of the failure of the Vietnam War and the Bretton Woods crises. The point where the European Community has come as a regional integration initiative and its threat to American hegemony, as well as the independence of many new states in the post-colonial period, and the fact that many new states have started to take place in the world system were the main factors that directed academic interest to the regional level at that time. The new regionalism trend has started to gain effect with the end of the bipolar world system of the Cold War and the disappearance of the superpower domination over the Southern countries since the 1990s¹⁶.

Ole Wæver and Barry Buzan also move from such a historical and systemic reading in developing their approach to regional security complexes. During the colonial period, imperial powers with overseas colonies perceived the world as their own territory, and the scope of regional security dynamics independent of them was rather limited¹⁷. During the Cold War period, the domination of the two hegemonies over the regions within their sphere of influence narrowed the scope of independent regional initiatives. On the other hand, although some regional formations were encouraged in the Middle East, Africa and Asia during the Cold War period, the hegemonies supporting these formations were actually behind these efforts to penetrate the regional relations more easily¹⁸.

¹⁶ Buzan. 2007, p. 31.

¹⁷ Buzan and Wæver. 2003, p. 28.

¹⁸ Buzan. 2007, p. 32.

In the post-colonial era, regional security has become both a more autonomous and a more important issue of international politics, with the new independent states gaining independence from the great states and incorporating them into world politics. The end of the bipolar world order after the Cold War made this situation even more evident. In the absence of great power rivalry that eliminates the autonomy of the regions, local powers have started to find more space for political maneuver in the new era. In addition, in the post-Cold War era, the great and superpowers were more reluctant to get involved in security issues outside of their regions. This situation paved the way for regional security dynamics to become more independent within themselves and for regional powers to take more responsibility and gain efficiency in security issues in their own regions.

On the other hand, the pressure of the phenomenon of globalization on the sovereignty, economies and identities of the nation states since the 90's brought about an anti-globalization securitization process both at the state and regional levels. Especially, the perception of globalization as a tool of American hegemony or cultural imperialism in the new world order has accelerated the processes of cooperation at the regional level against the effects of globalization. With the formation of regional alliances, states aimed both to resist the social, economic and security threats of globalization and to be stronger in the global system.

One of the most important debates of the post-Cold War era was about whether this new era would evolve into a unipolar or multipolar global system. First of all, Buzan and Waever criticize the neo-realists' approach that only sees states as poles at the global system level, and argue that the alliances of multiple states as well as states can be qualified as a pole at the global level. With this criticism brought to neo-realists based on the fact that the EU took place in the international system as a single actor over time, Buzan and Waever make room for regional alliances as an important actor in the global picture¹⁹. According to them, states that can be effective in world politics should be evaluated in three categories: superpowers with military, economic

¹⁹ Buzan and Wæver. 2003, p. 30.

and political capacity to be effective at the global level, great powers that can be effective in more than one region and are considered in the calculations of the global power distribution even though they do not have as wide a capacity as them. Based on this reading, they describe the Cold War period as a period when two superpowers (USA and USSR) and three great powers (China, Germany, Japan) were effective (2 + 3). The post-Cold War era is depicted as a superpower (USA), four great powers (UK / Germany / France-EU, China, Japan and Russia) and regions²⁰.

Parallel to this systemic reading, Buzan and Waever attribute the importance of regionalism and regional security relations in the post-Cold War period to two basic assumptions. Accordingly, first of all, the disappearance of the superpower competition in the post-Cold War era has reduced the pursuit of influence of global powers in other parts of the world. Secondly, domestic public opinion of global powers do not want their states to interact with problematic areas in other parts of the world through military intervention and strategic competition. These two situations allow regional states and powers to produce politics in an environment relatively far from the domination of great powers in their own geographies.

The basic premise on which the Regional Security Complexes Theory is built is as follows: Since the dangers spread more easily in short distances than in long distances, mutual security dependency will naturally be much more intense within regional security complexes. "Historically, all states have been more concerned about the capacities and intentions of their neighbors. The securitization processes and thus the degree of mutual security dependence have been more intense among actors within these complexes than with actors outside." Security is an area where regionalism, that is, factors arising from sharing a common geography, are strongly influenced. Geographical proximity is the most influential factor on security relations, and the effects of this factor apply to all of the military, political, social and environmental sectors of security. Although some security elements, especially economic and environmental, show a character that transcends regionalism,

²⁰ Buzan. 2007, p. 33.

regionalism continues to be at the center and determinant of many unreliability dynamics²¹.

Indeed, security studies have dominated two levels of analysis: national security and global security. National security is not something that can be considered alone, given the fact that security relations are mutual. The security of nations is not only about the dynamics that arise from them, often threats from outside themselves become the most important part of national security. It is the most common case that these threats also originate from their neighbors or close geography. On the other hand, the world is not fully integrated in terms of global security relations, aside from the security interactions that global powers have entered in other regions. Therefore, according to Buzan and Weaver, the concept of global security is far from expressing a reality. Contrary to these two levels of analysis, at the regional level, the security of states and other actors is too related and intertwined to be considered separately.

The regional security complex theory considers the zones only from the security window. Thus, only security relations are taken into account when determining the boundaries of regional security complexes. In this regard, the boundaries of regional security complexes may not always coincide with the natural, real, cultural, geographical or historical boundaries of the area concerned. In order for a region to be qualified as a regional security complex, a group of states or other actors / units must have a mutual security dependency that will differentiate themselves from the surrounding security zones and make them an interrelated whole. The security relations of the states within a regional complex, the distribution of power in the region, deep-rooted historical relations, special issues such as border disputes, ethnic relations, common culture, etc. it can develop around friendships or hostilities that may result. In other words, in the formation of a regional security complex, any of the factors such as competition, balance of power, cooperation between the actors of the region may be effective. Whether friendship or cooperation,

²¹ Nicole J. Jackson. 2014. 'Trans-Regional Security Organisations and Statist Multilateralism in Eurasia', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 66:2, 181-203, p. 184.

hostility or competitive relations are valid, what matters here is that the security interactions of the actors that make up the regional security complex are somehow interrelated²².

A regional security complex should contain securitization dynamics within itself. This usually appears as the actors in the complex securitize each other. However, cooperative regional security communities may also be formed in cases where regional actors do not perceive each other as a security threat, in other words, when the de-security process is effective. In other words, there must be an active securitization process at the regional level in regional security complexes. In the formation of security relations patterns in a region, regional actors' collective securitization (positive securitization) by perceiving a problem as a common security threat, and regional actors directly constructing each other as security threat (negative securitization) may also be effective. Although not mentioned in Buzan and Wæver's works, in fact both positive and negative securitization can be effective in a regional security complex at the same time. While regional actors cooperate by securitizing a common problem, they may also be securitizing each other for reasons such as the distribution of power within the region, ethnic, cultural, and historical factors. A state may even tend to use security communities established by the effectiveness of joint securitization as a means of controlling or limiting other regional rivals²³.

According to Buzan and Wæver, unipolarity, bipolarity or multipolarity may prevail in regional security complexes, which is a subsystem of the global system, just like the global system. This situation is related to the distribution of power among the actors involved in the complex. A regional security complex may be formed by the security relations based on competition or cooperation between the actors in the region or it can be built as a result of the influence of foreign powers. Usually, small states may find themselves stuck in a security complex with their

²² Jackson. 2014, pp. 188-189.

²³ Buzan and Wæver. 2003, p. 35.

neighbors, but great powers have the ability to penetrate multiple regional security complexes, while superpowers can operate in all geographies²⁴.

Regional security complexes have been classified by Buzan and Waever in terms of their power distribution and the qualifications of the actors that make up them. Accordingly, regional security complexes are examined in four main categories: standard, centered, large power complexes and super complexes. In standard regional security complexes, security relations depend on the interaction between regional powers and regional powers form the poles of these multipolar complexes. Central complexes are unipolar complexes dominated by only one power. These are divided into four as regional security complexes dominated by a superpower (North America), dominated by a great power (former Soviet geography), dominated by a regional power and institutional centralization (EU). Large power complexes, on the other hand, are bipolar regional security complexes involving multiple major powers that are effective at the global level. The East Asian complexes in which Europe and China and Japan were effective together before 1945 are shown as examples. Although it is not mentioned in Buzan and Waever's book, one of the best examples of such regional security complexes is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which is the subject of this study and which we will examine in detail in the following section, where China and Russia are influential²⁵. Finally, supercomplexes emerge with the formation of strong security dynamics between regions as a result of the simultaneous penetration of a great power into neighboring regions. As an example, the South and East Asian regional security complexes have gradually become a supercomplex due to the Chinese factor. Super complexes may also emerge as a result of changes in large power complexes where more than one great power is effective.

Within a regional security complex, different security perceptions and dependencies that are not shared by the entire regional complex but concern a group of states can create various subcomplexes. Apart from this, Buzan and Waever have

²⁴ Buzan and Wæver. 2003, p. 36.

²⁵ Buzan and Wæver. 2003, p. 37.

left a door open to change and rejected the perception of a static structure by stating that regional security complexes can transform over time due to both internal and external reasons. Accordingly, both the structure and the boundaries of regional security complexes may change over time. The boundaries of the complex may expand or contract with the addition or exit of new members. In addition, with the merger of two regional security complexes or the emergence of two new complexes within one complex, the boundaries of regional security complexes may change over time²⁶.

Buzan and Waever drew on the assumptions and readings of both neo-realism and constructivism in the construction of the theory of regional security complexes. The authors say that the emphasis of the regional security complexes theory on the regional level is both appropriate and complementary to the structural scheme of neo-realism²⁷. Unlike neo-realists, they focus on a regional infrastructure, not a global structure. Although it lends itself to the level of regional analysis, the main purpose of the theory of regional security complexes is to open up a space for regionalism in the structural view of the international system. Therefore, their starting point is the effort to explain the global structure, to give its picture, as in neo-realists. In doing so, there is a search that focuses on developing and contributing to the structural readings of neo-realists by opening a global structure to the regions, which are the rising value of the new era. In addition, their use of realist approaches such as polarity, anarchy and regional power distribution while explaining the internal dynamics of regional security complexes is a strong sign that Buzan and Waever built their theories on the basic assumptions of realism, largely under the influence of realism. As can be seen above, it has been said that a regional security complex can be unipolar, bipolar or multipolar just like the global structure, power distribution and power balances at the regional level have an important effect on regional security relations and regional security complexes have been defined as 'mini anarchies'²⁸.

²⁶ Buzan and Wæver. 2003, p. 40.

²⁷ Buzan and Wæver. 2003, p. 40.

²⁸ Buzan and Wæver. 2003, p. 42.

The effects of the neo-realist approach are even more dominant in the works of Buzan when he first developed the theory. Despite the revision of the state-centered perspective and the diversification of the security sectors in the 2003 book, a state-centered perspective and military-political security sectors continued to be more dominant in the theory of regional security complexes. In addition, some authors believe that Carl Schmitt, who developed similar approaches in the past and one of the inspiration sources of classical realism, is the authority that decides whether the security threat exists or what will be the security threat in the securitization theory of the Copenhagen School. They think that it is effective on their assumptions. According to Schmitt, the dominant factor is the authority that decides whether there is a threat to the current order and when normal rules and processes should be suspended in order to maintain this order. The most important thing that distinguishes the Copenhagen School from Schmitt's approach is that it takes into account the third element of the securitization process, that is, the relevant audience must accept the securitization of the actors through discourse. In this sense, although securitization theory places the actor / authority in a central position in terms of deciding what to securitize through discourse, it does not see the sovereign authority as the sole decision maker in this social construction process, and accepts the approval of the relevant mass as an indispensable part of the securitization process²⁹.

Second, some assumptions of the constructivist theory were also used by Buzan and Waever in the construction of the regional security complexes theory. In this sense, securitization theory, which is one of the basic assumptions of the Copenhagen School, has been the most cited element in explaining the security relations within regional security complexes. Accordingly, there must be an active securitization process at the regional level in regional security complexes. Actors within regional security complexes will either collectively secure a problem by perceiving a problem as a common security threat, or directly construct each other as a security threat, and the actors will secure each other.

²⁹ Buzan and Wæver. 2003, p. 50.

Another approach that has an impact on the theory of regional security complexes is Buzan's historicist British School approach. History and geography are the two typical factors that the British School argues are effective on local security relations. Among the factors that determine the security dynamics within the Buzan and Waever regional security complexes, social perceptions, identity and competition relations shaped in the historical process also make an important place. Lake and Morgan³⁰, who prefer to use Buzan's concept of regional security complex in their work, are critical of Buzan's reading based on history and geography. Although there is a consensus between the definitions of Buzan and Lake and Morgan in terms of evaluating the regions only in terms of the commonality of security relations within the scope of the regional security complex theory and determining their borders in accordance with this functional approach, the historical factors in the security relations within the Lake and Morgan regional security complexes. They say that today's concrete security threats are decisive rather than their impact. According to Lake, any common security threat can bring states together in a region. All systems under the global system are regional and regionality is not determined by geographic proximity criteria. States no longer need neighbors or have too much historical partnership to be mutually dependent on security. Some states (mostly super and great powers) may be part of the regional security complex as a result of certain threat perceptions even if they are not adjacent or close to a region³¹.

The foundations of traditional security understanding are based on Realistic School. Although realism in international relations has also been divided into branches such as classical realism, neo-realism and neoclassical realism, each with its own unique structures, there are three basic assumptions that each share. These are "statism", the main purpose of states being "survival" and "self-help" under anarchy. As can be seen from these assumptions, according to traditional security approaches, the primary "reference object" (or what is tried to be protected) is the state.

³⁰ David A. Lake and Patrick M. Morgan. 1997. *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World*, Penn, Penn State University Press; 1st edition, p. 19.

³¹ Lake and Morgan. 1997, p. 21.

