

THE ROLE OF TURKEY AND RUSSIA ON THE RESOLUTION OF THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT

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Abstract: South Caucasus has always been the scene for instabilities in the region. Being in the backyard of the Soviets, many of the conflicts have their roots back to the Soviet Union. Demographic changes during the Soviet Union have mainly formed the basis of them. Even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, no major changes occurred for facilitating the resolution processes. Moreover, Russia's tendency to dominate the region has resulted in the continuation of the ongoing conflicts to be named as frozen. The reason for this lies in the fact that there are more benefits in protecting the status quo rather than resolving. Turkey, on the other hand, having close ties with the region historically and culturally, is not a direct part of these conflicts; but is very much affected by them due to the complexity of their ethnic dimensions. Therefore, Turkey has showed a level of eagerness to be part of the resolution process. The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict is one of the longest unsolved issues in the world, which involves many parties regarding the geopolitical dimensions and security elements. Even if it seems to be solved for the time being, the instability of the region raises some doubts of its continuity in the long run.

Keywords: *Turkey, Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh, Russia, Armenia.*

Article Category: International Relations/Political Science

Date of Submission: 21.02.2021

Date of Acceptance: 25.02.2021

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RUSYA VE TÜRKİYE’İN DAĞLIK KARABAĞ SORUNU’NUN ÇÖZÜMÜNDEKİ ROLLERİ

Öz: Güney Kafkasya, her zaman bölgedeki istikrarsızlıklar için bir sahne olmuştur. Sovyetler Birliği’nin arka bahçesi olarak bölgedeki çatışmaların birçoğunun kökü Sovyet dönemine dayanmaktadır. Sovyetler Birliği döneminde gerçekleşen demografik değişimler, bu çatışmaların temelini oluşturmaktadır. Sovyetler Birliği’nin çöküşünden sonra da bölgedeki çatışmaların çözüm süreçlerine dair büyük bir değişim olmamıştır. Bunun da ötesinde, Rusya’nın bölgedeki hâkimiyetini sürdürmek istemesi, bu çatışmaların adeta donmuş bir şekilde kalmasına neden olmuştur. Bu durumun asıl sebebi, sorunun devamlılığının çözümden daha fazla fayda sağlamasıdır. Diğer yandan, bölge ile yakın tarihsel bağları olan Türkiye, bu çatışmanın ana taraflarından biri olmasa da, çatışmanın etnik boyutlarının karmaşıklığından etkilenmektedir. Bu nedenle de, çözüm sürecine dahil olmaya istekli olduğunu dile getirmiştir. Dağlık Karabağ Sorunu, jeopolitik boyutları ve güvenlik unsurları içermesi nedeniyle dünya üzerinde en uzun süren çatışmalardan birisi olmuştur. Son dönemde yaşanan gelişmeler ve ateşkes anlaşmasına istinaden şimdilik bu sorun çözülmüş gibi görünse de, bölgedeki istikrarsız ortam bu durumun uzun dönemde devamlılığı açısından soru işaretleri yaratmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Türkiye, Azerbaycan, Dağlık Karabağ, Rusya, Ermenistan.*

Introduction

The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia is more than what is on the table for both sides. Since the beginning of 1990s, Azerbaijan has had around 20 % of its lands occupied by Armenia after the first war when many Azerbaijanis were killed and forced to migrate. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, eventhough the conditions altered in the region, the direction of this conflict has not much changed.

From Azerbaijani perspective, Azerbaijan insisted on that Armenia should leave its lands and from Armenian perspective, they stated that Nagorno-Karabakh should gain its independence based on the self-determination principle. However, the balance of the conflict was so perfect that it was not resolved for the benefit of either side, but remained unsolved for Russia's sake. Russia had more benefits in keeping it unsolved in terms of both political and economic means allthough it seemed to push hard for the mediation talks at different times.

