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Azerbaijan's strategic road to Karabakh victory in the context of international organizations

Abstract

The Karabakh region, which is the ancient and eternal land of Azerbaijan, is one of the most important and oldest historical regions from a strategic point of view. The complex interplay of historical grievances, ethnic tensions and territorial disputes has shaped Azerbaijan's strategic approach towards achieving its objectives in the Karabakh region. Understanding Azerbaijan's strategic road to victory in Karabakh necessitates a nuanced examination of its interaction with international organizations and the global geopolitical landscape. Azerbaijan's primary strategic objective in the Karabakh conflict has been the restoration of its territorial integrity and sovereignty. The country's strategic approach has evolved over time, shifting from diplomatic negotiations and international arbitration to a more assertive and at times, military-oriented stance. The Second Karabakh War, marked a significant turning point, resulting in a substantial territorial gain for Azerbaijan and reshaping the conflict dynamics. The strategic road to Karabakh victory for Azerbaijan involves a complex interplay of military, diplomatic, and economic strategies within the framework of international organizations. Understanding this multidimensional approach is essential for comprehending the broader implications of the Karabakh conflict and Azerbaijan's role in shaping



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regional stability and international relations. As the situation continues to evolve, the dynamics between Azerbaijan, its regional adversaries, and the international community will remain pivotal in determining the future trajectory of the conflict and the broader geopolitical landscape of the South Caucasus.

Keywords: *International Organizations, Karabakh victory, Second Karabakh War*

Uluslararası örgütler bağlamında Azerbaycan'ın Karabağ zaferine giden stratejik yolu

Öz

Azerbaycan'ın kadim ve ebedi toprağı olan Karabağ bölgesi, stratejik açıdan en önemli ve en eski tarihi bölgelerden biridir. Tarihi şikayetlerin, etnik gerilimlerin ve toprak anlaşmazlıklarının karmaşık etkileşimi, Azerbaycan'ın Karabağ bölgesindeki hedeflerine ulaşmaya yönelik stratejik yaklaşımını şekillendirmiştir. Azerbaycan'ın Karabağ'da zafere giden stratejik yolunu anlamak, uluslararası örgütler ve küresel jeopolitik manzara ile etkileşiminin incelikli bir incelemesini gerektiriyor. Azerbaycan'ın Karabağ çatışmasındaki birincil stratejik hedefi toprak bütünlüğünü ve egemenliğini yeniden tesis etmek olmuştur. Ülkenin stratejik yaklaşımı zaman içinde diplomatik müzakereler ve uluslararası tahkimden daha iddialı ve zaman zaman askeri yönelimli bir duruşa doğru evrilmiştir. İkinci Karabağ Savaşı, Azerbaycan için önemli bir toprak kazanımıyla sonuçlanan ve çatışma dinamiklerini yeniden şekillendiren önemli bir dönüm noktası olmuştur. Azerbaycan için Karabağ zaferine giden stratejik yol, uluslararası örgütler çerçevesinde askeri, diplomatik ve ekonomik stratejilerin karmaşık bir etkileşimini içermektedir. Bu çok boyutlu yaklaşımın anlaşılması, Karabağ çatışmasının daha geniş etkilerinin ve Azerbaycan'ın bölgesel istikrar ve uluslararası ilişkilerin şekillenmesindeki rolünün kavranması için elzemdir. Durum gelişmeye devam ettikçe, Azerbaycan, bölgesel rakipleri ve uluslararası toplum arasındaki dinamikler, çatışmanın gelecekteki yörüngesini ve Güney Kafkasya'nın daha geniş jeopolitik manzarasını belirlemede çok önemli olmaya devam edecektir.