Moreover, national independence, protection of territorial integrity and sovereignty constitute central values of the traditionalists' state-based understanding. Additionally, security is defined in military-political terms. For example, Walt, who is close to the traditionalist approach, defined security as "the study of threats and the use and control of military power". As another example of the traditionalist understanding, Miller emphasizes that the national security of states is threatened by other states and that the way to deal with these threats requires military responses.

The traditionalist understanding of security represents an objectivist perception of security. Realists claim that there is an objective and knowable world outside, independent of observing individuals. For them, security too is positioned "somewhere out there", with priority and independently of language. Finally, new realist and traditionalist perspectives see expansionist and deepening approaches as "approaches that move security studies away from its traditional focus and method and render this field intellectually inconsistent and practically irrelevant".

As Buzan simply put it, alternative approaches have emerged as a critique of traditionalist security approaches. The dissatisfaction created by traditionalist approaches "What / who is made safe?", "Against which threats?" and "By what means?" has led to the emergence of different answers to the questions. The emergence of new perspectives brought the debate between traditionalists and expansionists-deepeners. The end of the Cold War and therefore the bipolar world order has strengthened the camp of expanders and deepeners, new constructive approaches have entered the field of security studies. More and more scientists began to study the issues of environment, culture, identity, ethnicity, economics and health. Later on, the constructive security approach was divided into mainstream and critical approaches; Specific fields have emerged, such as the Copenhagen School and Critical Security Studies³².

³² Buzan. 2007, p. 42.

As Jeffrey Lewis pointed out, new approaches to security in international relations can be divided into two groups³³. The first group, deepeners, developed it by adding new reference objects other than the state to the security field. These new reference objects are also often found at different levels of analysis (individuals, society, all humanity, etc.) than the state. This group is "Security for Who / What?" It focused on the answer to the question. The other group, the extensionists, focuses on "threat". This group aims to improve security by introducing threats other than military threat. These new threats range from the environment to health and economics. In summary, while the expansionists continue to keep the state as the reference object, talking about new types of threats; Deepeners improve the security perception by putting new reference objects (especially individuals) at the center.

Although there are important differences between the constructivist and critical approaches in the expansionist-deepening wing, they all claim that "security is a non-objective situation; It shares the assumptions that threats are not only about material forces and that security is not a fixed but a changing concept and situation ". These assumptions are due to the fact that these approaches share the understanding of social ontology. According to this idea, the elements that make up the reality of world politics (eg sovereignty, state, power relations, peace, war, anarchy, etc.) are constructed in a process of social interaction. Similarly, security and security relations are "social situations" built by various actors in the process of mutual interaction.

In this context, as stated above, the collapse of soviets and the formation of new post-soviets are of great importance in the theory of the regional security complex. Almost all of these newly benefited states are a subject of independent research. It is especially important to learn about the regions where there are international conflicts. In this respect, it is necessary to dig deep into the Nagorno-Karabakh problem and to research it comprehensively. Therefore, in our next subsection we will look at the problems occurring in the South Caucasus.

³³ Jeffrey Lewis. 2014. 'Strategic stability and regional security', *Adelphi Series*, 54:446, 127-146, p. 130.

1.2. Emerged Geopolitical Problems in South Caucasus in post-Soviet Period

The South Caucasus region is an important area where the interests of major powers are concentrated on bilateral and multilateral levels. The interest of power centers in this region is primarily due to its geostrategic position. After the Cold War, the importance of the region as a source of energy resources and a transit line was added to this factor. The strategic importance of the South Caucasus region in terms of geopolitics is explained by a number of factors. The South Caucasus primarily serves as a corridor for the transportation of hydrocarbon resources from Central Asia and the Caspian Sea to Black Sea ports. At the same time, the South Caucasus is a region directly adjacent to large oil fields in the Caspian Sea. Another factor can be attributed to the fact that this region, located between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, is located at the intersection of South-North and West-East logistics lines. At the same time, from a military point of view, it is a suitable base for the deployment and mobilization of ground forces, aircraft and navy³⁴.

Despite the fact that recently the South Caucasus has been overshadowed by developments in the Middle East and Ukraine, this region remains strategically important, especially for Russia and the European Union. Ethno-political conflicts in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh (NK), as well as the spread of radical Islamist views have a direct impact on the internal security of the Russian Federation. The EU is trying to diversify its energy supplies, being interested in developing the Caucasus transport routes and strengthening stability in the Black Sea region, which is considered in the context of the Eastern Partnership program.³⁵ Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan could benefit from being in the position of a bridge between Europe and Asia, but in reality they are under constant pressure, not least from being at the crossroads of competition from one political-economic bloc with another. A quarter of a century after the collapse of the USSR, ethnopolitical

³⁴ Caryl Phillips. 2001. 'A new world order', *Wasafiri*, 16:34, 39-41, p. 39.

³⁵ Revaz Gachechiladze. 2002. 'Geopolitics in the South Caucasus: Local and External Players', *Geopolitics*, 7:1, 113-138, p. 115

conflicts in the region are still not completely resolved, and regional cooperation looks more like a speculative construct. The problems of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia could be reduced, and regional security changed for the better through the settlement of conflicts, if the West and Russia had a more or less coordinated approach to the South Caucasus.

The conflicts sown by the Kremlin during the Soviet era began to manifest themselves in the post-Soviet period. After the collapse of the USSR, ethnic conflicts began to flare up in the South Caucasus. There were wars in both Georgia and Azerbaijan. The conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia arose in Georgia, and the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict arose in Azerbaijan.

For example, Armenia, which benefited from political instability as a result of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and internal problems in Azerbaijan, launched military operations in Nagorno-Karabakh. In February 1992, in the town of Khojaly, committed an unprecedented genocide against the Azerbaijani population. This bloody tragedy, known as Khojaly genocide, included the murder of thousands of Azerbaijanis by various tortures. At night of February 25 to February 26, the Armenian armed forces captured Khojaly and the people of Khojaly (about 2,500 people) had to stay in the town. However, after the onset of the attack, they tried to leave their homes, hoping to reach the closest places where Azerbaijanis lived. However, these plans failed, the invaders plundered Khojaly and massacred the civilian population with special torture.³⁶

In May 1992, Shusha, the administrative center of Lachin region between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, was occupied. Ten days later, on May 18, 1992, Lachin was completely occupied. In 1993, Armenian armed forces captured six regions outside of Nagorno-Karabakh: Kelbajar, Aghdam, Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Gubadli and Zengilan. Contrary to the official statements of Yerevan that Armenia did not directly participate in the war with Azerbaijan, these allegations are undisputed, demonstrating that the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia are engaged in

³⁶ Behlül Özkan. 2008. 'Who Gains from the "No War No Peace" Situation? A Critical Analysis of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict', *Geopolitics*, 13:3, 572-599, p. 575

hostile acts against Azerbaijan and defending the direct military aggression of the Republic of Armenia against another sovereign state.³⁷

UN Security Council Resolution 822 on 30 April 1993 demanding the immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces from Kelbajar and other occupied areas of Azerbaijan, followed by the UN Security Council on 29 July 1993 that the occupying forces from the Aghdam region and the other occupation of the Azerbaijan Republic. Adopted Resolution 853, requesting the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal from the territories under it. On October 14, 1993, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 874 of the CSCE Minsk Group calling for the immediate implementation of some of the stated reciprocal and immediate steps, including the withdrawal of forces from the recently occupied areas. A month later, on 11 November 1993, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 884, condemning the occupation of the Zangilan region and the town of Horadiz, demanding the withdrawal of the occupying forces from the Zangilan region, which attacked the territory of the Azerbaijan Republic and civilians.³⁸

Military attacks against the Republic of Azerbaijan severely damaged the socio-economic sphere of the country, 871 settlements, including 11 towns, 848 villages, hundreds of hospitals and health facilities, were burned or bombed in the occupied areas. Hundreds of thousands of homes and apartments, thousands of social and medical buildings, hundreds of libraries were looted, and many valuable manuscripts were burned.³⁹

Along with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, some geopolitical problems also arose in Georgia. Today's conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia have their roots in Georgia's search for independence in the late 1980s and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. According to the esoteric federal structure of the Soviet Union, Abkhazia and South Ossetia became the semi-autonomous subunits of the Georgian

³⁷ Timuçin Hacıbəyli. 1998. 'Dağlıq Qarabağ məsələsinə dair', *Xalq qəzeti*, 27:02, 5-7, p. 5

³⁸ Elşad Abdullayev. 2004. *Dağlıq Qarabağ problemi beynəlxalq hüquq müstəvisində*, Bakı, Təhsil, p. 29-30

³⁹ Abdullayev, 2004, p. 37

Soviet.⁴⁰ According to the Soviets, the socialist republic itself was one of the 15 constituent union republics of the Soviet. For most of the countries of the Soviet era, this organization was only occasionally a source of ethnic and elite friction. But relations between the Soviet Union and Tbilisi began to erode in the late 1980s, especially after the Soviet troops were violently suppressed on April 9, 1989, which resulted in 19 deaths, and Georgia sought greater sovereignty. The absence of dynamics between Georgia's stance for independence and Abkhazian and South Ossetia's preference for the post-reform Soviet existence has led to serious mistrust.⁴¹

They claimed that Georgians, Abkhazians and South Ossetians were trying to keep the collapsing Soviet Union afloat and that they were pro-Russian "fifth column". Until 1991, disputes were manifested in protests and low-level conflicts. The first tragic example of this confusion was seen in July 1989, when 16 people were killed as a result of the dispute over the division of the Abkhaz State University.

A year before the collapse of the Soviet Union, armed conflict broke out in South Ossetia. A month ago, the first Communist Georgian government ruled by Zviad Gamsakhurdian abolished South Ossetia's "autonomous" status despite South Ossetia's independence trend in Tbilisi. With the dispatch of the armed forces to regain control of Tbilisi, the war began in South Ossetia.

In early January 1991, the Georgian Supreme Council adopted a law on the formation of the National Guard. On the night of January 5-6, on the orders of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Georgian armed formations were sent to Tskhinvali - militia and national guards, who tried to establish control over the city. The regiment of the internal troops of the USSR, despite the warnings of the South Ossetian leadership about the impending attack, removed the posts at the entrance to Tskhinvali and freely let the Georgians through. Internal troops were withdrawn to military towns (in

⁴⁰ Moritz Pieper. 2020. 'Russkiy Mir: The Geopolitics of Russian Compatriots Abroad', *Geopolitics*, 25:3, 756-779, p. 761

⁴¹ Françoise Companjen. 2010. 'Recent Political History of the South Caucasus in the Context of Transition', *Exploring the Caucasus in the 21st Century: Essays on Culture, History and Politics in a Dynamic Context*, Amsterdam University Press, 111-134, p. 113

Tskhinvali, until mid-1992, two regiments of the Soviet Army were quartered - an engineer-sapper and a helicopter).⁴²

On January 7, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev issued a decree condemning both the declaration of sovereignty of South Ossetia and the actions of the Supreme Council of Georgia, and demanded that all armed formations be withdrawn from the region, except for units of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs. This requirement has not been met. The Supreme Council of Georgia ruled that the decree was a gross interference in the internal affairs of the republic⁴³.

On January 29, the leader of South Ossetia, Torez Kulumbegov, was fraudulently taken out of Tskhinvali, taken to Tbilisi and imprisoned, from where he was released only on January 7, 1992. In his absence, the republic was led by Znaur Gassiev. Having failed in a military solution to the conflict, the Georgian authorities established a blockade of South Ossetia. On February 1, 1991, its power supply was cut off. According to the Ossetian side, this led to numerous casualties from the cold among the elderly and children⁴⁴.

After Georgia gained independence, Moscow offered to act as a mediator in Georgia's problems with Abkhaz, Ossetian and Adjar minorities in order to be more effective in the region. Unable to unite the separatist regions in one center, Georgia could not stand Moscow's insistence any longer. Despite believing that Russia directly helped the separatist administrations, Tbilisi had to enter the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 1993 by complying with the conditions demanded by Russia.

Entering the CIS under the conditions of Russia and by force has led to serious opposition in Georgia against Russia. The fact that Georgia was obliged to join the Collective Security Treaty Organization on September 9, 1993, with the pressure of Russia, further increased the anti-Russian opposition in the country. While the Georgian government strives to remove the country from Russia's sphere of

⁴² Companjen, 2010, p. 113

⁴³ Companjen, 2010, p. 114

⁴⁴ Companjen, 2010, p. 114

influence, Russia has turned to various political and economic practices to keep Georgia in its sphere of influence.

1.3. South Caucasus as a “Battlefield” of Global and Continental Powers

The South Caucasus region, which is historically dominated by Russia, Turkey and Iran, has been a “battlefield” for global geopolitical powers. Throughout the twentieth century, the South Caucasus was one of the priority areas of the Soviet Union's struggle with the West. In this region, the West is building its interests over NATO member Turkey.

Russia's special activity in the region in the 1990s was one of the factors determining the direction of US policy in the South Caucasus. In the early years of Russia's independence, the United States was committed to cooperation. During this period, US-Russian relations were developing at the level of "strategic partnership". However, it is clear that the United States understood at that time that it intended to control Russia's energy resources in its post-Soviet policy.

In May 1992, the US Defense Plan Project Licensing Guidelines were approved. The document highlights a plan to address potential threats to US interests. Under the plan, the United States developed a strategy to prevent attacks on its territorial integrity, its citizens, and its armed forces, as well as to provide military support to US allies. At the time, the U.S. military was planning to prevent any enemy forces from controlling areas of US interest, which it called "sensitive areas." In this regard, it should be noted that the United States assessed Russia's control over the energy resources of the post-Soviet space from its own point of view. In the following years, the US goal of "strengthening" the post-Soviet space became one of the most serious problems in US-Russian relations. Russia's effectiveness in this area has been a key factor in US policy in Central Asia, the Caspian Sea and the South Caucasus⁴⁵.