During the 2000s, there were various attempts for the resolution process, but each and every time it failed. In addition to this, both sides also failed to gain a military success over each other. Although Russia sold military equipment to both sides, politically it can be said that the picture was in more favor of Armenia since Russians and Armenians have close allies in the region ever since. On the other hand, Russia could not afford to lose Azerbaijan to Western world as well. In this respect, Russia had to balance its relations to both sides.

Turkey, being a close neighbour of the region and both states, was also effected from this conflict. Its ethnic and cultural ties with Azerbaijan, known with the slogan of “*one nation, two states*”, has led Turkey to support Azerbaijan from the beginning of this conflict explicitly. In addition to this, Turkey's problematic historical relations with Armenia (Armenian accusations towards Turkey about 1915 Events) made it easier to show support for the Azeri side. Armenia's claims of land from both Azerbaijan and Turkey, brought two states even closer against their common foe in the region. The importance of the resolution of this conflict for Turkey can also be well understood from the fact that it was one of the prerequisites for the normalization of the relations between Turkey and Armenia, which Turkey's Western allies insisted in the recent past.

Based on these dimensions, this article aims to provide a historical background of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict in the first part, the details of the 2020 War and peace agreement in the second part, the role of Russia in the third part, and the role of Turkey in the fourth and last part.

1. The Historical Background of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict is known as one of the frozen conflicts in the world that has its roots back to the Soviet period. As a result of Paris Peace Conference, Nagorno-Karabakh has been accepted as part of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic of 1918-1920. However, following the invasion of South Caucasus by Soviets, it became an area of conflict in the region. In 1921, the Caucasus Bureau of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party of the Bolsheviks approved that Nagorno-Karabakh as a territory belonging to Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic and in 1923, the status was changed to autonomy.²

In February 1988, Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous oblast wanted to join Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic; but both Azerbaijan and the Supreme Soviet of the USSR rejected this request. That was because in accordance with the article 78 of the USSR Constitution, in order to unify with different republics, autonomous oblasts had to get the approval from the republic which they belong to. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Republic of Azerbaijan became an independent state on August 30, 1991 and changed the status of Nagorno-Karabakh by removing its autonomy. Following this, on December 10, 1991, a referendum was made by the parliament of Nagorno-Karabakh and Nagorno-Karabakh gained independence in 1992, which was recognized by Armenia.³

Map I: Map of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic 1918-1920⁴

² Sergey Minasyan (2017), “The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the context of South Caucasus regional security issues: An Armenian perspective”, *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 45, No: 1, p. 133.

³ Kaan Diyarbakırlıođlu (2020), “The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia from the Historical Perspective”, *International Journal of Social, Political and Economic Research*, Vol. 7, No: 2, p. 416.

⁴ Ahmet Alemdar (2020), “Geçmişten Günümüze Dađlık Karabađ Sorunu ve Ermeni Politikaları”, *Defence Türk*, 10.11.2020, Date of Accession: 20.01.2021 from <https://www.defenceturk.net/gecmisten-gunumuze-daglik-karabag-sorunu-ve-ermeni-politikalari>.



Russian military forces started to withdraw from the territories of Azerbaijan and the control of the region switched to Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh in 1991. After this, on September 24, 1991, many Azerbaijanis were killed at the attack to the villages of Imarat and Garvand. Moreover, Armenians blocked Khojaly first and then the town was attacked on February 25-26, 1992. This massacre is known as the “*Khojaly events*”. Between 1992 and 1994, Armenians occupied 7 districts of Azerbaijan; Nagorno-Karabakh on May 8, 1992 and the others in 1993.⁵

Regarding the decision on July 31, 1993 by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) stating that Nagorno-Karabakh is officially a land belonging to the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenian occupation should be ended, no action was taken.⁶ Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) (formerly known as the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe-CSCE) initiated the mediation talks in 1992. Bishkek Protocol was signed on May 5, 1994 with Russia’s efforts for the conflict resolution. According to this protocol, approximately 20 % of Azerbaijan was occupied by Armenia.⁷

⁵ Vicken Cheterian (2017), “The Last Closed Border of the Cold War: Turkey–Armenia”, *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, Vol. 32, No: 1, p. 84.

