

# THE EFFECT OF KARABAG PROBLEM ON RELATIONSHIP TURKEY AND RUSSIA

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## Karabağ Sorununun Türkiye-Rusya İlişkilerine Etkisi

### ÖZ

Bu makale, 2020 yılında Azerbaycan ile Ermenistan arasında yaşanan savaşın sonucunda Transkafkasya bölgesinde meydana gelen jeopolitik değişiklikleri ele almaktadır. 1980'lerin sonundan beri SSCB'yi mahveden etnik çatışmalardan en önemlisi sona erdi. Sonuç olarak, iki cumhuriyetin her biri yalnızca uluslararası kabul görmüş topraklarını kontrol ederken, Karabağ fiilen Rus barış gücünün kontrolü altında varlığını sürdürüyor. Ermenistan ve Azerbaycan arasındaki uzun vadeli etno-politik çatışma ortadan kalktı ve kendi kendini ilan eden Dağlık Karabağ Cumhuriyeti pratik varlığını yitirdi. Rus barış gücü askerleri 30 yıl aradan sonra ilk kez bu topraklara geri döndü. Kafkasya meselelerinde uzun süredir söz sahibi olan Türkiye'nin rolü yeniden canlandı. Türkiye'nin bölgedeki etkisi 1920'lerdeki durumla karşılaştırılabilir. Bu prestij Türkiye'ye Rusya ile çatışmasına izin vermeden Kafkasya'nın sorunlarına katılma hakkı verdi. Türkiye'nin Karabağ savaşında Azerbaycan'a verdiği destek, Rusya'nın Azerbaycan'a karşı herhangi bir adım atmasına izin vermemiş ve mevcut durumu dengelemiştir. Putin'in uzlaşmaz düşmanları savaşı durdurmaya "ikna etme" ve müteakip "barışı koruma müdahalesini" kabul etme yeteneği, Rusya'nın bölgedeki otoritesinde gözle görülür bir artışa katkıda bulundu. Bununla birlikte, bölgede güçlü siyasi, yasal, ekonomik ve askeri pozisyonlar olmadan "çözumsuz" sorunları çözebilecek bağımsız bir hakemin rolü imkansızdır. Bu nedenle, Transkafkasya'daki Rus varlığının genişletilmesi, Rusya'nın ulusal çıkarlarını karşılayan stratejik öneme sahip bir faktördür. Bu nedenle, Güney Kafkasya yetkililerinin siyasi çıkarlarını dikkate alması Moskova için hayati önem taşımaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kafkasya, Güney Kafkasya, Karabağ, Türkiye, Rusya Federasyonu, AGİT, Rusya SFSC,

## The Effect of Karabağ Problem on Relationship Turkey and Russia

Azerbaycan SSC.

### ABSTRACT

This essay discusses geopolitical changes which happen in Transcaucasia region as a result of the war the between Azerbaijan and Armenia in 2020. The most important ethnic studies which overwhelm the USSR ended since the late 1980's. As a result, while each of the two republic control their international well accepted land, Karabagh actually is subsisting under the peace force of Russia. The long term ethno-political study has been removed between Azerbaijan and Armenia and Nagarno Karabagh Republic that self proclaimed lost its existence. Russian peace keeping soldiers turned back to this lands for the first time after a period of 30 years. The role of Turkey that have a voice for so long, rallied. The effect of Turkey at the region can confuse (?)with condition in 1920's. This prestige gave Turkey right to acces in problems of Caucasus without allowing to clash with Russia. The support of Turkey to Azerbaijan at the Karabagh war, didnt allow and balanced the current situation Russia to take any steps to Azerbaijan. The abilities of Putin to "convince" irreconcilable enemies to stop the war and accept the subsequent "peacekeeping intervention" has contributed to a noticeable increase in Russia's authority in the region. Nevertheless, it is impossible the role of an independent arbitrator who can solve 'unsolvable' problems without strong political, legal, economic, military pozitions at the region. For this reason, the expending of Russian existence in Transcaucasia strategically is a important factor that gain benefit the of Russia. Therefore, it is vital for Moscow that the South Caucasus autherities take into account their political interests.