⁴⁵ Camilla Khokhar and Paul Wiberg - Jørgensen. 2001. 'United States' strategic possibilities in the South Caucasus', *European Security*, 10:3, 76-83, p. 78

For example, in 1995, the American Academy of Military Strategic Studies published a report entitled "Energy, Economy and Security in Central Asia: Russia and Competitors." According to the report, Russia was one of the most competitive countries in the Middle East with the United States. Russia's dictatorship of its position in the Central Asian region seemed to be a key element of this competition. The Central Asian report also touched on the South Caucasus. The report said that international interests in the South Caucasus were insufficient.

Same year, the US National Security Council's Office of US, Russian, Ukrainian and Eurasian Affairs set out the goals and objectives of US policy in the region. The South Caucasus can be seen separately in these targets.⁴⁶ Limiting the influence of the Russian government within the framework of US regional goals was primarily related to the Caspian region, which is part of the South Caucasus. At the same time, Western-backed trends in the former Soviet republics in the South Caucasus were expected to follow. In addition, these goals included protecting and supporting the interests of US companies.

Although the South Caucasus had become a region where two great powers collide in the end of the Cold War, the West was still seen as a major global power. In other words, the US regional strategy was intended to be used not only for the countries of the region, but also for the global struggle. In this situation, the national interests of the countries in the region took a back seat. The warming of relations between Iran and the West, the political turmoil in Turkey, the decline in confidence in Georgia and other processes have led to the uncertainty of US geopolitical strategic goals in the South Caucasus. In such a situation, the border issue between Armenia and Turkey was increasingly raised by US officials. A report titled "US-Iran Strategic Competition: Turkey and the South Caucasus" published by the International Center for Strategic Studies, one of the world's leading think tanks,

⁴⁶ Anna Matveeva. 2002. *The South Caucasus: nationalism, conflict and minorities*, London, Minority Rights Group International, p. 24

states: "Conflicting trends in the region are a risk factor. Armenia as a factor which can be used to this end. " As can be seen, Armenia's role in US policy is clear⁴⁷.

In the 2000s, the South Caucasus region was also mentioned in US national security strategy documents. However, these documents were mainly about Russia and Russia's "Near Neighborhood" policy, as well as the US interest in the Caspian Sea. In addition, the document shows that 40% of energy needs in the United States come from oil. Half of this figure is provided by imports. Therefore, the security strategy document pays special attention to energy security. According to the indicator that the potential gas reserves in the Caspian region are close to 160 billion, the Caspian region is also included in the Energy Security section of the document. The United States is increasing gasoline imports from Venezuela, Africa, Canada, Mexico and OPEC. Therefore, the Caspian region is not one of the main energy suppliers to the United States. On the other hand, according to the document, oil areas outside "traditional interests" should be one of the main priorities of the United States. In this case, attention is drawn to the rich oil regions, as well as the geostatistics of the South Caucasus. The United States is focused on improving the efficiency of energy supply control while maintaining the competitiveness of the global market⁴⁸.

The 2004 US National Military Strategy focuses on the "global security goal." Creating the necessary security environment that contributes to the country's security as part of the interethnic peace process is one of the four main goals of the US military. Here you can see the theoretical aspects of US security beyond national borders⁴⁹. According to the US National Defense Strategy of 2005, Russia is in the category of "strategic" countries. The document also highlights a large-scale competitive tactic that needs to be restructured in relation to Russia. It is noted that this issue can be resolved again with the United States and Russia. In addition, Russia's approach to both global and regional issues could change its strategic

⁴⁸ Weber. 2010, p. 39.

⁴⁹ Description of the National Military Strategy 2004, pp. 5-6.

position in the world. This creates uncertainty about US security concerns and shows that its risky potential is still high⁵⁰.

According to the document, Russia is likely to become a regional rival or potential enemy, as it pays special attention to competition with the United States in terms of being a strategic country. The "key" countries that continue to influence "sensitive" areas, especially in terms of US interests, are considered "threats" to US interests. At the same time, the 2006 National Security Strategy Document reiterates the issue of energy security in previous security strategy documents. When it comes to energy security, the idea of working closely with US energy producers to increase energy sources and types is repeated in this document. It emphasizes that the development of a private initiative to bring energy to open markets will benefit global energy demand⁵¹.

The above-mentioned strategic security and military-defense documents clearly show the attitude of the United States to specific countries and regions in the field of energy. As one of these regions, it can be said that US policy in the Caspian Sea and the South Caucasus is focused on the economy and democracy.

According to the 2010 US National Security Strategy, US strategic goals are classified under three headings. These are internal security, multilateral cooperation, ensuring global stability. The document considers Russia one of the main centers of influence in the 21st century, and identifies three countries where the United States needs to improve bilateral relations: China, India and Russia. They emphasize the importance of developing cooperation with these countries based on common interests. The document assesses US policy in the South Caucasus in terms of energy security and global security goals. In terms of energy security, the Caspian region is of great importance for global energy turnover. On the other hand, the US goal of protecting freedom of transportation in the South Caucasus is seen as one of the key factors in approaching the region⁵². In this context, the United States aims to control

⁵⁰ Description of the National Military Strategy 2005, p. 10.

⁵¹ Description of the National Military Strategy 2006, p. 9.

⁵² Description of National Defense Strategy 2010, p. 2.

the transportation of energy resources in the Caspian Sea. Russia, a major energy power, is described in the documents as an "important regional partner." On the other hand, Russia is still considered an "important European state." However, Russia's support for Crimea during the 2014 events in Ukraine showed that it would not agree with the intervention of the post-Soviet republics to join NATO or sign a partnership agreement, which in turn significantly changed US policy in the South Caucasus.

Russia is the main country competing with the United States in order to be leader influencer state in the South Caucasus. Modern Russia is one of the world's largest power centers and has a multifaceted foreign policy. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia, which considers itself its rightful successor, seeks to seriously intervene in world affairs by defining the strategic interests of both Eurasia and the areas adjacent to its borders. This is understandable, because Russia, one of the world's largest nations with a strong nuclear arsenal, one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and one of its most powerful armies, is directly responsible for global peace and security. However, despite such extraordinary geopolitical positions, Russia's economic and financial growth lags behind its main competitors, such as the United States, the European Union and China, in terms of foreign exchange reserves. To balance its forces, Russia is developing its military, strengthening its military-industrial complex, and showing its "muscle strength" from time to time. Concerned about NATO's eastward expansion efforts, Russia aims to strengthen its geopolitical presence in Syria, Eastern Europe and Crimea. Regardless of who is in power in Moscow, the strategic interests and geopolitical goals of this state remain unchanged. Despite the impact of global processes, some political circles in the Russian Federation still see the former Soviet republics as "private property" and try to reunite them into their territories. To this end, the Russian government is trying to maintain the situation in the former USSR through the CIS and CSTO and prevent the entry of foreign forces into the region.

As noted above, Russia, which in some cases supports direct military intervention and the use of "muscle power" in countries seeking to pursue

independent policies, directly or indirectly seeks to prevent Ukraine, Georgia, and Azerbaijan from pursuing independent political strategies.

The Russian Federation has also had extensive socio-political, scientific and cultural ties with the former Soviet republics for centuries. With its vast natural resources, this country shares a common history, culture, challenges and common development processes with neighboring countries. However, Russia's ambition to become a large state, which is often seen in the geopolitical interests of small states, and its foreign policy, which forces neighboring countries to always be pro-Russian, sometimes overshadow friendly and neighborly relations. In this regard, the South Caucasus region is no exception. As before, one of the main directions of Russia's main state strategy is the South Caucasus. The Russian government does not hide its claims about the region. Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation I. Ivanov made these claims at an international conference in Moscow in October 2002: "... Russia is also a Caucasus state and has natural interests in the region. Russia's ruling circles, which have ruled a country of great wealth and strategic importance for 300 years, still exist. In this regard, the Russian government sees these areas as a "security zone on external borders"⁵³."

Historically, Russia has always trusted the Armenian community in its policy in the South Caucasus. For centuries, Armenians have been "slave" in the shadow of this great state by being thankful to their lobbies in Russia. The dramatic events in the South Caucasus show once again that the Armenian state, established in the territory of historical Azerbaijan, is not as independent today as it was a century ago with the support of great powers. Whoever comes to power in the Republic of Armenia, regardless of its identity, is the biggest obstacle to the integration of neighboring

⁵³ Azərtac. 2002. *İqor İvanov: Rusiya Üçün Təhlükə Qafqazda və Asiya Sərhədidədir* https://azertag.az/xeber/IQOR_IVANOV_RUSIYA_UCHUN_TAHLUKA_QAFQAZDA_VA_ASIYA_SARHADIND_ADIR-964077?_cf_chl_jschl_tk_=9903f1205457ce55f1114527de40b9edf6810e6e-1582411203-0-AQhHgPWcnc5qKj_gB2BJkppvaK7K5J4uXmb8V65ZIpTL4CjB1N6u5Rlokizv4cQ1zX3w6OmIVxpHToThyYAO9AI2tyUpRwwMEOEIdsF7Oeu5QEUODKUPmNkxM_Zb8kkYfQKwvfkG3Gvq03drrYoBba8fmQYI2So-CYS3W_8ztIxNy17TAAohJpmI54O2Dv39F7CFZC4kJbOWewNzzkKkW1sy0GAPq78mgBFsU20qxENMSKRGN_wn5kPkJj45vtjSlgckXd7wBHR-V0VgyN6NiWowGPt_13t7F9KVVV10JVh7GIWj9IS81xivm1eKJrwhJzloYuF8QAag0cFqxHx5nJK3iiV-ioIsT2956SVt7daQy_uNHfzaClziEW2m9SnnZsQ [access: 19.02.2021]

countries, especially the Republic of Azerbaijan, into independent politics, as well as the geopolitical interests of non-Russian forces in the South Caucasus.

Russian politicians, who see the South Caucasus as a geopolitical area of interest, do not intend to make concessions to the West over this important strategic zone near NATO's borders. Therefore, in their opinion, it is necessary to strengthen the military-political alliance with the independent states formed after the collapse of the USSR at the highest level. However, Georgia, which pursues a pro-Western policy and insists on integration into an independent policy, does not want to accept Russia's military-political presence in the region. The situation in Armenia is completely different. As a result, Armenia's airspace is protected by the Russian army, and a number of bilateral and multilateral military-political agreements are signed. Russia has military bases in Armenia. The country is economically completely dependent on Russia⁵⁴.

Peace and stability in the South Caucasus is not good news for Russia's military-industrial complex. Because the warring countries are regular buyers of the Russian arms industry. The Russian government has repeatedly "rewarded" its strategic ally Armenia with billions of dollars worth of weapons. In return, the Republic of Azerbaijan is forced to buy a large amount of weapons from Russia in order to protect itself from the weapons given to Armenia. Thus, by maintaining the status quo in the South Caucasus, Russia is making significant profits from the sale of weapons and military equipment⁵⁵.

The European Union is one of the global powers clashing with Russia's interests in the South Caucasus. The European Union's main foreign policy in the South Caucasus is the European Neighborhood Policy. To understand the essence of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), it must be remembered that the European Union (EU) is the guarantor of regional security in Europe. Although the EU is not a security organization, it is a political and economic project that has ensured peace and

⁵⁴ Sean Roberts and Ulrike Ziemer. 2018. 'Explaining the pattern of Russian authoritarian diffusion in Armenia', *East European Politics*, 34:2, 152-172, p. 154.

⁵⁵ Bahar Muradova. 2009. 'Rusiyanın Ermənistanına silah ötürməsi ikitərəfli strateji münasibətlərə uyğun gəlmir', *Yeni Azərbaycan*, 11/02, p. 4.

stability on the European continent since World War II, but security has always been the main goal of the organization. In this regard, the main direction of the organization was to make progress in prosperity and development in a region where peace and security are based on dialogue and cooperation.

The European Union has not been as interested in resolving the geopolitical problems as the United States and Russia. Using its capabilities only at the diplomatic and economic-financial levels, the organization has shown a more cautious approach to the region than the two countries in question. Even in the 2008 Russia-Georgia war, Georgia's most-supported European Union failed to provide the assistance it needed. The EU's approach to the South Caucasus is based on the regulation of economic relations and energy security. In addition to the regional conflicts mentioned above, the countries of the region face problems such as poverty, unemployment and economic growth.

The EU was one of the first to recognize the independence of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, the organization, which did not have a clear and comprehensive strategy for dealing with the region, proposed a single cooperation plan for all three countries with the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA), signed in 1996 and approved in 1999. The content of these agreements, which did not take into account regional conflicts, was almost the same as that offered to some Central Asian countries. However, the South Caucasus has made a number of contributions to the European Union on security issues and the diversification of the EU's eastern borders. Even on this level, the countries of the region participated in the European Security Strategy adopted in 2003, entitled "A Safe Europe in a Better World." The document stressed the need for a "stronger and more active interest in the problems of the South Caucasus⁵⁶."

In 2004, the countries of the South Caucasus joined the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, which set the agenda

⁵⁶ Eldar Ismailov and Vladimer Papava. 2008. 'A new concept for the Caucasus', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 8:3, 283-298, p. 286.

for political and economic reforms, were offered five-year ENP Action Plans. The EU has prepared annual progress reports in line with these action plans. The implementation of the ENP policy since 2004 has given a new impetus to relations. ENP primarily aimed at developing and modernizing the state institutions of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and the economies of these countries. However, the ENP did not meet the demands of the Georgian government, led by Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, which wanted a more concrete approach. Speaking at one of his first foreign visits to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), President Mikheil Saakashvili said, "The Rose Revolution has shown us Georgia's readiness to take the first bold step. Today, I want to take the next step to resolve the issue of membership, which will allow Georgia to become more integrated into Europe⁵⁷. "

In general, the EU's ENP policy cannot be considered a key player in the political game in the South Caucasus for a number of reasons. First of all, the Union's support in the region was minimal, and there was no light at the end of the EU membership tunnel on behalf of the countries of the region. At the same time, the biggest weakness of ENP and other EU programs for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia was their failure to address regional security issues.