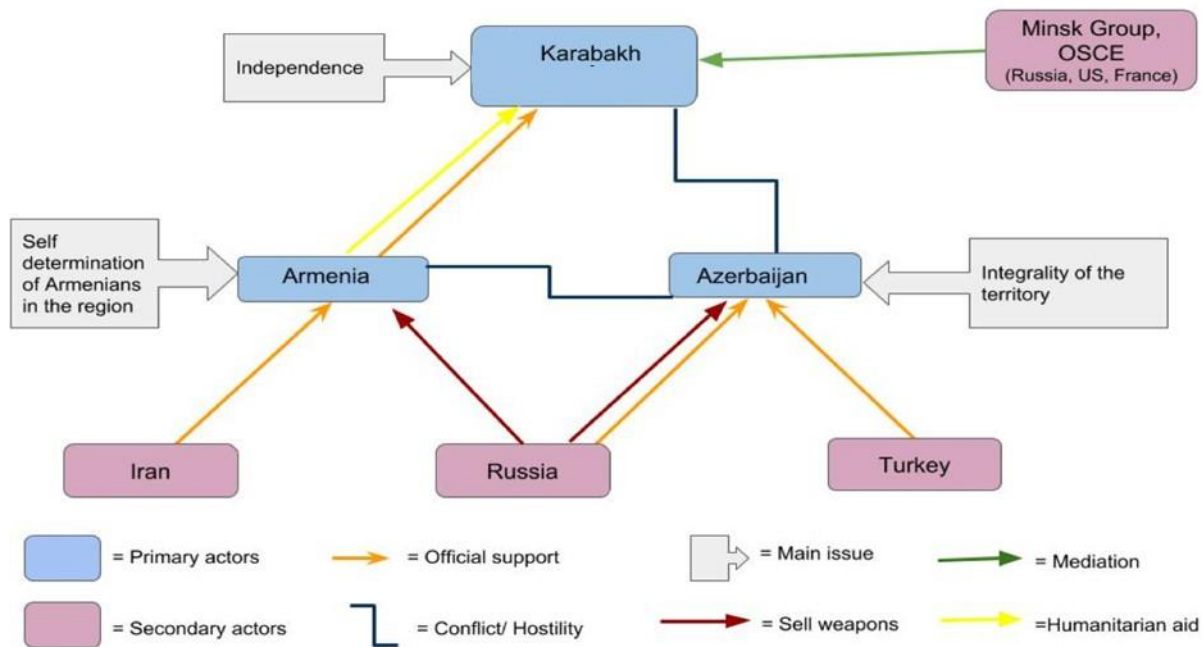
Anahtar Kelimeler: *Uluslararası Örgütler, Karabağ Zaferi, İkinci Karabağ Savaşı*

Introduction

The Caucasus is a region of new states. The great powers are involved in the Caucasus where they tend to complicate the situation in the region. But the absence of real nation-states and democracy are the problems in the region and these are the main obstacles to regional security. Actually, all three states seek security but their sensitivity over security concerns in the region differs greatly. Azerbaijan sees its future security based on regional economic cooperation. But Armenia, because of its specific threat perception and its conflict with Azerbaijan over the Karabakh conflict, relies on its relationship with its Russian ally and later on France.

The Karabakh conflict has been the longest-running in post-Soviet Eurasia. In 1988, ethnic Armenians living in Karabakh region demanded the transfer of what was then the

Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) from Soviet Azerbaijan to Armenia. As the Soviet Union collapsed, tensions grew into an outright war. When fighting ceased in 1994, Karabakh and seven adjacent districts were wholly or partially controlled by Armenian forces. More than a million people had been forced from their homes: Azerbaijanis fled Armenia, Karabakh and the adjacent territories, while Armenians left homes in Azerbaijan. From 1994 until 2020, intermittent deadly incidents, including the use of attack drones and heavy weaponry on the front lines and activities of special operations forces, demonstrated the ever-present risk that war would reignite. In April 2016, four days of intense fighting at the line of separation shook the region, killed hundreds on both sides and foreshadowed what was to come.



Russia, the US, Turkey and Iran as bilateral actors and the UN, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), NATO and the Council of Europe (CoE) as multilateral actors have become increasingly active in conflict resolution process. Actually, the main international organizations-UN, NATO and EU have not become involved with the conflict resolution process and have left it to the OSCE Minsk Group. The international organization OSCE remains leader in the effort of resolution process of conflict. Thus, the OSCE appeared to deal with the Karabakh conflict rather than the United Nations (UN). The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has four objectives from the perspective of the West.

- 1) "Humanitarian outcomes
- 2) To prevent recommencement where cessation of hostilities has occurred

3) The process of political transition to open and democratic societies in which individuals and groups are respected, economic transition towards open, free-market economies