**Keywords:** Caucasus, South Caucasus, Karabagh, Turkey, Russian Federation, OSCE, Russian SFSR, Azerbaijan SSR.

## **Introduction**

Nagorno Karabagh problem which arise with the disintegration of USSR, became a conflict area between international forces rather than a problem between Azerbaijan and Armenia. For the solution of Nagorno Karabagh Problem ideas that are propounded until today are evaluated within the framework of the 1994 status quo. However, the second Karabagh War in 2020 completely get changed this situation but actually the problem continues. The main cause of this is international prestige competition in the region. This situation creates conflict areas in the options that proposed for the solution of the problem. One of the most interesting aspects of Nagorno Karabagh problem is that dispensed of any packages sanction. None of the four resolutions of the UN Security Council were not implemented by Armenia during the occupation. This policy of the states that trying to mediate between Azerbaijan and Armenia shows that there are different views on the problem and the geopolitical structure of the region has international importance. Especially, The unilateral policy of France about Nagorno Karabagh problem constituted a significant effect on solution. France tried to alleviate the occupation phenomenon with some legal procedures in taken decisions of UN Security Council in 1993 and 1994 years. (The USC Institute of Armenian Studies, 2020) The Karabagh problem was evaluated in terms of double standards in international circles, especially in contradistinction to other separatist organs in the region. Although the words 'occupation' "(European Parliament's news site, 2018) were clearly used in Ossetia and Abkhazia, it was used the term of 'controversial land' about Nagorno Karabagh." (European Parliament's news site, 2018) Especially although the Lachin corridor was not a part of the old Nagorno Karabagh Autonomous Region the pressure was put on Azerbaijan to hand over these lands to the Armenians. The international community has called on Azerbaijan for 26 years to accept the occupation of Karabakh and to make recommendations on this issue. The views of Russia and Turkey regarding Azerbaijan on this issue overlap in many points. In contradistinction to France and USA, Russia described Turkey's position in the South Caucasus as a geopolitical reality. Herewith, the location of these two countries is so stick out at the solution of Karabagh problem. The aim of this study is to analyze the Karabakh policy of Azerbaijan and Armenia in the context of the South Caucasus realities and to show what geopolitical changes the first and second Karabakh wars caused. In addition, another aim of the article is to examine the views of the parties on the collective security system that will determine the solution of the Karabakh problem in regional conflicts, and the direct or indirect effects of the proxy war between Turkey and Russia on the geography.

## **Azerbaijan's Independence Process and Karabakh Problem**

Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region was established in 1921 on the territory of the Azerbaijan SSR by the decision of the Caucasus Bureau. The majority of the population of this province consisted of Armenians. Until 1988, the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region Soviet repeatedly appealed to the leaders of the USSR to join Armenia. However, all these attempts were rejected by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. After Gorbachev came to power, the liberal atmosphere in Soviet society greatly strengthened nationalism in the region. Thus, in February 1988, the leaders of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region called on the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan SSR to join the Armenian SSR (Köçerli,2009,p.39). The movement of local Armenians to unite with Armenia caused strong nationalist volatility in Azerbaijan. The conflicts between

representatives of two communities soon caused to emigration of the Azerbaijan population Armenian and SSR and Karabagh and Armenian programmes in Sumgait city of Azerbaijan in February 1988. The USSR government tried to solve the problem with military methods but the arresting of agents the national liberation in Azerbaijan and Armenia have further increased the backing and hostility for them among public. The Armenian programs occurred in Baku January in, 1990, and the army corps broke into the capital of Azerbaijan, in this conflict hundreds of civilians killed, injured or disappeared (Köçerli,2009,p.39). The Soviet Army banished the some Armenians from the Karabagh with the units Azerbaijan SSR in 1990. This policy was aimed at ensuring the security of Azerbaijanis living in the region. However, the military coup in the USSR in August 1990 exacerbated the crisis in the center. As a result, the Armenian militias, actively arming themselves, began to attack the surrounding villages. After the August coup, all republics began to secede from the USSR. The Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan SSR declared the country's independence on October 18. From this moment on, the Karabagh problem went beyond internal conflict. On 19 November, it was decided to establish defense battalions in 22 districts and provinces. However, it was very difficult to fight with these groups against the well-armed and trained Armenians. In December 1991, Armenian attacks on Azerbaijani settlements in Karabagh began to increase. Kerkicahan town, Gaybalı, Malibeyli, Aşağı Kuşçular and Yukarı Kuşçular villages were occupied in early 1992. The Azerbaijani army carried out the 'Operation Dashalti' to break the siege of Shusha at the end of January. However, the operation failed due to miscommunication. In mid-February, Armenians captured the village of Karadağlı and killed many civilians there. The beginning of 1992 was very difficult for Azerbaijan. In late February, Armenians attacked Khojaly and captured the city. During the capture of the city, 613 civilians were killed (Krüger,2010,p.100). This was the biggest massacre in the history of the Karabagh war.