Against this background, the issue of membership of the South Caucasus countries in the European Union was not welcomed. In early 2010, it became clear that the countries of the region had different approaches to this issue. Armenia, the most sensitive country to Russia's political and economic pressures, has decided to join the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union, despite three years of negotiations. After that, Georgia completed the negotiations and signed the association agreement, which came into force on July 1, 2016. Although Azerbaijan, in turn, wanted an equal strategic partnership agreement with the EU, the EU was reluctant to cooperate at this level. The Partnership Agreement proposed by the EU was of little importance to Azerbaijan, and although it was not a member of the World Trade Organization,

⁵⁷ Sebastian Mayer. 2017. 'The EU and NATO in Georgia: complementary and overlapping security strategies in a precarious environment', *European Security*, 26:3, 435-453, p. 440.

Azerbaijan was not interested in the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. As a result, the EU suspended talks with Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan's negative attitude towards the European Union is directly related to the EU's inability to provide the necessary support to the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In addition, the EU has been severely criticized by the Azerbaijani government for claiming double standards. It is no coincidence that according to EU visa rules, Armenia and Azerbaijan are on the black list. This means that citizens of Armenia and Azerbaijan must obtain a Schengen visa when entering the European Union. For Georgian citizens, this rule was abolished on March 28, 2017.

Turkey is one of the countries with special interests in the South Caucasus, especially those whose interests have recently intensified. From the Ottoman Empire to modern times, the South Caucasus has always been of interest to Turkey. During the Soviet era, the South Caucasus republics were not independent, and there were no direct political, economic, or even cultural ties between Turkey and these republics. After the collapse of the USSR, Turkey, as a regional power, began to shape the policy of the South Caucasus. The most important element of Turkey's cooperation with the countries of the South Caucasus is a common culture. Common cultural aspects serve to create a favorable environment for the development of other areas of cooperation.

With the exception of Armenia, which makes false territorial claims to Turkey, Turkey's policy towards Azerbaijan and Georgia has always developed in the context of friendship, kind neighborhood and cooperation. Especially in the 1990s, Turkey actively supported the solution of the problems of Azerbaijan and Georgia on various international platforms. At the same time, Ankara has played an important role in the transportation of energy resources of Azerbaijan and the Caspian Sea to Europe. Meanwhile, the Republic of Turkey fully supports the process of modernization of the armed forces of Azerbaijan and Georgia. Despite Turkey's approach to all three South Caucasus republics on the principles of good neighborliness and mutual cooperation, Armenia's unconstructive position and aggressive political behaviour prevented the establishment of cooperation between the two countries.

Military cooperation between the Turkey and Azerbaijan has been developing year by year. At the heart of military cooperation between Turkey and Azerbaijan is the need to neutralize the potential risks of a military alliance between Armenia and Russia. As is known, on August 16, 2010, an agreement on "Strategic cooperation and mutual assistance between Azerbaijan and Turkey" was signed. A few days before this agreement, Armenia and Russia had signed an agreement to extend the lease of Russia's military base in Armenia⁵⁸. As noted, Armenia, on the one hand, is building a bilateral military alliance with Russia and, as a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, is using Russia's military potential to its advantage, while strengthening the policy of good neighborhood with Iran. On the other hand, it pursues a bilateral policy, expressing a desire to improve relations with NATO and the European Union. In this situation, the establishment of a regional alliance between Azerbaijan and Turkey should be taken as a very natural and even necessary step⁵⁹.

As a logical consequence of this union, after a while, relations between the two countries began to take on a new character. The first important step in this direction was the three meetings held at the level of foreign ministers in Trabzon on June 8, 2012 and the declaration adopted as a result of these meetings. The text of the declaration emphasizes democracy, law, human rights, free market economy, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries, and states that the problems in the South Caucasus will be resolved on the basis of these principles. The declaration expressed determination to expand political, economic, cultural ties and cooperation between Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan in the fields of infrastructure, and promised to support each other's membership in international organizations.

It should be noted that strengthening economic, military security and cultural ties between Georgia and Azerbaijan is important in many ways. Azerbaijan is important not only in preventing threats from the south of Georgia, but also in terms

⁵⁸ Abel Polese and Lela Rekhviashvili. 2017. 'Introduction: Informality and power in the South Caucasus', *Caucasus Survey*, 5:1, 1-10, p. 4.

⁵⁹ Polese and Rekhviashvili. 2017, p. 5.

of being a reliable guarantor of Georgia's energy security. Georgia, in turn, is extremely important in terms of transporting Azerbaijan's energy resources to European markets and playing a transit role with another partner country, Turkey. A regional power like Turkey has similar interests and understands the importance of the trilateral cooperation format. The implementation of new projects based on mutual interest and benefits in the fields of economic development, energy, trade, transport and security promotes peace, stability, development and multilateral integration in the region⁶⁰.

Iran, whose relations with Turkey in the South Caucasus are based on fundamental contradictions and remains an outsider in the region after the collapse of the USSR, is very important for the region, though not as much as other countries. Iran's growing power in the global economic environment cannot be ignored by all three South Caucasus countries. For Armenia, building broader ties with Iran means more than trade and economic opportunities. Iran plays a key alternative role in overcoming Armenia's energy dependence. After gaining independence, Armenia has established close and consistent bilateral relations with its southern neighbor. Armenia sees Iran as a "necessary neighbor" on the basis of deep and historical partnership. In the context of bilateral economic relations, Armenia's more effective use of Russia's membership in the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union could provide Iran with an alternative roadmap for entering such a large market.

But for Iran, Armenia is of threefold importance: first, Armenia can play the role of a geostrategic ally to break the general blockade; second, Armenia could play the role of Iran's only military ally in the region; Third, Iran sees Armenia's accession to the Eurasian Economic Union as a way out⁶¹.

The Republic of Azerbaijan has the most sensitive relations with Iran among the countries of the South Caucasus. Tensions continue on many issues, from the

⁶⁰ Əmrah Güncər. 2020. 'Azərbaycan, Gürcüstan və Türkiyə xarici işlər nazirlərinin 8-ci üçtərəfli görüşü'. *TRT Azərbaycan*. <https://www.trt.net.tr/azerbaycan/iqtisadiyyat/2019/12/23/az-rbaycan-gurcistan-v-turkiy-xarici-isl-r-nazirl-rinin-8-ci-uct-r-fli-gorusu-1328253> [access: 03.03.2021]

⁶¹ Elaheh Koolae and Mohammad Hossein Hafezian. 2010. 'The Islamic Republic of Iran and the South Caucasus Republics', *Iranian Studies*, 43:3, 391-409, p. 393.

legal status of the Caspian Sea to the border between the two countries. These tensions are accompanied by natural irredentism from the broad ethnic Azerbaijani population in northern Iran. At the same time, the establishment of new military relations between Azerbaijan and Israel, which Tehran considers an enemy of Iran, has led to a slight increase in tensions.

In addition to the above, another problematic aspect of Azerbaijan's relations with Iran is that competition between the two energy countries may arise if Iran seeks to integrate its energy sector with global oil and gas markets. The decline in oil production in Azerbaijan in recent years has somewhat weakened this competition.

Another aspect of Iranian-Azerbaijani relations is based on religious values. Trying to remain the world's leading Islamic state, Iran has repeatedly expressed concern over the strict control of the activities of the Shiite sect in Azerbaijan. Another unresolved issue between Iran and Azerbaijan is that the domestic policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan is based on the principles of secularism and the prevention of the interference of religious sects, especially Shiite clerics, who are strongly supported by the Iranian government⁶².

Since the beginning of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Iran's policy on this issue has been sharply criticized by the domestic public. Iran's support for Armenia, which is under siege as a result of the occupation of Azerbaijani lands and its aggressive policy, as well as its exclusion from regional projects, its assistance in overcoming this "blockade" and so on. Other such nuances are not welcomed not only by the countries of the region, but also by the domestic community of Iran.

Although the South Caucasus has been a battlefield for almost the same countries for centuries, new players such as China have recently entered the region. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace's "Belt and Road and Beyond: China Makes Inroads Into South Caucasus" article says that China's cooperation with

⁶² Koolae and Hafezian. 2010, p. 395.

the South Caucasus has increased and Beijing has become one of the most influential countries in the region⁶³.

It is said in the article: "The South Caucasus cannot be considered one of China's foreign policy priorities, as it does not have a direct border with the People's Republic of China. The recent growing interest in the region can be seen as part of an investment strategy." In 2015, China signed a document with all three Caucasian republics on the participation of these countries in the Great Silk Road Economic Corridor initiative, and in 2017, for the first time in the post-Soviet space, signed a free trade agreement with Georgia. However, China accounted for only 5% of Georgia's exports in 2018. However, trade with Azerbaijan accounts for 40% of the total trade turnover with the South Caucasus, while Armenia is involved in most regional logistics and energy projects due to its occupation policy. As a logical consequence, this country is not among China's investment interests⁶⁴.

However, to say that the South Caucasus is only interested in China in terms of energy means to take a superficial approach. It is true that the use of the South Caucasus's energy resources to become a global power is important for the Chinese government, but China has other interests in this regard. One of China's main security interests is to protect itself from threats from the Western front through the region. It should be noted that China has a very important agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran in this area. In the current geostrategic plain, Russia-Iran-China strategic cooperation in the region seems possible in the near future. In this regard, it is possible that the events in the Middle East may affect the South Caucasus.

The Western media's view of these processes is unequivocally negative. New Eastern Europe and other pro-Western portals call the South Caucasus a "paradise of espionage" from China's point of view, but also consider it a "false friend" of Georgia because of China's cautious approach to the Russia-Georgia conflict⁶⁵.

⁶³ Azər Nuriyev. 2019. 'Çinin Cənubi Qafqaza marağı güclənir'. *Kaspi qəzeti* <https://www.kaspi.az/az/inin-cenubi-qafqaza-marai-guclenir> [access: 03.03.2021]

⁶⁴ Nuriyev. 2019.

⁶⁵ Nuriyev. 2019.

In general, the South Caucasus, due to its geopolitical significance, may attract more actors in the near future. Currently, Russia is the main country in the region. The South Caucasus is a favorable region for Moscow, which is trying to prevent the US strategy of NATO expansion to the east by all possible means. Even Russia, which currently keeps the United States within the framework of energy projects in the region, has an ambiguous attitude towards the region. Representatives of some high-ranking government officials consider the region as even South Russia. But at the same time, the Russian-Georgian war of 2008 was not enough to change the balance of power in the region, but it managed to break these arrogant stereotypes in Russian state circles. Russia and Iran have overlapping interests in resolving the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Thus, both countries are thinking about maintaining the status quo. Unlike Turkey, which continues its efforts to increase trilateral cooperation in the region, and Russia-oriented China, which has become more active in the South Caucasus market in recent years, the European Union is one of the world's leading powers with the least ties to the South Caucasus. The ineffectiveness of the integration policy pursued in the 2000s also limited the EU's interest in the region to energy issues. It should also be noted that China's activation in the region could change the balance of power in the US-Russian competition in Russia's favor. A possible Russia-Iran-China alliance has the potential to further limit the West's role in the region.

CHAPTER II. KARABAKH WAR AND NEW REGIONAL ORDER

2.1. Fail of Twenty-six-year Negotiations

After the Russo-Georgian war in Abkhazia and South Ossetia in 2008, security issues in the South Caucasus became relevant again. Regional conflicts in the South Caucasus, which are beginning to play an increasingly important role in world politics and the economy, remain unresolved. This, in turn, promises a very mysterious and uncertain perspective for the future of the region. However, in recent years, the political, military and economic dynamics in the South Caucasus has increased significantly compared to previous periods, and radical political and military changes have taken place in the region. Against the background of these changes, the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, one of the most serious problems in the region, has become a historical necessity.

Thus, the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which dates back to the ADR period and before, has always been one of the main obstacles to the development of the South Caucasus. The transformation of this conflict into a more fundamental problem dates back to the Soviet era. The establishment of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region within the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic by the decree of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of the Azerbaijan SSR on July 7, 1923 laid the foundation for the systematization of separatist activities of Armenians living in the region⁶⁶. This problem, which remained in the form of a frozen conflict for many years, came up again on the eve of the collapse of the USSR. On February 20, 1988, the XX extraordinary session of the Nagorno-Karabakh Soviet of People's Deputies convened the 20th convocation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Soviet of People's Deputies. To submit a petition to the Supreme Soviets. Then, in November 1989, the issue was considered, and the Supreme Soviet of the USSR decided to keep the lands of the autonomy of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous

⁶⁶ Николай Самсонович Шахназаров. 1960. *Нагорно-Карабахская автономная область*, Баку, Азернешр, р. 4.

Region within the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic⁶⁷. However, on December 1, 1989, a joint meeting of the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Karabakh National Council considered the decision unfounded and declared the unification of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region with Armenia illegal and contrary to the USSR Constitution. After gaining independence, this issue was raised again in the Republic of Azerbaijan, and on November 26, 1991, by the law of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the administrative-territorial unit of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region was abolished. According to this law, the Decree of the Central Executive Committee of Azerbaijan "On the Establishment of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region" of July 7, 1923 and the Law of the Azerbaijan SSR "On the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region" of June 16, 1981 were repealed, Stepanakert, Mardakert, Returning the historical names of Martuni cities Stepanakert city - Khankendi city, Mardakert city - Aghdara city, Martuni city - Khojavend city, Mardakert district - Aghdara district, Martuni district - Khojavend district were renamed, Askeran and Hadrut districts were abolished, Khojaly city with center as Khojaly district The territory of Askeran district, which was created and abolished, was given to Khojaly district, and the territory of Hadrut district was given to Khojavend district⁶⁸. Khankendi and Shusha cities are included in the list of republican cities, Agdara, Khojavend, Khojaly and Shusha districts are included in the list of republican districts. By the Resolution of the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 327 of October 13, 1992 "On partial changes in the administrative-territorial division of the Republic of Azerbaijan", Aghdara region was abolished and its territory was divided between Tartar, Kalbajar and Aghdam regions⁶⁹.