⁶ Farid Shafiyev & Vasif Huseynov (2020), “Peace Negotiations Cannot be Held Forever: Breaking the Deadlock in the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict”, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 22, No: 4, p. 100.

⁷ Emin Şihalyev (2013), “The Armenian Question in the Context of the Clash of Civilizations and Geopolitical

Map II: Map of Occupied Rayons⁸

During the 2000s, the efforts continued for the resolution of this conflict. In 2006, Prague Summit was organized and “*Prague Document*” was published. In 2007, Madrid Summit was held and at the end of this summit, a document called “*Madrid Principles*” was published. According to this document, it is stated that the Armenian occupation on the lands of Azerbaijan should end, normalization of the relations should start, and a referendum should be held for the sake of self-determination. However, none of these efforts resulted in a concrete resolution and this led to a slow down in peace process after 2009.

The violations of the ceasefire by Armenia started on April 2, 2016 and lasted for four days. This was named as the “*Four-Day War*”, after which Azerbaijan started controlling six more points for its security. This defeat created economic and motivational downside effects for Armenia, which had also negative effects on the image of Armenian leader Serzh Sargsyan and caused the opposition to become stronger against him. However, Russia, as the most influential regional power, once again, was able to force both sides agree on the ceasefire agreement.

2. The 2020 War and the Peace Agreement

Interests, Its Impact on Armenia-Azerbaijani Relations and Vision of the Near Future”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, Vol. 27, p. 100.

⁸ Ahmet Alemdar (2020), “Geçmişten Günümüze Dağlık Karabağ Sorunu ve Ermeni Politikaları”, *Defence Türk*, 10.11.2020, Date of Accession: 20.01.2021 from <https://www.defenceturk.net/gecmisten-gunumuze-daglik-karabag-sorunu-ve-ermeni-politikalari>.

On September 27, 2020, another violation occurred and the war started between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Eventhough there were many attempts for ceasefire during October, the armed conflict continued and turned into a comprehensive war. Armenia targeted to gain the control of more territories and Azerbaijan forced the implementation of UNSC resolution. The war continued for 44 days and ended with the military success of Azerbaijan gaining back the control of its territories. On November 10, 2020, Russia announced that it was agreed upon a ceasefire agreement, which foresees Armenia to leave the occupied lands of Azerbaijan.