The Azerbaijan Government reviewed the Karabagh problem at OSCE. Although the Minsk Group is formed for to solve the problem, Azeri villages and cities in Nagorno Karabagh were occupied by Armenian. Armenian captured almost all the lands of Karabagh with the falling of Şuşa on 8 May 1992. A few days later, it established a direct connection between Karabagh and Armenian occupation of Laçın region. In the summer of 1992, the Azerbaijan Army achieved a number of successes. In July and August, most of the Agdere region was captured and the lands south of Goranboy recaptured (Velimemmedov,2019, p.90-91). In early August, the Baskent (a village of the Republic of Armenia located within the territory of Azerbaijan) was liberated. However, in the autumn of that year, the Armenians began to seize the initiative. At the beginning of 1993, the Azerbaijan Armed Forces suffered heavy losses in the conflicts. At the beginning of February 1993, Armenians attacked the Agdere region. Incompetence and even betrayals in the Azerbaijan Army played a role in the success of the Armenian army. The Armenian army directly participated in these operations for the first time. Armenian leaders claimed that armed operations were carried out only by Nagorno Karabagh Armenians until 1993. In March, the Kelbajar region was occupied by a coordinated attack by the Nagorno Karabagh and Armenian army. Thousands were taken prisoner during the occupation and 60,000 civilians were forced to flee their homes (Watkins, 1995,p.53). After the occupation of Kelbajar the United Nations Security Council accepted Resolution 822 on April 30, 1993 which calling for the immediate evacuation of the province, however the Armenians did not implement this decision. The political crisis that started after the occupation of Kelbajar in Azerbaijan and the military uprising of Colonel Surat Huseynov allowed the Armenians to launch a strong attack in early June. Agdam was occupied in July, Gabriel, Fuzuli and Kubatli in August, and Zangilan at the end of October.

The UN Security Council accepted the 853, 874 and 884 decision numbered in relation to occupation of Azerbaijan lands. The winter of 1994 started with success for Azerbaijan. On 5 January, 1994, Azerbaijan Army conquered the settlement of Horadiz where have a strategic importance and the 22 villages at the region of Fuzuli. However Azerbaijan unities suffered heavy losses because of attacks of Armenian on March and April months. The leaders of the country who faced with the Armenian attack that tried to divide the country had to sign a ceasefire agreement. On May 8, 1994, the Bishkek Protocol was signed between the Armenian communities of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh. On May 12, 1994, a ceasefire was reached on the front line. Thus, at the end of the First Karabagh War, 14% of the country's territory fell into the hands of Armenians. Azerbaijan Army lost 11,557 soldiers during the hostilities (AZERTAC,2022).

### **Karabagh in Azerbaijan Foreign Policy**

The Karabagh problems remains the first priority in Azerbaijan's foreign policy. After the signing an armistice in 1994 years, Azerbaijan and Armenia's leaders a few times gathered for the solve the problem. In view of the rejection of the Minsk Group's proposals by both parties in the conflict, it was decided to continue the main format of negotiations with direct dialogue between the leaders of Baku and Yerevan. However, this approach did not yield effective results. Attempts by the leaders to reach a compromise led to a difficult internal political conflict. Azerbaijan has repeatedly offered a peaceful solution to the Karabagh conflict. For this, Armenians had to return the 7 districts occupied around Nagorno Karabagh to Azerbaijan. On the other hand, Azerbaijan offered the Armenians the highest autonomy in the former Nagorno Karabagh Autonomous Region. However, Armenians insisted on Azerbaijan's recognition of the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh. Negotiations continued intensely until the 2000s. President Levon Ter-Petrosyan, who supported concessions to Azerbaijan during this period, resigned under pressure from the opposition. In 1999, the parties approximated to signing a peace agreement. But, on 27 October, 1999, it was terrorist attacked to Armenia National parliament building. For an hours the lawmakers remained hostages of armed terrorists who declared their aim was a coup. As a result, eight politicians were killed there including Prime Minister Vazgen Sargsyan and former presidential candidate Karen Demirchyan (Coene,2009,p.32). Thus, the Armenian Leaders decided to increase the maximalist policy after the pressure of the Armenian Community.

At the beginning of 2001, under the mediation of the President Jacques Chirac in France, Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia Heydar Aliyev and Robert Kocharyan met at the Rambouillet Palace near Paris. After a few hours of meetings, it was announced that the parties made significant progress. There were even statements that the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia can sign peace agreement on Karabagh. Although the details of the peace agreement were not known until the end the leaked information caused important concerns in the Azerbaijan society. These peace proposals called as 'Paris principles' were said to involve a territorial Exchange between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Azerbaijan can take a corridor by giving Karabagh to Armenia can take a corridor to Nakhchivan (Geukjian,2016,p.139). In April 2001, the Bush administration attempted to implement a strategy to strengthen US positions in the former Soviet republics, including the South Caucasus. This policy can not be successful without solving the Karabagh problem. So, the Foreign Secretary of the era Collin Powell invest the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia to Key West. Powell acted according to George W. Bush's instructions and gave him informations about the parties. It was expected that if Heydar Aliyev and Robert Kocharyan reached an important agreement, Bush would invite them to Washington, the White House, and a peace agreement would be announced with the participation of the US President. But both of two the state officers did not show some nerve about proposals on the