However, despite the legal basis of the Armenian side, the activation of Nagorno-Karabakh with the separatists in the region as a result of disagreement with

⁶⁷ Bəxtiyar Adiloğlu. 2010. 'Bədnam DQMV necə yarandı: Vilayətin yaranması ilə Azərbaycan ənənəvi tarixi-coğrafi vahidliyini itirdi'. *Olaylar*, 16/10, p. 15.

⁶⁸ Niyaz Hacıyev. 2005. *Dağlıq Qarabağın tarixindən sənədlər*, Bakı, Gənclik, p. 35.

⁶⁹ Nazim Məmmədov. 2014. *Azərbaycanın Ağdərə rayonunun tarixi*, Bakı, Avropa, p. 458.

the stay of Nagorno-Karabakh in the Republic of Azerbaijan re-ignited the conflict and led it to war. The local Azerbaijani population, forced by intensive attacks by Armenian separatists, was forced to leave their ancestral lands. Large-scale military operations between the two sides began in the winter of 1992 as a result of an attack by Armenian forces, and attempts by several international organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), to end the war and resolve the conflict failed. The occupation of non-enclave lands by Armenian forces in the spring of 1993 was further evidence that it violated international law and did not accept the principle of respect for any peace and territorial integrity. Until the end of the war in 1994, the Armenians, with the military, political and economic assistance of their patrons, completely occupied Nagorno-Karabakh and usurped part of the Azerbaijani lands that were not part of the enclave. As a result of the conflict, about one million Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced persons. Most of them were in the battles of 1992-1994, and 11557 Azerbaijani servicemen were killed in the military operations in the conflict zone in 1991-1994⁷⁰. In May 1994, a ceasefire was reached with the resolute position of national leader Heydar Aliyev, numerous attempts, as well as with the support of Russia, and then the OSCE Minsk Group was entrusted with the settlement of the conflict and the organization of the negotiation process.

Numerous talks have been held since 1994 to resolve the conflict, and the heads of state and government of Azerbaijan and Armenia, as well as the foreign ministers, have held bilateral, trilateral and multilateral meetings. These peace talks did not yield serious results as a result of Armenia's indecisive position and unchanging unconstructive approach. Over the past years, the Azerbaijani state has achieved considerable success in the diplomatic sphere and gained a diplomatic and legal advantage over Armenia. For example, at the OSCE Lisbon Summit in December 1996, the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office set out some recommendations for resolving the Armenian-Azerbaijani

⁷⁰ OxuAz. 2014. *Qarabağ müharibəsində nə qədər şəhid vermişik?* <https://oxu.az/society/11399> [access: 01.04.2021]

Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, but Armenia did not accept them and the OSCE was the only member state to vote against the proposal out of 54 member states. This historic event is another proof of the unconstructive position of the Armenian side⁷¹.

In the following years, Armenia continued its destructive approach and tried to prevent all attempts to resolve the conflict. For example, on June 1, 1997, the OSCE proposed a comprehensive agreement on the settlement of the conflict, and although the Azerbaijani side was ready to start constructive consultations on the substance of these issues, the Armenian side rejected the proposed approach.

Efforts of the Republic of Azerbaijan under the leadership of national leader Heydar Aliyev to resolve the conflict continued in subsequent years, especially in 1999-2001, when 20 meetings were held between the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia, but these meetings were ineffective. Since 2004, direct talks have been held between the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia within the framework of the Prague Process.

Negotiations continued in a broader form in the following years. Following a meeting between Ilham Aliyev and Robert Kocharian in St. Petersburg on 9 June 2007, the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs stated that during the meeting of the Presidents, the conflict had been resolved peacefully. The "basic principles" of the solution were discussed and the parties could not agree due to differences of opinion⁷².

Negotiations on the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict intensified in 2009 and the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan met six times and the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan three times with the participation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs. In 2010, the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia met on July 17 in Almaty, on November 6 in Moscow, on November 19 in Lisbon, on November 22 and December 9 in Moscow. In 2011, the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia held two meetings at the

⁷¹ Umut Uzer and Adil Baguirov. 2012. 'Nagorno-Karabakh—A Forgotten Conflict: An Introduction to the Special Issue', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 32:2, 134-138, p. 136.

⁷² Azərbaycan Respublikası Xarici İşlər Nazirliyi. 2020. *Münaqişənin həlli prosesi* <https://www.mfa.gov.az/az/content/111/munaqisenin-helli-prosesi> [access: 04.03.2021]

invitation of the President of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev: on March 5 in Sochi and on June 24 in Kazan. The meetings ended inconclusively. During 2014, the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan met three times.

After 2014, the meetings of the Presidents slowed down, and hopes for a negotiated settlement of the conflict diminished. The active activity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan in this field in 2015, 2016 and 2017 also failed due to the lack of interest of Armenia and its supporters in resolving the conflict. On July 11, 2018, the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia met in Brussels through the mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs. No significant progress was made in this meeting either⁷³.

Despite the slowdown in meetings at the level of heads of state and government, during this period the Foreign Ministers held meetings to determine future prospects. On January 16, 2019, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov met with the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group and the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan in Paris. A joint statement was adopted. After that, on January 22, 2019, within the framework of the Davos World Economic Forum, an informal meeting of President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister of Armenia Nicol Pashinyan took place⁷⁴.

The radical change of government in Armenia and the fundamental change in the political system in the country as a whole, as well as the system of public administration, have revived the stalled negotiation process and created new hopes for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. Calling himself a democrat, Pashinyan promised in his first informal meeting with Ilham Aliyev that he was interested in a peaceful solution to the conflict and would not take a non-constructive position, unlike his predecessor Sargsyan's regime, which in turn took the peace talks to a new level. President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister of Armenia Nicol

⁷³ Sabine Freizer. 2014. 'Twenty years after the Nagorny Karabakh ceasefire: an opportunity to move towards more inclusive conflict resolution', *Caucasus Survey*, 1:2, 109-122, p. 112.

⁷⁴ Ruslan Rehimov. 2019. *Azerbaijani president, Armenian premier meet in Davos* <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/azerbaijani-president-armenian-premier-meet-in-davos/1371882> [access: 02.04.2021]

Pashinyan met in Vienna on March 29, 2019 to discuss the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. At this meeting, hopes for the effectiveness of the negotiation process were dashed, and it became clear that the Armenian side did not give up its unconstructive position.

In this context, the more radical and destructive steps taken by the new Armenian leadership have begun to signal that the conflict will gradually turn into a war. In one of his speeches in August 2019, Pashinyan quoted the following⁷⁵:

"I'm sure many are asking you now why there is no mention of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh)?" The answer is clear. Because Artsakh is Armenia, and so on!"

This aggressive political rhetoric was accompanied by military aggression. In July 2020, the Tovuz region of Azerbaijan came under intense fire from the Armenian military and was subjected to military aggression against the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Starting from noon on July 12, the Armenian Armed Forces fired at the positions of the Azerbaijani State Border Service in the Tovuz region, far from the conflict zone, causing casualties among the Azerbaijani army⁷⁶. According to the Armenian Defense Ministry, which tried to legitimize its aggressive actions, *"Azerbaijani servicemen tried to cross the state border of Armenia with a UAZ car at about 12:30 for unknown reasons. After the warning of the Armenian side, Azerbaijan The servicemen left the car near the Armenian positions and retreated, and then started artillery fire at about 13:45"*⁷⁷.

Rejecting this absurd claim, the Azerbaijani side said, *"If the Azerbaijani Army wanted to cross the state border of Armenia, it would do so not by cars, but by armored vehicles. Also, from 2018, control of the state border with Armenia in Gazakh, Agstafa, Tovuz, Gadabay and Dashkesan regions has been given to State*

⁷⁵ BBC Azərbaycanca. 2019. *Paşinyan Dağlıq Qarabağın Ermənistana "aid olduğunu" ilk dəfə bəyan edib* <https://www.bbc.com/azeri/region-49253151> [access: 07.02.2021]

⁷⁶ Azərbaycan Respublikası Müdafiə Nazirliyi. 2020. Ermənistan silahlı qüvvələrinin bölmələri Tovuz istiqamətində təxribat törədib <https://mod.gov.az/az/news/ermeniistan-silahli-quvvelerinin-bolmeleri-tovuz-istiqametinde-texribat-toredib-31439.html> [access: 01.03.2021]

⁷⁷ Армениан Репорт. 2020. *Вооруженные силы Армении уничтожают опорные пункты ВС Азербайджана, обстреливающие пограничные поселения Тавуша* <https://armenianreport.com/pubs/252764/> [access: 05.02.2021]

Border Service. And this shows peaceful approach of Azerbaijan. The transfer from the Ministry of Defense to the State Border Service confirms that the Republic of Azerbaijan has no military intentions on the border with Armenia."

However, the Armenian side was not satisfied with this and continued its military aggression against the Azerbaijani lands, abusing the restraint of the Azerbaijani side. On July 13, artillery installations were re-launched by Armenia in the direction of Tovuz, and shots were fired at the Azerbaijani army. The Azerbaijani Armed Forces fired back in self-defense, and both sides suffered various losses. During this period, the Armenian side began black propaganda and tried to manipulate its society with false news. Thus, the media close to the Armenian government reported that Armenian military units captured the Garagaya plateau in the direction of Aghdam village of Tovuz region, while the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry denied the information and said that there were no territorial losses and the positions remained the same. During the fighting, the Armenian artillery, ignoring the norms of international law, began to fire on the civilian population in the villages of Dondar Gushchu and Aghdam in Tovuz with military artillery, and clearly showed its vandal intentions⁷⁸. The Armenian army, which has not yet received a decent response, continued its attacks the next day. Armenian Armed Forces fired at Azerbaijani army positions and civilians and civilian objects in Aghdam and Alibeyli villages of Tovuz region with large-caliber weapons and artillery since July 14. Major General Polad Hashimov and Colonel Ilgar Mirzayev were martyred as a result of the enemy attack⁷⁹. In addition, 5 servicemen were killed while preventing the attack. After that, the Azerbaijani army responded to the Armenian side, and according to the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry, various military equipment, ammunition, command posts, reserves in the depths of defense and a large number of personnel belonging to the Armenian Armed Forces were destroyed.

⁷⁸ ApaAZ. 2020. *MN: Düşmənin Qaraqaya yüksəkliyini ələ keçirməsi barədə məlumatlar dezinformasiyadır* https://apa.az/az/herbi_xeber/MN-Dusmnin-Qaraqaya-yukskliyini-l-kecirmsi-bard-mlumatlar-dezinformasiyadir-596328 [access: 01.03.2021]

⁷⁹ AzeriDefence. 2020. *General-mayor Polad Həşimov şəhid olub* <https://azeridefence.com/general-mayor-polad-h%C9%99simov-s%C9%99hid-olub/> [access: 11.02.2021]

The Armenian side, as if preparing for these military operations for a long time, not only did not stop the operations, but also expanded them. On July 16, the Armenian side began to send even more troops to the war zone. In order to openly threaten the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan, a separate motorized infantry brigade No. 3 AK 63853 from Vanadzor, a separate motorized infantry brigade from Razdan 96583 and a brigade from Dilijan were mobilized to the battlefield. It is very interesting that the Armenian side took the battles in the direction of Tovuz, far from the area of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which is the main problem between Armenia and Azerbaijan, very seriously, as if conducting military operations in a warlike manner. In this context, the leadership of the Armenian army hastily mobilized ex-servicemen, conscripts, including the second and third groups of disabled people, as well as prisoners to the Tavush region due to large gaps in the personnel of the border⁸⁰.

The Armenian side was not satisfied only with artillery, but also involved other combat brigades in operations. According to the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry on July 18, 2020, not only artillery, but also machine guns and sniper rifles were used in different directions of the frontline by the Armenian Armed Forces in violation of the ceasefire.

During the fighting, rallies in support of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces were held in different parts of Baku, in the streets and avenues, as well as in other cities and regions of the country, thousands of people holding Azerbaijani flags took to the streets and chanted slogans such as "Karabakh" and "Freedom for Karabakh". The protests also showed support for the military and honored the memory of the martyrs. The big rally, which took place on July 14, continued with a march to the Alley of Martyrs⁸¹.

⁸⁰ ReportAz. 2020. *MN: Sərhəddə düşmənin şəxsi həyəti sırasında böyük boşluqlar yaranıb* <https://report.az/qarabag/vaqif-dergahli-ermenistan-ordusuna-kecmis-cagiriscilarin-ve-elillerin-seferberliyi-baslayib/> [access: 09.02.2021]

⁸¹ FedAz. 2020. *Bakıda Azərbaycan Ordusuna dəstək yürüşü keçirilib* <https://fed.az/az/dovlet/bakida-azerbaycan-ordusuna-destek-yurusu-kecirilib-84322> [access: 20.04.2021]

One million manat was transferred from the President's reserve fund envisaged in the 2020 state budget to the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Azerbaijan in order to eliminate the damage caused to the civilian population in Aghdam, Dondar Gushchu, Vahidli, Alibeyli, Yukhari Oysuzlu and Ashagi Oysuzlu villages of Tovuz region⁸².