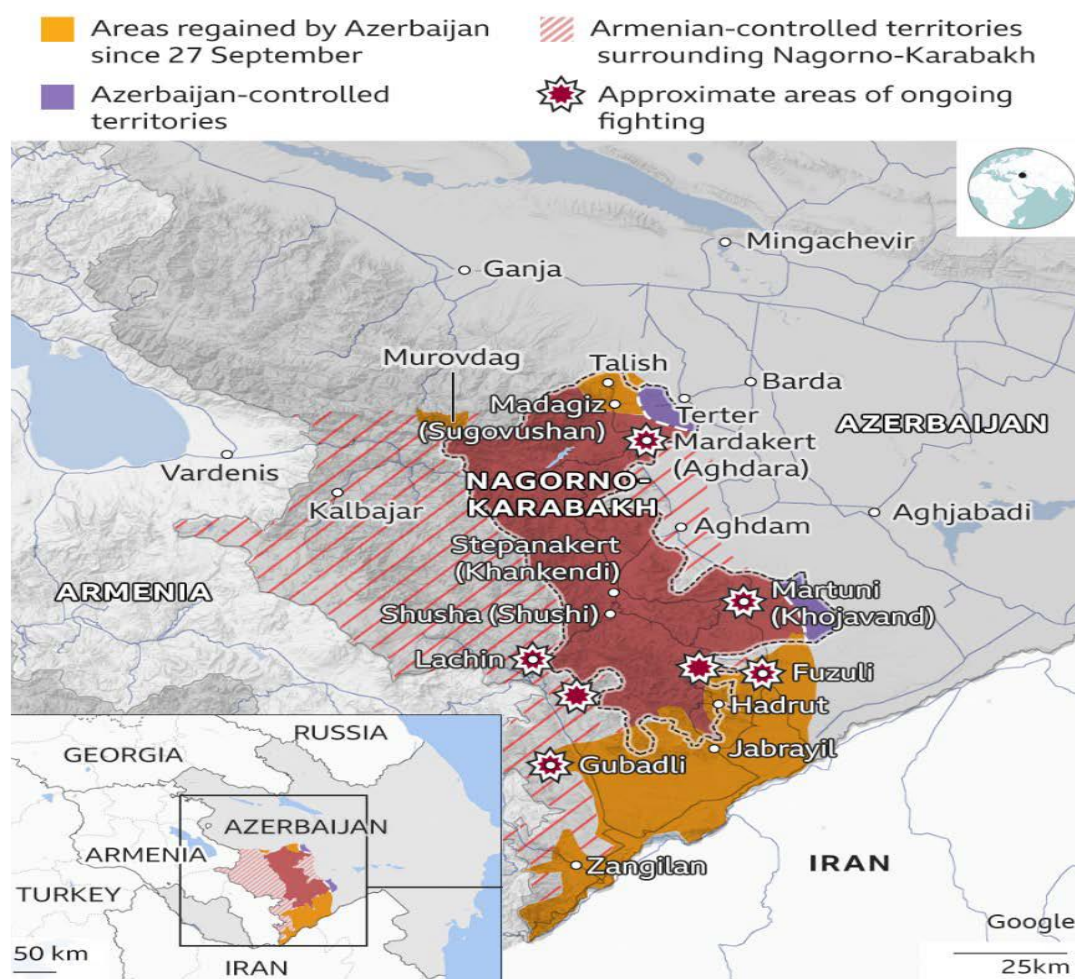
Map III: Map of Armenia-Azerbaijan Peace Deal⁹



Map IV: Map of The Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh¹⁰

⁹ BBC (2020), "Armenia-Azerbaijan: Why did Nagorno-Karabakh spark a conflict?", 12.11.2020, Date of Accession: 12.01.2021 from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54324772>.

¹⁰ BBC (2020), "Nagorno-Karabakh conflict: Missile strike on Azeri town kills 21 civilians", 28.10.2020, Date of Accession: 26.01.2021 from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54722120>.



The Armistice Agreement was signed on November 9, 2020 by Azerbaijani President of the Republic Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan with the mediation of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Kremlin announced on November 10, 2020 that Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict ended. The details of this ceasefire agreement stated the following:¹¹

Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, and the President of the Russian Federation

“We, 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, state the following:

1. A complete ceasefire and termination of all hostilities in the area of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict is declared starting 12:00 am (midnight) Moscow time on November 10, 2020. The

¹¹ President of Russia, “Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and President of the Russian Federation”, Date of Accession: 01.02.2021 from <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64384>

Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, hereinafter referred to as the “Parties”, shall stop in their current positions.

- 2. The Agdam district shall be returned to the Republic of Azerbaijan by November 20, 2020.*
- 3. The peacemaking forces of the Russian Federation, namely, 1,960 troops armed with firearms, 90 armoured vehicles and 380 motor vehicles and units of special equipment, shall be deployed along the contact line in Nagorno-Karabakh and along the Lachin corridor.*
- 4. The peacemaking forces of the Russian Federation shall be deployed concurrently with the withdrawal of the Armenian troops. The peacemaking forces of the Russian Federation will be deployed for five years, a term to be automatically extended for subsequent five-year terms unless either Party notifies about its intention to terminate this clause six months before the expiration of the current term.*
- 5. For more efficient monitoring of the Parties’ fulfilment of the agreements, a peacemaking centre shall be established to oversee the ceasefire.*
- 6. The Republic of Armenia shall return the Kalbajar district to the Republic of Azerbaijan by November 15, 2020 and the Lachin district by December 1, 2020. The Lachin corridor (5 km wide), which will provide a connection between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia while not passing through the territory of Shusha, shall remain under the control of the Russian Federation peacemaking forces.*

As agreed by the Parties, within the next three years, a plan will be outlined for the construction of a new route via the Lachin corridor, to provide a connection between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, and the Russian peacemaking forces shall be subsequently relocated to protect the route.