4) To effect integration into European and global structure of cooperation” (Macfarlane, no date). However, Armenia and the Karabakh Armenians favored the UN for resolution as its historical “friends” -France and Russia were members of the Security Council. Azerbaijan for the same reason, favored the involvement of the OSCE. However, the biggest ally- Turkey was a member. In the Karabakh conflict Russia worked hard to minimize the role of the international community. Actually, Russia tried to keep Moscow’s influence as mediator and peacekeeper in the territory of the former USSR. These differences led to competition between Russia and the international community for leadership in mediating and in the resolution process of the Karabakh conflict (Volker, 2005). Russia began to play a dual role as member of the Minsk Group and as a regional actor. Russia has always had its significant objectives in its “near abroad”. This challenge manifested itself in Russia’s competing mediation efforts in the region. However, it was understood that it was Russia and not the Minsk Group, which brokered the May 1994 ceasefire. (Maresca, 1994). In the spring of 1992, the OSCE jelled into a strategy whose principal elements are given below: Western countries considered that the Karabakh conflict was not a high priority for Western countries and also because of Russian interest in the region. It was understood that the OSCE could intervene only in limited ways in the area of the former USSR. OSCE did not want to provoke a Russian response. One important point is that it was largely agreed that the Western countries involved in this effort should take the role of neutral mediators and should work within the Minsk group. Actually, the Western mediators agreed that they should work closely with Russia and Turkey and keep Iran out of the negotiating process (Volker, 2005). In the wake of the recent victory in the Karabakh region, international organizations have been closely monitoring and responding to the unfolding situation. The conflict, rooted in decades of territorial disputes between Armenia and Azerbaijan, has drawn global attention due to its geopolitical significance and the humanitarian crises it has triggered.

1. United Nations: A Call for Stability and Peace

The United Nations (UN) has consistently called for peace and stability in the region. Following the announcement of the victory, UN Secretary-General António Guterres reiterated the organization's commitment to supporting a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The UN urged both parties to engage in constructive dialogue and emphasized the need for immediate humanitarian assistance to those affected by the hostilities.

"While the recent developments have altered the dynamics on the ground, our focus remains on ensuring that the rights and needs of the civilian population are addressed," said Guterres. The UN's various agencies, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), have been mobilized to provide critical aid, including food, shelter, and medical supplies to displaced persons.

The Karabakh conflict traces its roots back to the early 20th century but erupted into full-scale war in the late 1980s and early 1990s, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The initial phase of the conflict resulted in heavy casualties, massive displacement and severe human rights violations. The UN, through various resolutions and peacekeeping efforts, sought to mediate the hostilities and bring about a ceasefire.

Resolution 822 (1993), along with subsequent resolutions 853, 874 and 884 underscored the UN Security Council's stance on the conflict. These resolutions called for the cessation of hostilities, withdrawal of occupying forces, and the return of refugees and displaced persons. Despite these efforts, achieving lasting peace proved elusive, as sporadic clashes continued and the region remained in a state of frozen conflict.

Throughout this turbulent period, the UN's humanitarian arms, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP), were actively engaged in providing relief to those affected by the conflict. Refugee camps and displaced persons' settlements became a common sight, highlighting the dire need for international support and intervention (Nuriyev, 2000). The immediate aftermath of the victory saw a surge in humanitarian needs. The conflict resulted in casualties, destruction of infrastructure and renewed displacement. The UN has been at the forefront of addressing these needs, mobilizing resources to provide food, shelter and medical assistance to affected populations. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has coordinated efforts to ensure that aid reaches those in dire need, despite the challenging conditions on the ground.

With the cessation of active hostilities, the UN's focus has expanded from immediate relief to long-term peacebuilding and reconciliation. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has initiated various projects aimed at rebuilding infrastructure, restoring livelihoods and promoting social cohesion. The emphasis on reconciliation is crucial, as deep-seated animosities and mistrust between the communities need to be addressed to prevent future conflicts.

Diplomatically, the UN continues to support negotiations and dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, has reiterated the importance of a comprehensive and negotiated settlement. The UN's Special Envoy for the South Caucasus has been actively engaging with regional leaders, emphasizing the need for a peaceful resolution that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all involved parties.

The UN has also stressed the importance of addressing human rights violations and ensuring justice for victims. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has called for thorough investigations into allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the conflict. Holding perpetrators accountable is essential for building trust and ensuring that such atrocities do not recur. The victory in Karabakh presents an opportunity for the UN to reinforce its commitment to peace, stability and human rights in the region. The path forward is fraught with challenges, but it also holds the promise of a more peaceful and prosperous future for the people of Karabakh and the surrounding areas. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a framework for rebuilding and development in the post-conflict period. By focusing on goals such as poverty eradication, quality education and reduced inequalities, the UN can help create a foundation for sustainable and inclusive growth in the region.