table. Not only the Minsk Group cochairs and the US Secretary of State, but also some well known experts on the Karabagh conflict, Paul Goble from the USA and Thomas de Waal from the UK attended these meetings. Ten years after the Key West talks Thomas de Waal, now program director of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, writes: "The most important thing in diplomacy is the ability to seize the moment. Key West was the most important attempt of USA about Karabagh. After the falling of this work the role of USA gradually started to reducing in Karabagh settlement. The meetings started to good but everything went to different directions. The then president of Azerbaijan had some healthy problems and when he turned back to Baku he did not accept some articles of the agreement. Also, none of the presidents had taken steps to prepare their people for the compromises being discussed." (De Waal,2003,p.284).

However, the search for a compromise solution continued, and in 2007 the Madrid Principles (conditional name of the Basic Principles for the settlement of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict) were presented to the parties to the conflict. In this peace plan, it was stated that all occupied territories should be returned to Azerbaijan's control, and that Nagorno Karabagh should be given a "temporary status" that ensures its security and self-government (Aydin,2011,p.185). Regarding the final legal status of Nagorno Karabagh, it was proposed to be determined "with a legally binding declaration of intent". The CoChairs also undertook to provide international security guarantees to the resolution process through the deployment of peacekeepers. The nationality of the peacekeepers was not discussed in detail, but it was clear that they could not be from any country or member states of the Minsk Group (i.e. not from the Russian Federation, the USA and France). If Denmark, India or Argentina showed an interest in this, they would be among the "ideal candidates" for peacekeeping. However, The main obstacle was the unanimous refusal of both sides to bring not only peacekeeping forces to the region, but even a symbolic OSCE military observer contingent. The political oppression was so powerful in both sides neither Azerbaijan nor Armenia agreed to find a peaceful solution to the issue. For instance, the Armenians were exhibiting the maximalist, practically demands for the status and security of Nagorno Karabagh. An important role in creating a sense of superiority over Azerbaijan in Armenian society was played by the Armenian deploying the abroad, speaking from radical positions, far from the real balance of power. The Armenian population of Nagorno Karabagh had set the goal of joining Armenia. This position found support among the people of Armenia. Besides, the Armenians formally demanded that the Nagorno Karabagh government be recognized as an equal party in the negotiations and included in its full participation in the negotiation process. On the other hand, Azerbaijan insisted on the ceding back of the lands occupied by the Karabagh Armenians and offered Karabagh "the greatest autonomy". However, these offers were not accepted by the Armenians and hereby, tensions began to rise.

### **The Role of Turkey on Karabagh Problem**

There is a special importance and role of Turkey on solution of Karabagh problem. When the OSCE Minsk Group was found on March, 1992, although the persistences of Azerbaijan Turkey was not included to cochairman blocs. Although Armenia continued its hostile policy towards Turkey after declaring its independence, Turkey has always been interested in establishing relations with this country. However, the genocide propaganda that is made by Armenia in the international arena, the non-recognition of the Kars and Moscow agreements, which confirmed Turkey's territorial integrity, was the reason why diplomatic relations could not be established between the parties. In fact Turkey, has not posed a real threat to Armenia. As a matter of fact before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey's Ambassador to the USSR Volkan Vural visited Armenia and met with state officials to

determine the main lines of Turkish Armenian relations (Menashri,2013,p.154). The official representatives of Armenia did not consider the offer from Turkey during the years of independence. Consequently, the diplomatic relations have not yet been established between the two countries. On 21 September, 1991, after the declaration of independence Armenia, Turkish committee got together with Levon Ter-Petrasyon who is first president of the country in the Yerevan for the positively making all the difference of relationships. Armenia which has just declared its independence, continued its sensitiveness against the 1915 events and illegitimate Turkish boundary. And so Ter-Petrosyan met with the delegation came from Ankara only in the field of commercial and economic relations. On December 16, 1991, Turkey became one of the first countries to recognize Armenia (Ruysdael,2002,s.209). However, there were situations that worried Ankara. In a letter to Levon Ter-Petrosyan on December 24, 1991, former Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel wrote: "Our government has acted with the understanding that it will respect the principle of territorial integrity and inviolability of its borders, apart from recognizing the Republic of Armenia. I believe that relations will be built and developed on the basis of these basic principles."

Armenian troops entered Nagorno Karabagh before diplomatic missions were opened between the two countries in 1992 years. Armenia continued its policy of aggression in Nagorno Karabagh, which is the land of Azerbaijan, and Turkey supported Baku's stance on this issue. After Armenia entered the Kelbajar, Ankara announced that it was closing all its borders with the country, cancelling the rail and air links and transit trade routes on 3 April in 1993 (Geukjian,2016,p.176). However the support which is given by Turkey to Azerbaijan during the first Karabagh War, was just only composed of a word. The President of Azerbaijan, Abulfeyz Elchibey had said that he wanted a helicopter from Turkey in the battles of Kelbajar, but the Turkish side did not give it to him.