During the battle, the Azerbaijani side also responded to Armenia in the field of cyber security, Azerbaijani hackers hacked more than 30 Armenian websites and posted slogans "Karabakh is Azerbaijan and the exclamatory sign" and "Azerbaijani soldier". The destroyed web resources include the official websites of both government agencies and a number of companies, as well as the Voice of Armenia, one of the most watched media resources in Armenia. Azerbaijani hackers also managed to hack the website of the Prime Minister of Armenia Nicol Pashinyan⁸³.

There have been reactions from the international community to the Tovuz battles. For example, on July 12, the Turkish Foreign Ministry issued a statement condemning the attack of the Armenian Armed Forces on the positions of the Azerbaijani Army in the Tovuz region of Azerbaijan. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu also made a statement in support of Azerbaijan on his Twitter account⁸⁴. Along with Turkey, the Pakistani Foreign Ministry expressed its deep condolences to the families of the Azerbaijanis who lost their lives. At the same time, a group of members of the British Parliament called Armenia an "aggressor" and signed a resolution condemning their recent actions.

By that, the Foreign Ministers met three more times in 2019, and exchanged views on the prospects of negotiations in certain areas. 2020 was a revolutionary year in the history of the conflict in general. This year, marked by the intensification of the negotiation process, the fact that the negotiation process was found to be ineffective,

⁸² VirtualAz. 2020. *Ermənilərin Tovuzda vurduğu ziyanın aradan qaldırılmasına bir milyon manat ayrıldı* <https://virtualaz.org/bugun/166776> [access: 20.02.2021]

⁸³ AzVisionAz. 2020. *Paşinyanın rəsmi saytı dağıldı* <https://azvision.az/news/222078/-pasinyanın-resmi-sayti-dagidildi-.html> [access: 11.04.2021]

⁸⁴ İsmayıl Məmmədov. 2020. "Mövlud Çavuşoğlu: "Türkiyə və türk milləti olaraq bütün imkanlarımızla qardaş Azərbaycanın yanındaıq". *Azərbaycan*, 12/08, p. 5.

the conduct of military operations on the Armenian-Azerbaijani frontline and outside the conflict zone (Tovuz battles), and the 44-day Karabakh war.

On January 28-30, 2020, the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia met in Geneva with the participation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. The meeting was the most intensive discussions between the parties in recent years. The parties held comprehensive discussions on the agenda presented by the co-chairs. In the following months, the rapid spread of the coronavirus pandemic around the world did not pass unnoticed in the negotiation process, and the negotiations turned into a video conference. On April 21, 2020, the Foreign Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia met in a video conference with the participation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. In accordance with the joint statement adopted by the parties in Geneva on January 30 this year, the next steps in the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict were considered. It was noted that the implementation of pre-planned humanitarian measures in connection with the spread of coronavirus infection, as well as the meeting of ministers and the visits of the co-chairs to the region were postponed. They also stressed the importance of observing the ceasefire in the event of a pandemic and refraining from any provocations. The parties agreed to maintain contacts and resume talks as soon as possible⁸⁵.

On May 18, 2020, a video conference meeting was held between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to discuss the current state of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement process. In the coming months, the steps to be taken after the global pandemic were discussed. However, the unexpected provocative political rhetoric of the Armenian leadership has dealt a serious blow to the negotiation process. On June 30, 2020, the Azerbaijani and Armenian Foreign Ministers met in a video conference with the

⁸⁵ Azərbaycan Respublikası Xarici İşlər Nazirliyi. 2020. *Münaqişənin həlli prosesi* <https://www.mfa.gov.az/az/content/111/munaqisenin-helli-prosesi> [access: 04.03.2021]

participation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. The sides discussed the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. discussed the current state of the regulatory process. Minister Elmar Mammadyarov commented on the illegal activities carried out by the Armenian government in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, including the issue of infrastructure changes. The Co-Chairs stressed the recent increase in aggressive rhetoric on the part of Armenia and the need to eliminate it⁸⁶.

The BBC's Russian correspondent, Alexander Gabuev, also criticizes Armenia in the conflict. According to his article, the Kremlin, Armenia's staunch supporter, has pressured Armenia to accept a diplomatic agreement brokered by Russia, the United States and France, citing the irreversible imbalance of power with Azerbaijan, which has repeatedly had a military budget over the past two decades. refused to compromise⁸⁷.

However, the Armenian authority, which did not draw conclusions from all these criticisms, continued its provocations. Not content with occupying 20 percent of Azerbaijani lands, making new territorial claims and living in wild fantasies, Pashinyan's government was not as democratic, compromising and constructive as it had promised when it came to power. On the contrary, he was as shameless as his predecessors in Armenia and de jure called Karabakh, the territory of Azerbaijan, Armenia. Despite its conflicting position with Russia due to its extreme pro-Western policy, taking such unthinkable steps in a tense and mosaic geopolitical situation has put Pashinyan in a difficult condition. In such a situation, an experienced politician would make some concessions and take steps to soften tense relations with neighboring countries. However, Pashinyan not only did not do so, but in September increased his provocative actions against Azerbaijan.

⁸⁶ Joshua Kucera. 2020. *Azerbaijani president calls into question negotiations with Armenia*, Eurasianet <https://eurasianet.org/azerbaijani-president-calls-into-question-negotiations-with-armenia> [access: 10.04.2021]

⁸⁷ Alexander Gabuev. 2020. *Viewpoint: Russia and Turkey - unlikely victors of Karabakh conflict*, BBC <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54903869> [access: 23.04.2021]

2.2. Second Karabakh War

The incessant attacks of the Armenian army on the units of the Azerbaijani army along the front line on the morning of September 27 are a clear example of this. When the Armenian army units carried out provocations on the frontline on September 27, 2020, they did not even think that the consequences of these provocations would be so severe. Thus, the Armenian Armed Forces fired large-caliber weapons at Gapanli of Tartar region, Chiragli and Orta Garvand of Aghdam region, Mirzenagili, Gazaxlar, Ahmadalilar, Alkhanli, Shukurbayli and Horadiz cities of Fuzuli region, Jojug Marjanli villages of Jabrayil region on September 27, 2020 at 06:00 was intensively fired by mortars and artillery of various calibers. As a result, there were casualties among the civilian population of Azerbaijan and civil infrastructure facilities were severely damaged. On the same day, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev addressed the people, and the Azerbaijani side sent troops, tanks and artillery units, planes and anti-aircraft guns to the combat zone⁸⁸. The so-called Artsakh Republic, in turn, announced a general mobilization of men due to the state of war. The turn of the nearly 30-year-old military confrontation into a war on September 27 has once again come to the fore in international news agencies.

The next day, the Armenian side began to target Tartar, and the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry said that Armenian forces were deliberately targeting civilian areas. The first news of the day's victory came from the Talish Heights, and at about 10:00 the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry reported that the Armenians had suffered heavy losses and that the Azerbaijani military had captured the strategic heights around Talish. Fearing chaos, disintegration and unrest in Armenian society, Pashinyan's leadership sought to manipulate society in order to prevent potential uprisings. At about 20:00, the Armenian leadership announced that the Armenian forces had repulsed the attacks of the Azerbaijani army and were advancing towards the territory of Azerbaijan. Seeing that their lies had a temporary effect on the Armenian society,

⁸⁸ OrduAz. 2020. *Ordumuzun PUA-sı Ermənistanı məxsus S-300 sistemini məhv edib* <https://ordu.az/az/news/172205/ordumuzun-pua-si-ermenistana-mexsus-s-300-sistemini-mehv-edib-ekskluziv-> [02.04.2021]

the Armenian leadership continued its lies and said that about an hour later an Azerbaijani plane was shot down near Khojavend. The Azerbaijani Defense Ministry denied this absurd claim⁸⁹. Such manipulations and false propaganda were frequently voiced by Armenia during the fighting. In general, in these battles, the glorious Azerbaijani army achieved great victories with very few losses. After liberating a number of villages and strategic facilities, including crossings and bridges, at the beginning of the fighting, the Azerbaijani Armed Forces completely liberated the southern border of Karabakh with Iran on 22 October and began advancing towards the Lachin Corridor on 23 October⁹⁰.

As a result of the meeting held in Moscow on the initiative of Vladimir Putin on October 9-10, 2020, a joint statement was adopted by the Foreign Ministers of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia. According to the agreement reached between President Vladimir Putin, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Pashinyan, a ceasefire has been agreed for the exchange of corpses of prisoners of war and other detainees for humanitarian purposes from October 10, 2020. Following a joint meeting of the Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers with US Deputy Secretary of State Steven Bigan on October 24, 2020, the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia reached a humanitarian ceasefire agreement in accordance with the Moscow Declaration of October 26, 2020⁹¹.

In general, the glorious Azerbaijani army liberated the ancient and eternal lands of Azerbaijan during the 44-day war in the following chronology⁹²:

⁸⁹ BBC Azərbaycan. 2020. *Qarabağ müharibəsi: 8 noyabr Azərbaycanda zəfər günüdür* <https://www.bbc.com/azeri/live/azerbaijan-54577122/page/38> [access: 20.03.2021]

⁹⁰ OrduAz. 2020. *Türkiyənin "Bayraktar" PUA-ları müasir müharibəyə necə təsir etdi?* <https://ordu.az/az/news/179003/turkiyenin-bayraktar-pua-lari-muasir-muharibeye-nece-tesir-etdi-qisa-baxis> [access: 10.04.2021]

⁹¹ TASS. 2020. *Statement of Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia leaders leads to full-format negotiations* <https://tass.com/politics/1222317> [access: 22.04.2021]

⁹² Azərbaycan Respublikası Müdafiə Nazirliyi. 2020. *İşğaldan azad olunan şəhər, qəsəbə və kəndlərimiz* <https://mod.gov.az/az/news/isgaldan-azad-olunan-seher-qesebe-ve-kendlerimiz-28583.html> [access: 04.04.2021]

- “September 27 - heights in the direction of Garakhanbeyli, Garvand, Horadiz, Yukhari Abdurrahmanli villages of Fuzuli region, Boyuk Marjanli, Nuzgar villages of Jabrayil region, Agdara and Murovdagh directions
- October 3 - Sugovushan and Talysh villages of Tartar region, Mehdili, Chakhirli, Ashagi Maralyan, Shaybey, Gujag villages of Jabrayil region, Ashagi Abdurrahmanli village of Fuzuli region
- October 4 - Jabrayil city and Karkhulu, Shukurbayli, Yukhari Maralyan, Chereken, Dashkasan, Horovlu, Decal, Mahmudlu, Jafarabad villages of the region
- October 9 - Hadrut settlement and Sur village of Khojavend region, Garajalli, Suleymanli, Efendilar and Qishlag villages of Jabrayil region, Yukhari Guzlak, Gorazilli villages of Fuzuli region, Chayli village of Tartar region
- October 14 - Garadagli, Khatunbulag, Garakollu villages of Fuzuli region, Bulutan, Malikjanli, Kemartuk, Teke, Tagaser villages of Khojavend region
- October 15 - Edisha, Dudukchu, Edilli, Chiraguz villages of Khojavend region, Arish village of Fuzuli region, Doshulu village of Jabrayil region
- October 16 - Khirmanjig, Agbulag, Akhullu villages of Khojavend region
- October 17 - Gochahmedli, Chimen, Juvarli, Pirahmadli, Musabayli, Ishigli, Dadali villages of Fuzuli region and Fuzuli city
- October 18 - The Azerbaijani flag is hoisted on Khudafar Bridge
- October 19 - Soltanli, Amirvarli, Mashanli, Hasanli, Alikeykhanli, Gumlag, Hajili, Goyerchinveysalli, Niyazgullar, Kechal Mammadli, Shahvelli, Haji Ismayilli, Isaqli villages of Jabrayil region
- October 20 - Havali, Zarnali, Mammadbayli, Hakari, Sharifan, Mughanli villages of Zangilan region and Zangilan city, Dordchinar, Kurds, Yukhari Abdurrahmanli, Gargabazar, Ashagi Veysalli, Yukhari Aybasanli villages of Fuzuli region, Safar, Imamba, Hasanbayli Dash Veysalli, Agtepe, Yarahmedli villages, Agjakend, Mulkudere, Dashbashi, Gunashli (Norashen), Chinarli (Vang) villages of Khojavend region
- October 21 - Minjivan settlement of Zangilan region, Khurama, Khumarli, Saril, Babayli, Third Agali, Hajalli, Girah Mushlan, Udgun, Turabad, Icheri Mushlan,

Malikli, Jahangirbeyli, Baharli villages, Balyand, Papili, Tulus, Jabrayil region villages, Gejagozlu, Ashagi Seyidahmedli, Zargar villages of Fuzuli region

- October 22 - Kollugishlag, Malatkeshin, Zangilan, Genlik, Valigulubeyli, Garadara, Chopadera, Tatar, Tiri, Amirkhanli, Gargulu, Bartaz, Dallakli villages and Agband settlement of Zangilan region, Sirik, Shikhlar, Fuzili, Mastalibeyli of Jabrayil region Mollaveli, Yukhari Rafadinli, Ashagi Rafadinli villages

- October 23 - Dolanlar and Bunyadi villages of Khojavend region, Dag Tumas, Nusus, Khalafli, Minbashili and Veysalli villages of Jabrayil region, Vanadli and Mirzahasanli villages of Zangilan region, Zilanli, Kurd Mahrizli, Muganli and Alagurshag villages of Gubadli region

- October 25-26 - Birinci Alibeyli, Ikinci Alibeyli, Raband, Yenikend villages of Zangilan region, Govshudlu, Sofulu, Dag Mashanli, Kurds, Hovuslu, Chalabilar villages of Jabrayil region, Padar, Efendiler, Yusifbeyli, Khaytligas, Chaytumas, Gubadli region villages and Gubadli city