2. European Union: Emphasizing Diplomatic Solutions

Basically, the EU's policy is limited in conflict areas with the specific programs such as TACIS, PCA and ENP. In reality, the EU has decided not to intervene directly in the negotiation mechanism of the conflict and to leave this to the UN and the OSCE. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Committee on Relations with European Non-Member Countries have been concerned over the Karabakh conflict for several years. Additionally, on 22 December 1991 Armenia applied for special guest status with the Parliamentary Assembly, followed by Azerbaijan on 24 January 1992. The applications that gave Armenia and Azerbaijan special guest status were not dependent on a solution of the Karabakh conflict. In regard to this, finally on 4 October 1994 the Assembly adopted Recommendation 1247 on the enlargement of the Council of Europe. Thus, the Assembly decided that Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are part of the Council of Europe area (Parliament Assambly, 1994). Later, in December 2003 the European Council adopted the European Security Strategy where they recognized the promotion of good governance to the East of the European Union and on the borders of the Mediterranean with whom the EU has close and mutual relations. In this context, finally the EU identified that they should have a

more active participation in the problems of the South Caucasus as a neighboring region. Thus, in 2003 a European Union Special Representative was appointed to the region of South Caucasus. In 2006 this mandate was expanded to the “promotion of conflict resolution”

Resolutions 822, 853, 874, 884. The Council of Europe made it clear that it is not going to change the structure or the work principles of the Minsk Group of the OSCE. Later, the Political Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe set up an “ad-hoc”, a sub-commission on the Karabakh conflict with dialogue between the Parliaments of Armenia and Azerbaijan (Gahramanova, 2007). In the following years, signed Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA) with all three countries of Caucasus in 1996, brought them into force in 1999 and implemented Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independence States (TACIS) programs to support them. Thus, the Commission drafted Country Strategy Papers (CSP) for the period 2002-2006, which called on Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to engage in greater regional cooperation. In February 2002, the EU made an effort to play a more active political role in the South Caucasus and to support conflict prevention and resolution. (Conflict Resolution, 2006). Nowadays, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, emphasized the importance of diplomatic efforts to achieve a lasting peace. "The victory in Karabakh must not come at the expense of further human suffering," Borrell stated. "We urge all parties to return to the negotiating table and work towards a comprehensive peace agreement." The EU has offered to mediate talks and provide financial support for reconstruction and development projects in the region. Additionally, the European Commission has allocated funds to support humanitarian efforts, focusing on the most vulnerable populations affected by the conflict. During the war, the EU, represented by its High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and the resumption of negotiations. The EU emphasized the importance of dialogue facilitated by the OSCE Minsk Group, co-chaired by France, Russia, and the United States, as the primary framework for resolving the conflict. "The cycle of violence must end. We call on all parties to engage in substantive negotiations without preconditions," Borrell stated, reflecting the EU's commitment to a peaceful settlement. As the conflict caused significant civilian suffering, the EU swiftly mobilized humanitarian assistance. The European Commission allocated emergency funds to support displaced persons and those affected by the fighting. This aid included food, shelter, medical supplies and psychosocial support delivered through partnerships with various international humanitarian organizations.

The European Council, comprising heads of state or government of EU member states, also expressed solidarity with the affected populations. In joint statements, the Council condemned attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure and stressed the need for unrestricted humanitarian access to the conflict zones. The cessation of major hostilities and Azerbaijan's military victory in Karabakh marked a turning point. The EU and the European Council have since focused on supporting peacebuilding, reconstruction and reconciliation efforts in the region. In the aftermath of the conflict, the EU has prioritized reconstruction and development initiatives. The European Commission has pledged substantial financial support for rebuilding infrastructure, restoring public services and fostering economic recovery in the war-torn areas. These efforts aim to create conditions conducive to sustainable development and stability. The EU has also emphasized the importance of inclusive development. Projects targeting education, healthcare and employment are designed to benefit all communities in the region, promoting social cohesion and addressing the root causes of the conflict. Ensuring respect for human rights and accountability for war crimes has been a key focus for the EU and the European Council. The European Parliament has called for thorough investigations into allegations of human rights abuses and war crimes committed during the conflict. By advocating for justice and accountability, the EU seeks to build a foundation of trust and reconciliation between the conflicting parties. The EU continues to engage diplomatically with Armenia and Azerbaijan, encouraging them to pursue peaceful negotiations. The European Council has reiterated its support for the OSCE Minsk Group's efforts and urged both countries to commit to a comprehensive peace agreement.

Furthermore, the EU has sought to promote regional stability by fostering cooperation among South Caucasus countries. Initiatives aimed at enhancing economic integration, improving connectivity, and addressing shared challenges such as climate change and security are seen as vital for long-term peace and prosperity (The Nagorno Karabakh Conflict, 2020). The post-victory landscape in Karabakh presents both significant challenges and opportunities for the EU and the European Council.

Challenges

- **Humanitarian Needs:** The immediate humanitarian needs remain substantial, with many displaced persons still requiring assistance and rehabilitation.
- **Political Tensions:** The political situation remains fragile, with deep-seated mistrust and animosities between Armenia and Azerbaijan posing a risk to lasting peace.