The main turning point in Turkey's Azerbaijan and Armenia relations began in 2008 years. Turkish President Abdullah Gul congratulated Serzh Sargsyan who was Armenian President by virtue of his selection in the same year (Geukjian,2016,p.176). At the same time, then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Foreign Minister Ali Babacan also sent letters of goodwill to their Armenian counterparts. Sargsyan answered positively to the letters of the new Turkish administration. The Armenian leader, during his visit to Moscow announced that he would invite Gul to the match of the Armenian and Turkish national football teams in Yerevan. Despite the ongoing protests in both countries, Abdullah Gül went to Yerevan on September 6 in 2008 years. After the match, Gul who met with Sarkisyan at the Presidential Palace evaluated the talks as positive. After this visitation there was a important revival bilateral relations for the first time in 15 years. Turkey opened its airspace completely to Armenian planes and diplomats began to participate in each other's activities at the foreign.

At the same time, Turkey, which does not want to spoil its close relations with Azerbaijan, tried to establish a trilateral meeting format among Azerbaijan-Armenia-Turkey. In January 2009, Ilham Aliyev, Erdogan and Armenian Foreign Minister Nalbandyan posed together for the cameras at a summit in Davos. However, Azerbaijan did not respond positively to further initiatives. Meanwhile, USA, Turkish and Armenian medias wrote the diplomatic relations would be re-established as soon as possible. These allegations angered Baku, which has not yet reacted to the events in public. The President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev refused to attend a meeting that attended by many world leaders in Turkey on 6-7 April 2009. On April 22, 2009, the Foreign Ministries of Turkey, Armenia and Switzerland issued a joint statement announcing that the two countries "agreed on a comprehensive framework and a roadmap for normalization". However, the details of the roadmap

were not disclosed. This situation increased the criticism style towards Turkey in the Azerbaijani media. Baku tried to increase the price of natural gas sold to Turkey by way of SOCAR (Shafiyev,2020,p.108). The former Prime Minister Erdogan visited to Baku on 14 May, 2009 less than a month after the common statement. However, the peocess continued between the two countries. The Nagorno Karabagh problem, which is sensitive for both sides, was never brought up in these meetings and was not disclosed to the public. Finally, the two protocols were agreed upon on 31 August, 2009. One of these was the Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations and the other was the Protocol on the Development of Relations. The opening of the border would begin after enter into force of these docements. However, it was a difficult process that the protocols were signed by the foreign ministers of Armenia and Turkey and approved by the parliaments of both countries. Ahmet Davutoğlu and Edward Nalbandyan signed a protocol in the progressing meetings in Zurich, Switzerland, with the participation of US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner(Aydn,2011,p.185). On January 10, 2010, the Armenian Constitutional Court adjudged that the implementations of protocols would not be unconstitutional in case of fulfillment the some conditions. One of the main conditions was "the unconditional acceptance of the 1915 events as genocide". The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has sharply stated that it will not accept this condition. Erdogan and Sargsyan met for the last time to Washington for the Nuclear Security Summit on April 10. According to later statements, Erdogan did not give up on the condition of "ending the occupation of Nagorno Karabagh" and Sarkisyan's "recognizing the genocide and paying compensation to the victims". Thus, the last attempts came to naught and, the protocols were "born dead" as the Turkish diplomats of the period said. A few days after the meeting, Sargsyan postponed the sending of the protocols to the parliament indefinitely, by saying that Turkey "presented the Nagorno Karabagh problem as a precondition and would not accept it".

Therefore, the harsh stance of Azerbaijan on the Nagorno Karabagh problem also affected Turkey's relationships with Armenia. Azerbaijan and Turkey relationship, which deteriorated until 2010, started to improve rapidly since then. Turkey presented to Minsk Group cochairs a transportation project binding Europe and Asia, in which Armenia was also invited to participate. According to the Turkish side, this project would be carried out in order to further strengthen the peace after the return of the seven regions occupied by Armenia around Karabagh. The project consisted of two parts. At the first stage, it was planned to open Turkey-Armenia, Azerbaijan-Russia railway transportation. If Armenia and Azerbaijan reached an agreement after the opening of the Kars-Tbilisi-Baku railway, Turkey would open its borders and railway communication with Armenia. In the second part of the project, after the completion of the Marmara project, the London-Beijing railway would provide rail communication between Asia and Europe. Armenia could also participate in this project over the Kars-Tbilisi-Baku railway. In this project, the using of Trabzon port by Armenia was allowed (Güngör,2014,p.6). Thus, Armenia would acquire a more easy and cheaper access to the international transport corridor. If Armenia left the occupied seven regions, it would have the opportunity to use the railway line from Azerbaijan to Russia. However, all these proposals were rejected by Armenia. The aggressive policy of Armenia towards both Azerbaijan and Turkey eventually established a strong liage relationship between the two countries.