- October 28 - Birinci Agali, Ikinci Agali, Uchuncu Agali, Zarnali villages of Zangilan region, Mandili village of Fuzuli region, Gazanzami, Khanagabulag, Chullu, Gushchular, Garaagaj villages of Jabrayil region, Giyasli, Abilja, Gilijan villages of Gubadli region

- October 30 - Khudaverdili, Gurbantepe, Shahvaladli, Khubyarli villages of Jabrayil region, Aladin, Vejnali villages of Zangilan region, Kavdadig, Mamer, Mollali villages of Gubadli region

- November 2 - Chaprand, Haji Isaqli, Goshabulag villages of Jabrayil region, Dere Gilatagh, Boyuk Gilatagh villages of Zangilan region, Ishigli, Muradkhanli, Milanli villages of Gubadli region

- November 4 - Mirak, Kavdar villages of Jabrayil region, Mashadiismayilli, Shafibeyli villages of Zangilan region, Basharat, Garakishiler, Garajalli villages of Gubadli region

- November 7 - Yukhari Veysalli, Yukhari Seyidahmedli, Gorgan, Uchuncu Mahmudlu, Gajar, Divanalilar villages of Fuzuli region, Yukhari Mazra, Yanarhaj villages of Jabrayil region, Gazyan, Balasoltanli, Mardanli villages of Gubadli region,

Beshdali village of Zangilan region, Beshdali village of Zangilan region , Ataqut, Tsakuri villages of Khojavend region

- November 8 - Shusha city
- November 9 - Gobu Dilagarda, Yal Pirahmedli, Yukhari Yaglivand, Dilagarda, Seyid Mahmudlu, Alasgarli, Ashagi Guzdek, Govshatli, Mirzajamalli, Shekerjik, Mardinli, Shikhli, Garamammadli, Dovletjarli, Hajili, Huseynbeyli, Hajili, Huseynbeyli villages of Fizuli region. Canakchi, Madatkend, Sighnag, Shushakend, Mukhtar, Dashalti villages, Susanlig, Domi, Tug, Akaku, Azykh, Mets Taglar, Salaketin, Zogalbulag, Aragul, Tagavard, Boyuk Tagavard, Zardanashen, Shahar villages of Khojavend region, Huseynabray Ashagi Sirik, Galajik, Mollahasanli, Askerkhanli, Yukhari Nusus, Ashig Malikli, Niftalilar, Garar, Chalabilar villages, Yukhari Mollu, Ashagi Mollu, Khojik, Garamanli, Khandak, Hamzali, Mahrizli, Hal, Balligaya, Ulashli, Tinli of Gubadli region Boyuneker, Garagoyunlu, Charali villages, Kechikli, Ordekli, Sobu, Garagoz, Iskanderbeyli villages of Zangilan region, Bartaz settlement, Guleburd, Safiyan, Turks villages of Lachin region,
 - According to the joint statement signed on November 20-November 10, Aghdam region
 - According to the joint statement signed on November 25-November 10, Kalbajar region
 - According to the joint statement signed on December 1 - November 10, Lachin region.

2.3. Outcomes of Karabakh War for the Security of South Caucasus

As a result of the war, according to Azerbaijani sources, 2,855 servicemen were martyred, 50 servicemen went missing, and 12 servicemen were taken prisoner. According to Armenian sources, 4,005 servicemen were killed, more than 60 were taken prisoner, 9,094 were wounded and 1,600 were missing. According to unofficial sources, the losses are many times higher, but the Armenian side is trying to falsify

the real figure by certain manipulative means⁹³. The situation with the captives remains uncertain. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharov said at a March 5 briefing that 63 Armenians and 16 Azerbaijanis had been deported through Russia so far and that Russia did not know how many remained on both sides. Zakharova also said that Russia, the only third party with significant influence on both sides, insisted on a "one-for-all" exchange of prisoners, regardless of the details of both sides⁹⁴.

In addition to the loss of life, the Armenian army has serious losses in terms of military arsenal. These are as follows⁹⁵:

- 53 anti-tank vehicles
- 4 pieces of "Smerch"
- 97 "Grad"
- 2 "Hurricane"
- 1 piece "YARS"
- 1 TOS
- 7 S-300 anti-aircraft missile systems
- 1 S-300 radar
- 2 "S-300" detection stations
- 1 Oborona radar station
- 5 TOR anti-aircraft missile systems
- 40 Osa anti-aircraft missile systems
- 4 "KUB" anti-aircraft missile systems
- 1 "KRUG" anti-aircraft missile system
- 2 S-125 anti-aircraft missile systems

⁹³ РБК. 2021. Минздрав уточняет потери армянской стороны в карабахском конфликте <https://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/5ff0b22b9a7947972e765858> [access: 03.03.2021]

⁹⁴ Joshua Kucera. 2021. *Post-war report: Armenia accuses Azerbaijan of dragging feet on POWs*, EurasiaNet <https://eurasianet.org/post-war-report-armenia-accuses-azerbaijan-of-dragging-feet-on-pows> [access: 11.03.2021]

⁹⁵ Sputnik Azərbaycan. 2020. *Ermənistanın məhv edilən və qənimət götürülən texnikaların siyahısı açıqlandı* <https://sputnik.az/azerbaijan/20201201/425612334/Ermenistann-mhv-ediln-v-qnimt-gtrln-texnikalarn-siyahisi-aciqlandi.html> [access: 03.03.2021]

- 22 unmanned aerial vehicles
- 2 Elbrus operational-tactical missile systems
- 1 Tochka-U missile complex
- 5 radio-electronic means of struggle
- 4 "Repellent" radio-technical barriers
- 1 Nebo-M radar station
- 7 different radar stations

At the same time, about 500 military equipment of the Armenian army was seized during the war. Defeated as a result of the 44-day war, the Armenian side was forced to sign a capitulation. In this regard, on November 10, 2020, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan and President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin adopted a joint statement. The statement said⁹⁶:

"We, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan IH Aliyev, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia NV Pashinyan and the President of the Russian Federation VV Putin declare the following:

1. On November 10, 2020, from 00.00 Moscow time, a complete ceasefire and all military operations in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone will be announced. From now on, the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, which will be called the Parties, will remain in their positions.
2. Until November 20, 2020, Aghdam region is returned to the Republic of Azerbaijan.
3. A peacekeeping contingent consisting of 1,960 firefighters, 90 armored vehicles, 380 vehicles and special equipment of the Russian Federation is stationed in Nagorno-Karabakh along the line of contact and the Lachin corridor.
4. The peacekeeping contingent of the Russian Federation is deployed in parallel with the withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces. The period of stay of the peacekeeping contingent of the Russian Federation is 5 years and is automatically extended for

⁹⁶ Azərbaycan Prezidentinin Rəsmi İnternet Səhifəsi. 2020. *Azərbaycan Respublikasının Prezidenti, Ermənistan Respublikasının baş naziri və Rusiya Federasiyasının Prezidentinin Bəyanatı* <https://president.az/articles/45923> [access: 02.04.2021]

another 5 years unless either Party declares its intention to terminate this provision 6 months prior to the expiration of the period.

5. A peacekeeping center for ceasefire control shall be established in order to increase the effectiveness of monitoring the compliance of the conflicting parties with the agreements.
6. The Republic of Armenia shall return the Kalbajar region to the Republic of Azerbaijan by November 15, 2020, and the Lachin region by December 1, 2020. The Lachin corridor (5 km wide), which will provide a link between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia and will not touch the city of Shusha, remains under the control of the Russian peacekeeping contingent.

According to the agreement, a plan for the construction of a new route on the Lachin corridor, which will provide communication between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia for the next three years, will be determined, and thus the future relocation of the Russian peacekeeping contingent to protect this route.

The Republic of Azerbaijan guarantees safety for the movement of citizens, vehicles and cargo in both directions along the Lachin corridor.

7. Internal IDPs and refugees return to the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas under the supervision of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
8. The exchange of prisoners of war, hostages and other detainees, as well as bodies, shall be carried out.
9. All economic and transport links in the region are being restored. The Republic of Armenia guarantees the security of transport links between the western regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic in order to organize the unimpeded movement of citizens, vehicles and cargo in both directions. Transport control is exercised by the Border Service of the Federal Security Service of Russia.

Based on the agreement of the parties, the construction of new transport communications connecting the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and the western regions of Azerbaijan will be provided.”

The BBC's Alexander Gabuev in his article points out that Russian President Vladimir Putin is the only head of state to sign the declaration, apart from the leaders of the two warring states⁹⁷. The 44-day Karabakh war, which ended with the November 10 statement, had great consequences for the Republic of Azerbaijan. These results can be classified as follows:

1. The joint declaration of November 10 once again showed that the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh is of international and interstate nature. The so-called former Artsakh Republic is not considered a party here. This, in turn, means that the Karabakh conflict is not an internal issue of Azerbaijan, but an interstate conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

2. The existing legal framework for the conflict has already expired and the international legal framework for the settlement of the conflict must be updated. Because the Republic of Azerbaijan, guided by Article 51 of the UN Charter, has alone implemented the requirements of 4 resolutions of the UN Security Council⁹⁸. In this context, the UN Security Council should re-adopt a new resolution in accordance with the provisions of the November 10 Declaration, and on the basis of this resolution, the OSCE Minsk Group should begin work to develop a new peace agreement. In addition to the international legal framework, the Republic of Azerbaijan is faced with the need to make a number of changes in its domestic legislation. This is especially evident in the wording of conceptual documents (National Security Concept, Military Doctrine, etc.).

3. 132 km part of our state border with the Islamic Republic of Iran was liberated from occupation and border posts were established there. This is a major event in the international arena, both politically and non-politically. For almost thirty years, some manifestations of transnational crime in these areas, in particular drug trafficking and logistics, have been widely developed and implemented in the form of

⁹⁷ Gabuev. 2020.

⁹⁸ According to Article 51 of the UN Charter, each member state has the right to restore its territorial integrity. Azerbaijan, as a state, has exactly this right. Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan is a gross violation of Article 51 of the UN Charter.

criminal cooperation. Legal, legitimate jurisdiction has already been restored in those areas and criminal manifestations have disappeared.

4. Another important consequence of the 44-day war is the exchange of corridors. This means that there is a direct land route between the main part of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. That is, Azerbaijan is given access to Nakhchivan through both Lachin and other western regions. This, in turn, has not only regional but also continental significance. Thus, a direct land transport line will be established from Azerbaijan to the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, and from there to Turkey, as well as in the opposite direction from Turkey to Azerbaijan. If we look at it in a more global context, a huge Turkish strip will stretch between Turkey-South Caucasus-Central Asia-China. It is also a very important step in determining the course of logistics activities on the new Silk Road. In other words, the Azerbaijani economy will enter a new phase with this corridor.

5. Illegal economic activities in the liberated territories, as well as the settlement of terrorist-criminal groups (Armenianization and Kurdishization of the territories by placing Armenian and Kurdish families from Syria, Lebanon, etc. in the Middle East) are neutralized.

6. Exploitation of natural resources of the liberated territories, use of the recreational potential of these territories for the welfare of our country and people, especially gold, etc. The transfer of minerals to the control of Azerbaijan is one of the important positive results for our country.

7. The removal of the psychology of defeat over the Azerbaijani people is another irreplaceable consequence of the war. Transformation from a defeated nation to a victorious nation will help eliminate the negative social energy on the people and society. The 44-day war has restored the pride of the Azerbaijani people. The national patriotic spirit and moral and psychological condition of our people and army have reached a high level.

8. A positive stereotype is being formed about a victorious Azerbaijani army that is well acquainted with the secrets of modern warfare, conducts disciplined warfare on the battlefield, and is guided by international rules. In this regard, the

article "Military lessons from Nagorno-Karabakh: a cause for concern in Europe" prepared by the famous military expert Gustav Gressel for the Council on European Foreign Affairs, in particular, speaks of the bravery of the Azerbaijani army⁹⁹. The author recommends taking three lessons from the Azerbaijani army. These are: 1. strategy and policy, 2. computer weapons and networks, 3. to neutralize the enemy by avoiding its strong points.

9. It is impossible to stop counting the global significance of the 44-day victory. This victory is also a great victory because it is Azerbaijan that put an end to the 200-year-old Armenians' crazy "sea-to-sea" fantasies and "Greater Armenia" claims. Today, not only the Armenians in Armenia, but all the Armenian diasporas in the world have a very serious defeat syndrome.

All these results are new realities created by Azerbaijan's indisputable victory. In addition, Azerbaijan also changed the geopolitical situation in the South Caucasus with this war. The analysis of the changing balance of power and other dynamics in the South Caucasus shows that with this victory, the Azerbaijani army has created a basis for balancing regional and continental forces in the region, such as Turkey and Russia. Of course, Azerbaijan's armament program and Turkey's political support during the 44-day war have been widely discussed in international circles. However, it is useful to note that Azerbaijan does not only buy weapons from Turkey, and all countries where Azerbaijan buys weapons are interested in Azerbaijan's victory in the war. In this regard, although the Turkish defense industry is an important supplier to the Azerbaijani armed forces, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the countries where Azerbaijan buys the most weapons are Russia, Israel, Ukraine and Belarus. Turkey is in the 5th place after these countries¹⁰⁰.