The Republic of Azerbaijan shall guarantee the security of persons, vehicles, and cargo moving along the Lachin corridor in both directions.

- 7. Internally displaced persons and refugees shall return to the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent areas under the supervision of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.*
- 8. The Parties shall exchange prisoners of war, hostages, and other detained persons, and dead bodies.*
- 9. All economic and transport connections in the region shall be unblocked. The Republic of Armenia shall guarantee the security of transport connections between the Western regions of*

the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic in order to arrange unobstructed movement of persons, vehicles, and cargo in both directions. The Border Guard Service of the Russian Federal Security Service shall be responsible for overseeing the transport connections.

As agreed by the Parties, new transport links shall be built to connect the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and the Western regions of Azerbaijan.”

As a summary, the agreement stated that Armenia should leave Kalbajar district until November 25, 2020 and Lachin district until December 1, 2020. The connection between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia should be via the Lachin corridor and bypass the town of Shusha, which will be controlled by the peacekeeping troops of the Russian Federation.

However, this agreement was not admitted by Armenians and large scale protests started against Pashinyan government, which calls him to resign. In Moscow, Russia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia met in order to clarify the details of the agreement on January 11, 2021. The tone of the announcements after the talks differed between the parties. While Putin proudly stated that the 30-year conflict was resolved, Pashinyan seemed not to be sure about this since the status of Nagorno-Karabakh and the connection between Naxcivan remained uncertain. The most clear part of the resolution was that it accepted Nagorno-Karabakh as part of Azerbaijan.

Map V: Nagorno-Karabakh After 2020 War¹²

¹² *Deutsche Welle* (2020), “Nagorno-Karabakh: Thousands displaced by war return home”, 22.11.2020, Date of Accession: 25.01.2021 from <https://www.dw.com/en/nagorno-karabakh-thousands-displaced-by-war-return-home/a-55690512>.



3. The Role of Russia

After the Ottoman Empire and Iran's loss of power, Russia has been the major actor in the South Caucasus since the 18th century. Demographic changes taking place during the Soviet Union have formed the roots of the conflicts. However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia lost both its economic and political power in the region. However, after Vladimir Putin has become the President of Russia in year 2000 and has begun to implement centralist policies favoring Russian interests, Russia turned back to the “*big game*” within the region.

With this respect, it can be stated that there are three main different phases in Russian foreign policy. The first phase includes the term between 1989 and 1993, when Russian President Boris Yeltsin followed a pro-Western policy by building close relations with European countries and the United States (U.S.). The second phase is when Russia followed a “*near abroad*” policy under Putin leadership between 1993-2008 for achieving stabilization and claiming the rights for intervention in case of a threat for national interest. The main reason for that is the numerous pro-Western colored revolutions in the region taking place between 2003-2005 and surrounding Russia with pro-European and pro-American regimes. In order to omit the effects of these revolutions, Russia established different organizations for the reintegration. These are the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), and (together with China) the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The third phase on the other hand has started after 2008 and it is still in place.

Especially the invasion of Georgia and the recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states by Russia are the major issues in this term and they proved that Russia is still a great power and it would continue to play an active role in the region for its national interests and security. Furthermore, Russia made it clear that it perceives the enlargement of NATO as a direct threat for its security and therefore, tries to balance this by its strategies.¹³

Russia and Armenia are close military allies and there is a Russian military base in Armenia. However, Russia had to step back in Nagorno-Karabakh since the war took place officially in Azerbaijani territory. Thus, Moscow seemed neutral during the war in order to balance its position and to keep good relations with both sides. Moreover, in terms of domestic politics of Armenia, it is clear that this was also a response to pro-European Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan's anti-Russian activities. Pashinyan tried to replace pro-Russian politicians and officials with pro-Western ones after he came to power. Russia, by staying neutral during the war, wanted to show Yerevan that there will be some consequences if Armenia wants to leave its orbit. Regarding the protests against Pashinyan after the peace agreement, it seems that he is losing power and probably he will be replaced in the next elections. Moreover, Robert Kocharyan, who is one of the former Presidents of Armenia, has been back in the political scene as a pro-Russian politician recently.¹⁴

Although Russia and Armenia have been close friends in the region throughout the history, the military success of Azerbaijan is not be underestimated by Russia. Moreover, Armenia's tendency to follow a multi-vector policy was not much welcomed by Russia and Moscow's allowance for the defeat of Armenia carry strong political messages; such as leaving Russia's orbit could have negative effects for Armenia.