### **The Role Of Russia Karabagh Problem**

The conflict in Nagorno Karabagh was one of the country's most serious problems on the eve of the collapse of the USSR. Even this conflict did not directly affect the collapse of the state, it reduced the

influence of the center on the regions. The conflict which started as an inter communal and inter republic confrontation, soon turned into a movement to secede from the USSR. These separatist feelings were strengthened first in Armenia and then in Azerbaijan after the tragic events on January, 1990. As a result, the two republics which began to see national independence as a strategic goal in order to resolve the conflict in their own interests, contributed to the weakening of the union state. The Russian SFSR formed a policy that looked at this process differently from the USSR in this case. The first participation of Russia in this process was in Zheleznovodsk, and mediated by Boris Yeltsin and Nursultan Nazarbayev in 1990 (De Waal,2003,p.162). The ideas that determined Moscow's approaches to a peaceful solution for many years were formulated in this document. Above all it was mention about a ceasefire as the mainstay of the negotiation. The attempt of Yeltsin and Nazarbayev did not succeed in that case.

During the Karabagh war, Russia officially followed an objective policy. However, this policy did not create a problem in supporting sometimes Azerbaijan and sometimes Armenia. The Russians had an active role in the operations of the Azerbaijan army in Goranboy and Agdere in 1992. The interesting thing was that these troops approaching the center of Khankendi were shot by the Russians fighting on the side of the Armenians (De Waal,2003,p.215). It is thought that Russia was also involved in the military coup organized by Colonel Suret Husseinov in 1993 in Ganja and Colonel Elikram Hummatov in Lankaran. The main desire of Russia in this conflict, was to keep both Azerbaijan and Armenia in its sphere of influence. Therefore, he intervened in the conflict to prevent a clear defeat of Azerbaijan in 1994. The Bishkek Protocol was signed between Azerbaijan and Armenia in 1994 under the mediation of Moscow (Geukjian,2016,p.73). A document was signed on the strengthening of measures to ensure a ceasefire as a follow up this after one year. Until 2000, Azerbaijan's relationships with Russia remained tense. The main reason for this was the pro-Western policy of Azerbaijan. Russian companies were not included in the oil agreement "Deal of the Century" signed by the Azerbaijani leadership in 1994. The then President Heydar Aliyev wanted to sell Azerbaijani oil to Europe not through the Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline, but through an alternative oil pipeline. This was one of the factors that seriously affected Russia's energy hegemony in the region. On the contrary, Yeltsin provided significant military assistance to Armenia (Grillot,1998,p.187). Azerbaijan also secretly supported the Chechen Mujahideen against Russia. Thus, relationships between the two countries remained tense until the election of President Vladimir Putin in Russia. After the election of Putin, relationships between the two countries began to improve. Azerbaijan was among the first countries Putin visited after being elected president. The Russian leader's visit to the country took place during Russia's military operations in Chechnya. After this visit, important economic and strategic agreements were signed between the two countries. Russia is more influential than other countries in terms of geopolitical power in the region. This factor was also reflected in the negotiations held for the solution of the Karabagh problem. In November 2008, the "Meindorf Declaration" was signed at a meeting attended by the leaders of Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia (Kurban, 2020,p.50). It was the first document signed by the two countries since 1994. the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia stated that they aim at a political solution to the Nagorno Karabagh conflict in this document. Russia was also officially reacting to the ceasefire violations between the two countries. The four day war between the two countries in 2016 yerars was stopped by the pressure of Russia on Azerbaijan (Bayramov,2016,p.118). Thanks to the efforts of Russia, agreements on this issue were made in Moscow between the chiefs of staff of Azerbaijan and Armenia. The most important proposal of Russia for the solution of the Nagorno Karabagh problem was the plan of Lavrov. The plan proposed by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is based on the "Madrid Principles". The solution plan that