There are different views on Turkey's role in resolving the conflict. Some authors say that the reasons for Turkey's political support for Azerbaijan are the

⁹⁹ Gustav Gressel. 2020. *Military lessons from Nagorno-Karabakh: Reason for Europe to worry*, *European Council on Foreign Relations* <https://ecfr.eu/article/military-lessons-from-nagorno-karabakh-reason-for-europe-to-worry/> [access: 10.04.2021]

¹⁰⁰ Haldun Yalçınkaya. 2021. *Turkey's Overlooked Role in the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War*, *The German Marshall Fund of the United States* <https://www.gmfus.org/publications/turkeys-overlooked-role-second-nagorno-karabakh-war> [access: 09.03.2021]

friendship and brotherhood of the Azerbaijani and Turkish peoples, the friendly relations between Ilham Aliyev and Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the common interests of the countries, and so on. They touch on other issues as well. Svante E. Cornell, director of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute of the American Council on Foreign Relations, told Al Jazeera that he posed a greater threat to Azerbaijan and Turkey than his predecessors, Nicole Pashkina, a nationalist, radical and more pro-Western prime minister. At the same time, the author noted that Armenia's lavish celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Treaty of Sevres, which divided the Ottomans on August 10, 2020 and cost the Armenians to build a "Greater Armenia", was met with dissatisfaction in Turkey and the Turkish leadership considered it a geopolitical threat¹⁰¹.

Whatever the reasons, the reality is that Armenia was severely defeated in the 44-day war. This defeat was accompanied by social chaos and economic decline in Armenia. Armenia's military power has dwindled, its diplomatic credits have run out, and its influence in the South Caucasus has been reduced to zero. At the same time, the Republic of Azerbaijan regained its power and gained new economic prospects, as well as diplomatic opportunities. Proper use of these opportunities, taking advantage of the new situation and global political and economic developments in the world will lead to a slight imbalance of power between Azerbaijan and Armenia, a deepening of the gap between them and Armenia's decline.

Latest situation also left Armenia deeply reliant on Russia for security, potentially weakening Armenia's independence. Protests immediately erupted in Armenia, expressing anger at the agreement and calling into question whether the government that negotiated the deal could remain in power to enforce it.

¹⁰¹ Patrick Keddie. 2020. *What's Turkey's role in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict?* Aljazeera <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2020/10/30/whats-turkeys-role-in-the-nagorno-karabakh-conflict> [access: 05.03.2021]

2.4. Elements and prospects of the new order in the South Caucasus after the Second Karabakh War in the context of the intersecting interests of regional and global powers

The Second Karabakh War began at the right time. Because this period was the most favorable period of the international political situation and geopolitical order. During this period, many regional and global powers did not stand in the way of Azerbaijan's justified national struggle. Even Russia, which provides the most military and political support to Armenia, did not face Azerbaijan directly. The Russian government, along with Turkey, became the main foreign player in the war, mobilizing all its efforts to find a common way out and end the war at the right time. The first point we need to touch upon related to the new order in the South Caucasus is the energy issue. Because the launch of TAP during the war, which transports Azerbaijani gas to Europe, had a serious impact on Azerbaijan's relations with European countries.

The Trans Adriatic Pipeline is a project carrying natural gas from the Caspian Sea Azerbaijan sector to Greece, Albania and from the Adriatic Sea to Italy and then to Western Europe. The TAP pipeline, which is part of the Southern Gas Corridor project, initially produces 10 billion cubic meters of natural gas per year from the Shah Deniz-2 project. The produced gas is transported to Europe and meets the energy needs of 7 million European families. The groundbreaking ceremony of TAP was held on May 17, 2016 in Thessaloniki, Greece. After TAP started its operations, it meets 33% of Bulgaria's gas needs, 20% of Greece and 10.5% of Italy. BP, Italian SNAM and Azeri SOCAR are the three main investors, each holding 20 percent of the shares¹⁰².

Although the Southern Gas Corridor is important to the EU, it is a concern for Russia. For example, at a time when the Western-backed Nabucco project was being talked about, Russia started a South Stream pipeline project to transport its natural gas to Bulgaria on the Black Sea coast. This project did not materialize because it did

¹⁰² Laure Delcour and Kataryna Wolczuk. 2020. 'Mind the gap: role expectations and perceived performance of the EU in the South Caucasus', *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 16:3, 3-26, p. 16.

not comply with EU competition rules, and then the Turkish Stream pipeline project proposed by Russia's Gazprom also failed. Russia will clearly never be willing to undertake gas transport projects in this region without its own participation¹⁰³.

The most recent event related to the project is the start of the transportation of natural gas. In October 2020, the TAP pipeline from the Greece-Turkey border to the receiving terminal in southern Italy was filled with natural gas, and finally on November 15, 2020, the TAP pipeline, the last part of the Southern Gas Corridor, was completed and commercial operations began.

It also took Azerbaijani-British relations to a new level. Because BP will also play an important role in the operation of TAP. This will further improve the already good bilateral relations. We saw its first sprouts during the war. The unconditional support of the United Kingdom to Azerbaijan during the war and its veto of possible UN resolutions against Azerbaijan helped Azerbaijan to participate more confidently in the war.

Despite being non global power, there were certain countries in the war that could more or less influence the war. These countries cover many countries, from continental powers to small states. The Republic of Turkey provided the greatest support to Azerbaijan to liberate its lands. The Turkish side has been with Azerbaijan until the day of victory at all levels - the President, the Foreign Minister, the Minister of National Defense, the National Intelligence Organization - and is with Azerbaijan in the post-war process.

Pakistan is the second country to demand that Armenia withdraw its troops from Azerbaijani lands unconditionally and call the aggressor by name. Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan said in a message using the term "brother country" for Azerbaijan that his country stands by Azerbaijan and supports its right to legal protection. Islamabad called for the immediate establishment of Azerbaijan's

¹⁰³ Amerikanın Səsi Bakı Bürosu. 2016. *TAP layihəsi: Avropanın enerji təhlükəsizliyinə təsirlər*. <https://www.amerikaninsesi.org/a/tap-layihesi/3345986.html> [access: 10.06.2021]

territorial integrity and the implementation of four UN Security Council resolutions¹⁰⁴.

Afghanistan is the third country that has unequivocally supported Azerbaijan since the beginning of the liberation of the occupied territories and called the aggressor by name. The country's Foreign Ministry stated that Nagorno-Karabakh is an integral part of Azerbaijan and Armenia must immediately withdraw from the occupied territories and restore the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan¹⁰⁵.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is also a strong supporter of Azerbaijan. The chairman of the State Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sefik Dzaferovic, wrote a letter to President Ilham Aliyev stating that Azerbaijan's territorial integrity must be restored and that Armenian militants must return the occupied lands to their true owners, the Azerbaijanis. Meanwhile, the chairman of the SDA, Bosnia and Herzegovina's largest political party, Bakir Izzetbegovic, said in a message to the Azerbaijani people that Nagorno-Karabakh belonged to Azerbaijan and that Armenian attacks on civilians were unacceptable.

Neighboring Georgia is another country that supports Azerbaijan in liberating its lands. The Georgian government, which, like Azerbaijan, controls part of its territory and is illegally occupied by Russia, considers it important to restore Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. Even during the war, in order to prevent the shipment of weapons and ammunition to Armenia, Georgia punished Armenia, if possible, by keeping its land and airspace closed. During the war, the Peace Bridge and the TV tower in the capital Tbilissi were covered with the colors of the Azerbaijani flag¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰⁴ Vüsal Tağıbəyli. 2020. *Qarabağ müharibəsində Azərbaycana dəstək verən və verməyən ölkələr*. <https://hafta.az/qarabag-muharibesinde-azerbaycana-destek-veren-ve-vermeyeyen-olkeler-arasdIrma-291365-xeber.html> [access: 10.06.2021]

¹⁰⁵ Asif Nərimanlı. 2020. *Azərbaycan onları heç vaxt unutmayacaq: Bizə dəstək olan ölkələr*. <https://azxeber.com/az/azerbaycan-onlari-hec-vaxt-unutmayacaq-bize-destek-olan-lkeler-siyahi/siyaset/> [access: 10.06.2021]

¹⁰⁶ Eldar İbrahimov. 2020. *Haqq savaşımızın ən səmimi dostları*. <https://www.azerbaijan-news.az/view-200062/haqq-savasimizin-en-semimi-dostlari> [access: 10.06.2021]

Ukraine is one of the first countries to openly support Azerbaijan in this right. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmitry Kuleba said that they have always stood by Azerbaijan and will support this friendly country, which is restoring its territorial integrity. He also noted that his position on Azerbaijan will never change. In response, Armenians even staged a rally in front of the Ukrainian embassy in Armenia. But not only did Ukraine not back down, President Zelinski renewed his message of support for Azerbaijan¹⁰⁷.

Israel is one of the countries that openly supports Azerbaijan. The political and social elites of this country have united with Azerbaijan to save our occupied lands. Not only did Israel provide political support, but it also provided the necessary medicine to Azerbaijan during the war¹⁰⁸.

Hungarian Foreign and Trade Minister Peter Szijjarto also said his country openly supported Azerbaijan. During a meeting with his Azerbaijani counterpart Jeyhun Bayramov, Minister Szijjarto said they were concerned about the military conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. He said they wanted the problem to be resolved through peace talks without violating Azerbaijan's territorial integrity¹⁰⁹.

If we look at global powers, a very interesting nuance attracts our attention. Thus, the United States and Russia, which disagreed on many issues, took almost the same position in the Second Karabakh War. The United States took a more cautious stance, ignoring numerous calls from Armenians. Although a trilateral meeting of the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan, Armenia and the United States was held, in general, the United States has not developed a policy that meets the interests of Armenians.

This is a fantastic change compared to 1992-1993. The two global powers that put pressure on Azerbaijan with their policies in the First Karabakh War responded to Azerbaijan's interests by maintaining their neutral position in the Second Karabakh War. At the same time, before this war, a new superpower had emerged: China. China is already one of the countries that determines world politics and the new

¹⁰⁷ Tağıbəyli. 2020.

¹⁰⁸ Nərimanlı. 2020.

¹⁰⁹ İbrahimov. 2020.

world order, and directs economic trends in the world. Azerbaijan, an active participant in China's new Silk Road project and one of the most important countries, is becoming increasingly important for both China and the West. In this regard, it is in China's interest to restore Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and turn it into a regional power. There is another interesting nuance here that the positions of the United States and China on Azerbaijan, which have been irreconcilable rivals in recent years, overlap.

In summary, after the Second Karabakh War, Azerbaijan partially changed the order in the South Caucasus, brought the region's energy security to a new level, changed the balance of power in the region and ensured some changes in the view of global and regional powers in favor of Azerbaijan. If we look to the future, we can say that in this new order, Azerbaijan will be a regional power and a regional leader. Playing the role of a bridge in geopolitical relations, Azerbaijan will have more say than ever in the new system of international relations. Azerbaijan, a major player in the region's energy security, will soon compete with Russia to become one of the key players in Europe's energy security. Turkey provides the greatest support to Azerbaijan in this direction. Because Turkish-Azerbaijani cooperation in the field of energy will result in the weakening of Russia as a regional power.

CONCLUSION

The results of the dissertation can be summarized as follows. Regional security complex theory is a theory of international relations developed by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver and advanced in their 2003 work *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. Buzan and Wæver are perhaps best known as the key figures behind the influential Copenhagen School of security studies, in which the main principle is examining security as a social construct. Regional security complex theory posits that international security should be examined from a regional perspective, and that relations between states (and other actors) exhibit regular, geographically clustered patterns. Regional security complex is the term coined by Buzan and Wæver to describe such structures.

In this regard, in general, the South Caucasus, with its geopolitical significance, may attract more actors in the near future. Currently, Russia is the main country in the region. The South Caucasus is a favorable region for Moscow, which is trying to prevent the US strategy of NATO expansion to the east by all possible means. Even Russia, which currently keeps the United States within the framework of energy projects in the region, has an ambiguous attitude towards the region.

Prior to the 44-day Karabakh war, Russia and Iran had overlapping interests in resolving the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Thus, both countries were thinking about maintaining the status quo. Unlike Turkey, which continues its efforts to increase trilateral cooperation in the region, and pro-Russian China, which has become more active in the South Caucasus market in recent years, the European Union is one of the world's leading powers with the least ties to the South Caucasus. It should also be noted that China's activation in the region could change the balance of power in the US-Russian competition in Russia's favor. A possible Russia-Iran-China alliance has the potential to further limit the West's role in the region.

The 44-day Karabakh war, which ended with the November 10 statement, had great consequences for the Republic of Azerbaijan. These results can be classified as follows:

1. The joint declaration of November 10 once again showed that the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh is of international and interstate nature.

2. The existing legal framework for the conflict has already expired and the international legal framework for the settlement of the conflict must be updated.

3. 132 km part of our state border with the Islamic Republic of Iran was liberated from occupation and border posts were established there.

4. Another important consequence of the 44-day war is the exchange of corridors. This means that there is a direct land route between the main part of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic.

5. Illegal economic activities in the liberated territories, as well as the settlement of terrorist-criminal groups (Armenianization and Kurdishization of the territories by placing Armenian and Kurdish families from Syria, Lebanon, etc. in the Middle East) are neutralized.

6. Exploitation of natural resources of the liberated territories, use of the recreational potential of these territories for the welfare of our country and people, especially gold, etc. The transfer of minerals to the control of Azerbaijan is one of the important positive results for our country.

7. The removal of the psychology of defeat over the Azerbaijani people is another irreplaceable consequence of the war.

8. A positive stereotype is being formed about a victorious Azerbaijani army that is well acquainted with the secrets of modern warfare, conducts disciplined warfare on the battlefield, and is guided by international rules.

9. It is impossible to stop counting the global significance of the 44-day victory. This victory is also a great victory because it is Azerbaijan that put an end to the 200-year-old Armenians' crazy "sea-to-sea" fantasies and "Greater Armenia" claims. Today, not only the Armenians in Armenia, but all the Armenian diasporas in the world have a very serious defeat syndrome.

Latest situation also left Armenia deeply reliant on Russia for security, potentially weakening Armenia's independence. Protests immediately erupted in

Armenia, expressing anger at the agreement and calling into question whether the government that negotiated the deal could remain in power to enforce it.

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