Russia seems as the winner when the agreement is considered as well. The peacekeeping mission at the Lachin corridor will be valid for five years and will be renewed automatically unless there is an objection against it six months before or earlier. There will be 1,960 Russian military personnel and several military vehicles and equipment. In addition to this, a transport corridor will be established between Azerbaijan and Nakchivan Autonomous Republic, which will allow both the citizens and cargo transit to Armenian territory. The guarantor for the security of this route will be Russian Border Service authorities. This route was in place

¹³ İlhami B. Değirmencioğlu (2019), "Nagorno Karabakh Conflict and The Holistic Analysis of The Intractability", *Alternatif Politika*, Vol. 12, No: 2, p. 354.

¹⁴ Valeri Modebadze (2021), "The Escalation of Conflict Between Armenians and Azerbaijanis and The Problems of Peaceful Resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh War", *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs*, Vol. 6, No: 3, p. 107.

during the Soviet period between Baku and Nakchivan and then was closed after the first Karabakh War in the 1990s.¹⁵

From time to time, Russia played the role of mediator for the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. The reason for this is that Russia wanted to be in charge of a possible diplomatic solution for keeping its own interests. Therefore, it can be said that Russia was not much willing to resolve this conflict since the ambiguity made both sides dependent on Moscow. Armenia is dependent on Russia in many ways; both economically and politically and a resolution could loosen these ties, whereas Azerbaijan could also improve its relations with the European Union (EU) and the U.S. in case the problem is solved without any leverage for Moscow. Furthermore, Russia has always tried to keep a balance in the military relations with both sides; selling both Azerbaijan and Armenia military equipments and guns, which created economic gains for Russia as well. Moreover, Russia was also scared that a possible effect could occur among other ethnic groups in Russia if there are any changes occurring in the borders regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh.¹⁶

4. The Role of Turkey

Turkey's ethnic and historical ties with the people of South Caucasus, has led Turkey to act with emphasis for the resolution of the conflicts within the region. Turkey has always supported Azerbaijan not only morally, but also in diplomatic, military, political, and economic ways. As a neighbour of the South Caucasus, the region has also geopolitical importance for Turkey's national interests and security. Turkey's ties and interests have also been useful for the EU and the U.S. for balancing Russian power and limiting Iran's activities in the region.

In order to do that, decreasing the level of the dependency of these states on Russia especially for economic reasons was prioritized by Ankara. Therefore, pipeline (energy) projects such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC), the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) and the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) were designed for increasing economic wealth. The establishment of regional cooperation is also vital for balancing Russia's domination on these states. In this respect, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the enlargement of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) also play crucial roles.

¹⁵ Austin Clayton (2020), "The Nagorno-Karabakh Peace Deal: Reading Between the Lines", *Caspian Policy Center*, 16.11.2020, Date of Accession: 14.02.2021 from <https://www.caspianpolicy.org/the-nagorno-karabakh-peace-deal-reading-between-the-lines/>

¹⁶ Çağlar Söker (2017), "Dağlık Karabağ Sorunu'nun Çatışmayı Çözme Perspektifinden İncelenmesi", *Kafkas Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol. 8, No: 16, p. 563.

The key elements of Turkey's strategy on this issue can be stated as supporting Azerbaijan in any case, being involved in the conflict resolution process, and preventing worsened relations with Armenia. Turkey views this conflict as a long-term issue, because the issue has direct effects on its security. Armenia's claims on the lands of Turkey as well as Azerbaijan's creates a security threat for Turkey. Moreover, Turkey puts emphasis on the resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict for the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations as well.