prepared in 2019 was very similar to other views on the problem. Lavrov suggested that the Armenian army withdraw its troops from the occupied territories at the first stage, and return to the lands where the Azerbaijan people live, provide security and communicate. There was no any matter in Lavrov's plan regarding the status of Nagorno Karabagh. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan evaluated the plan as "peace with the hope of prosperity" in this connection. However, the spokesperson of the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Anna Nagdalyan said that the Lavrov plan was not discussed (Aysor.am,2019). The Armenian side was mentioned about the self-determination of the Armenians who living in Nagorno Karabagh through a referendum. Armenia has made it clear that it will not sign any document that will not establish the independence of Nagorno Karabagh. This process took place when Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan came into power in Armenia. Pashinyan, who came into power in 2018 years thanks to the Velvet Revolution, was commemorated with his anti-Russian actions in his early years. After Pashinyan came to power, he arrested former CSTO chairman Yuri Khachaturov and former President Robert Kocharyan. Kocharyan was known for his closeness to Putin and his friendship with him. Pashinyan rejected the Russian President's request regarding Kocharyan (Dorodnova,2020,p.63-80). The distantness between Russia and Armenia tend to the rapprochement of Azerbaijan, Turkey and Russia and a tripartite alliance against Armenia. This situation allowed Azerbaijan to resolve the Karabagh conflict by military channels.

### **The Role Of 2020 Karabagh War In Relationships Between Turkey and Russia**

When Pashinyan came into power, the main discourse of his foreign and domestic policy was about Karabagh. Priorly, the country was governed by Karabagh Armenians, Robert Kocharyan and Serzh Sargsyan. Therefore, it was thought that Pashinyan would look at the conflict from a different angle because he was a democrat. Unfortunately, Pashinyan did the opposite of its. Pashinyan which trying to introduce his "revolutionary principles" into the negotiation process with Azerbaijan, suggested that the OSCE Minsk Group cochairs reconsider the content of the negotiation agenda and completely abandon the previously agreed Madrid principles. The Defense Minister Tonoyan outlined the military doctrine of Armenia that called "new war- new regions", on March 29, 2019 in New York. Particularly, he emphasized that the option "return of lands in exchange for peace" no longer exists, and that is the principle of "return of lands in exchange for peace" is no longer recognized by Yerevan (Abrahamyan,2019). Pashinyan who developing the main provisions of the new doctrine, extravagated further and said that Karabagh should participate completely in the negotiation process. Thus, Pashinyan announced his thesis which caused sharp differences of opinion among the Minsk Group cochairs. The OSCE officers expressed clearly to Yerevan that such a hardening of the negotiation process could lead to a resumption of the war, but Pashinyan was no longer listening to anyone. The Armenian Prime Minister evaluated Baku's threats as "customary bluff". There were clashes of arms on the border with Armenia in which one of the Azerbaijani generals was killed in early July 2020. This situation caused serious protests in Azerbaijan. The group who gathered in the city center, entered the National Assembly building with the demanding war(Guliyev,2020). Under the circumstance the President Aliyev had to take a series of unpopular measures, especially to dismiss several senior officials. The strained Armenian-Azerbaijani relationships took place on the backdrop of increased military activity in the region by both Russia and Turkey. Between July 17 and July 23, Russian military exercises were held in the North Caucasus and on July 28, the Turkish army came to Azerbaijan for joint exercises with the participation of the ground forces and air forces. The Flying tactical exercises continued until 10 August in both Baku and Nakhchivan. The war preparations had begun in the summer and Turkish leader Erdogan had said that he would

completely support Azerbaijan in this regard. Turkey played an important role in Azerbaijan's preparation for the war as both tactically and in terms of modern technological weapons. Especially, the "Bayraktar TB-2" unmanned aerial vehicle created an important advantage against the Armenians (Eiriz, 2021,p.153-163).

The Azerbaijani troops launched a massive attack towards the Armenian defense line by using armored vehicles, artillery and UAVs on the morning of September 27. Some experts claim that Turkish military leaders were involved in the planning and direct execution of offensive operations. the Azerbaijani Armed Forces managed to break through the enemy line in a few days. The going for army groups created to the threatened for completely encircle the defense structures of the Karabagh Armenians. Although Yerevan's attempts to deny the achievements of the Azerbaijanis, the defeat became more evident with each passing day. The present conditions and the attempts of the Turkish side to participate in the armed conflict have caused to the seriousss worries in Moscow. In the circumstances the Russian President, immediately began negotiations with Baku and Yerevan, about the insisting on the restoration of peace. The OSCE Minsk Group cochairs- the presidents of Russia, the USA and France called on the warring parties to immediately cease hostilities and "immediately assume obligations in good faith and without preconditions" on October 1. Russian President Putin held a series of phone calls with Aliyev and Pashinyan insisted that about the war must be stopped immediately and political and diplomatic efforts must be resumed to resolve the conflict. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan and Armenia were invited to Moscow for consultations on the ceasefire the concilation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia on October 9. The ministers agreed on a temporary humanitarian ceasefire for the exchange of dead bodies of prisoners of war and the dead, after more than ten hours of meetings in Moscow. Although the ceasefire military operations continued. The last defeat of Armenia was inavitably approaching (Modebadze,2021,p.103). Russian President Putin presented Pashinyan with options based on the current military reality for being to relapse but the Armenian leader rejected all these offers. The active participation of Russia in the resolution of the conflict was not welcomed by other OSCE members. A tragic confirmation that Russian military helicopter MI-24 was crashed to the Armenian airspace near the Nakhchivan border on 9 November. However, despite this incident and a number of other attempts to draw Russia into the conflict, this did not prevent the successful completion of the mediation mission. On the night of November 10, the leaders of Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia signed a tripartite agreement. Thus, the war ended with the victory of Azerbaijan. Armenia had to return Aghdam, Kelbajar and Lachin regions to Azerbaijan. According to the agreement, Russian peacekeepers would be deployed in the Armenian controlled areas of Nagorno Karabagh and at a distance of 5 km along the Lachin corridor. The peacekeepers was formed of 1960 military personnel, 90 armored personnel carriers, 380 vehicles and special equipment (Welt ve Bowen, 2021,p.15). And also in the documation there was an articte about the establishment of transport links between the western regions of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic under the control of Russian border guards. It also ensured the re-establishment of land relations with Nakhchivan with the giving back a significant part of Azerbaijani lands. The victory of Azerbaijan in the war also increased Turkey's prestige in the region. Turkey had a special position in this regard by assuming the role of the only regional arbitrator. After et the end of the conflict, there were rumours about deploying the Turkish peacekeepers to Nagorno-Karabagh together with Russia. The President of Russia Vladimir Putin confirmed that he was in meetings with Turkey. Putin told Erdogan that the joining of Turkey as a peacekeeping force would be viewed badly by Armenians and would result in extreme measures (Kommersant, 2020). Therefore, Russia and Turkey agreed to establish a joint

center that the using drones to monitor the situation along the line of contact. The parties will jointly analyze the information received and come to appropriate conclusions in this center. According to the internal memory which were signed by the Russian and Turkish defense ministers on November 11, 2020 and he Russia-Turkey Ceasefire Monitoring Center in Aghdam region of Azerbaijan became operational (Racz, 2021, s.5).

## **Conclusion**

The armed operation performed in Nagorno Karabagh in the autumn of 2020 tend to a radical change in the geopolitical structure of the region. The long-term ethno-political conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan disappeared and the self-proclaimed Nagorno Karabagh Republic practically ceased to exist. The Russian peacekeepers turned back to these lands for the first time in 30 years. The role of Turkey, which has had a say in the Caucasus issues for a long time, has been revived. The CIS space has not to be pro-Russian, and Russia's adult neighbors and the chaotic, unpredictable international environment were laying a new foundation for Transcaucasian geopolitics. These are the main elements of the changing geopolitical configuration. Putin's determination to resolve the conflict, his ability to "convince" irreconcilable enemies to stop the war and accept the subsequent "peacekeeping intervention" contributed to a noticeable increase in Russia's authority in the region. Since the late 1980s the most important of the ethnic conflicts that had devastated the USSR has end off. As a result, while each of the two republics controls only their internationally recognized territory, Karabagh remains de facto under the control of Russian peacekeepers. The redundant mediators, the USA and France, which together with Russia were supposedly in the leadership of the OSCE Minsk Group, were annihilated.

The relationships with Turkey which Azerbaijan and Russia have strong ties have been preserved and strengthened. The efforts of Russian diplomacy bore fruit. The conciliation and peacekeeping continue to be one of the most important mechanisms of foreign policy activities in conflict areas. Nevertheless the role of an independent arbitrator capable of resolving "unsolvable" problems is impossible without strong political, legal, economic and military positions in the region. Therefore, the expansion of the Russian presence in Transcaucasia is a strategically important factor that fulfilled the national benefits of Russia. When the condescending and consumerist attitude of Armenia's ruling elite towards Russia accepted, it is not possible that safe area and ally of Armenia. If this attitude does not change in the future, the nature of ties with this country can be reviewed and adjusted without prejudice to Russia's interests. As for Azerbaijan, it always defending its sovereignty and it actively cooperates with Russia in key areas of world politics. For example, the creation of new tripartite forms of diplomacy, consisting of Azerbaijan-Turkey-Russia and Azerbaijan-Iran-Russia, on Aliyev's initiative. On the same plane there is an example about colloboration with Baku in the framework of the "Caspian Quintet". At the same time, it is advisable that to constantly monitor the Russian approach to relations with them in terms of equal and pragmatic cooperation, taking into account the peculiarities of the "multi-vector nature" of the states of the South Caucasus. This will prevent the resulting vacuum from being occupied by other powers that have increasingly asserted themselves in recent years. Turkey is among them undoubtably. Although there is no mention about any conflict between Russia and Turkey in the region under the current conditions these are natural geopolitical processes.

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