Considering the conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh, eventhough Turkey is not directly involved, it can be evaluated as part of it. The reason can be explained regarding the relations of Turkey with both countries. Despite the balanced relations of Russia with Azerbaijan and Armenia, Turkey has always showed its support to Azerbaijan explicitly. Moreover, Turkey played an important role for renewing Azerbaijan's military equipments and increasing its military capacity, which was a crucial factor in Baku's military success in the latest war.¹⁷ In this respect, it was no surprise that eventhough Turkey was not part of the ceasefire agreement, it still will play an important role in terms of peacekeeping activities. Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, announced that Turkish military forces will join the peacekeeping mission managing the ceasefire monitoring center with Russia. On the other hand, Dmitry Peskov, the spokesman of the Russian President announced that Turkey will only take place in the monitoring center rather than being in the peacekeeping mission. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on the other hand stated that Turkey is part of the peacekeeping mission.

Conclusion

After 30 years, the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict seems to be resolved with the peace agreement signed after the war that lasted almost two months in the late 2020. Unlike previous times, this time one side, Azerbaijan, was able to gain military success and ended the Armenian occupation on its lands. Armenia, with this defeat, lost its power both internally and externally. Domestic politics of regional countries were also affected after the signing of this agreement.

For Armenia, it was clear that without the high level of support from Russia, not much can be achieved. In this respect, we can observe in the near future some major political power

¹⁷ *BBC Türkçe* (2020), "Dağlık Karabağ: Türkiye, Azerbaycan'ın askeri kapasitesini geliştirmesinde nasıl rol oynadı?", 02.10.2020, Date of Accession: 23.02.2021 from <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-54379105>.

changes in Armenian domestic environment such as the replacement of pro-Western politicians with the pro-Russian ones.

Azerbaijan on the other hand, as the winner of the war, took back the control of its own lands and proved the whole world that its claim was right from the beginning. With the agreement, Russia also had to announce and accept that Nagorno-Karabakh belongs to Azerbaijan. However, due to strong influence of Moscow and the presence of Russian military forces, the status of Nagorno-Karabakh is still open to discussion in the long run that may cause shifting the problem from military to the political scene. It would be interesting to see if any autonomy or else would be granted to Nagorno-Karabakh in the mid-run. In terms of domestic politics, However, without any doubt, Ilham Aliyev strengthened its popularity and guaranteed to keep his position as the Azerbaijani President of the Republic.

Russia also seems to be a winner with the agreement, since it gained in many ways. Politically, the allowance for the defeat of Armenia has enabled Moscow to gain the trust of Azerbaijan. From Azerbaijani perspective, Russia is no longer solely supporting Armenia. Moreover, from Armenian perspective, Russia is their only friend and savior in the region. So, the image of Russia being a great power and friend has been reexercised. Moreover, Russia gained a status for itself under the clause of peacekeeping mission in the area, which enables controlling strategic points such as the Lachin corridor officially. This also means eliminating the dominance of Western world in the region.

Turkey, not being directly involved as part of this conflict, but very closely interested in it, had also some gains. Turkey explicitly supported Azerbaijan during the war and wanted to take part in the peacekeeping activities afterwards. Although this seems like a good opportunity both for Turkey and Western states in terms of balancing Russian hegemony in the region, it should be stated that Turkey cannot join peacekeeping activities without Russia's approval. Regarding this issue, Russia stated that Turkey's involvement would be limited by monitoring activities. There is no reference to Turkey's military presence in the stated agreement as well.

Considering all of these elements, one can claim that there will be some consequences of the new status quo. Russia, being the strongest state in the region, will certainly regain domination and control over Armenia. Azerbaijan, on the other hand, will probably follow more pro-Russian policies afterwards due to Moscow's contribution to the resolution of the problem. Lastly, the position of Turkey could be to continue to support Azerbaijan, but also improve ties with Armenia since the most important problem is now resolved.

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