- **Reconstruction:** Rebuilding the devastated region is a complex and resource-intensive process, requiring sustained international support and cooperation.

Opportunities

- **Peacebuilding:** The end of active hostilities offers a unique opportunity to build a lasting peace, grounded in dialogue, reconciliation, and respect for human rights.
- **Regional Cooperation:** The potential for regional cooperation on economic, environmental, and security issues could transform the South Caucasus into a zone of stability and prosperity.
- **EU's Role:** The EU can play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the region, leveraging its diplomatic, economic, and humanitarian tools to support sustainable development and peace.

3. OSCE: Monitoring and Mediation

The international involvement in the resolution of this conflict began in 1992. The CSCE (OSCE) became the major organization for the resolution of the Karabakh conflict. On March 24 1992 at a Helsinki meeting, a CSCE Council decided to authorize the CSCE Chairman-in-Office to organize a conference on Karabakh under the auspices of the CSCE. The processes of the Minsk Group to be dependent on the "Troika" of the OSCE. ("Troika" consists of the former, present and future OSCE Chairman-in-Office). The OSCE's intention was "to provide an ongoing forum for negotiations towards a peaceful settlement of the crisis on the basis of the principles, commitments and provisions of the CSCE" (Maresca, 1994). This decision was supported by the Minsk Process. (The process is so named after the city of Minsk/Belarus and this place had been selected as the site for the future conference on this conflict resolution.) The goal of the Minsk Process is to provide a suitable framework for conflict resolution, also to support the negotiation process by the Minsk Group. Additionally, in bringing all the interested parties-including Karabakh Armenians to the negotiating table, achieving a cease-fire with OSCE sponsored international monitoring. Later the Minsk Group lifting of all blockades surrounding states, aiding refugees and negotiating on the status of Karabakh with regard to taking consideration of both sides and moreover to encourage the peace process by deploying OSCE multinational peacekeeping forces (Maresca, 1994). In March 1992 the OSCE decided to bring the warring parties together at an international conference in Minsk. However, Azerbaijan refused to participate until the occupied territories had been returned. The Minsk Group consisted of eleven countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Russia, Sweden, Turkey and the United States. From the beginning of 1992 all

negotiation processes have been conducted within the framework of the Minsk Conference. Chronology-the Chairmen of the Minsk Conference were below:

“Italy in 1992-1993,

Sweden in 1994,

Russia, Finland in 1995-1996,

Russia, USA, France - since 1997 till now” (OSCE)

As we see, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has played a significant role in monitoring the ceasefire and facilitating dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The OSCE Minsk Group, co-chaired by France, Russia, and the United States, has been actively involved in peace negotiations for years. In light of the recent victory, the Minsk Group reiterated its readiness to assist in the peace process. "The recent military developments underscore the urgency of a negotiated settlement," the Minsk Group co-chairs said in a joint statement. "We remain committed to working with all parties to achieve a peaceful resolution that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states involved."

4. CIS or Regional security dilemma: Reestablishment sphere of influence within border of the former USSR

After the collapse of the USSR, Russia wants to strengthen its strategic significance as a great power in its immediate neighborhood and in the geopolitical setting of the CIS. Moscow knows well enough that the security of Russia is linked to political developments in the former USSR territories. In order to emerge as a great power, Russia concentrates on closer strategic ties with the former USSR Republics. Moscow insists that the newly independent states should not only preserve but also strengthen security arrangements with Russia. The Russian's main intention, with these arrangements, is to make sure these states do not develop security relations with NATO, the West and the US. Thus, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was created in 1991. Russia attempted to reintegrate the Post-Soviet space and to preserve a common security and economic space. Actually, the Caucasus states joined the CIS under different conditions. For instance, as we know, Georgia joined the CIS under heavy pressure from the Russian Federation. But at that time, many people believed that the CIS would provide Georgia security and bring economic benefits to the region. But after the crisis in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Georgia left the CIS (Cornell, 1990). Actually, after collapse of the Soviet Union, the intentions of Russia in “near abroad” became clearer and clearer. The Russian Federation intends to reestablish its sphere of influence within the borders of the former USSR. In reality, at the beginning of the foundation of the CIS, Baku and Tbilisi tried to leave the

Russian sphere of influence. Although the major orientation in the foreign policies of Azerbaijan and Georgia was toward the West but despite of orientation of Baku and Tbilisi, they did not receive any political support from the Western democracies .

5. The Non-Aligned Movement's Principles and Approach

The NAM's core principles include respect for sovereign equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of states, and the peaceful settlement of international disputes. These principles have guided NAM's stance on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The movement has consistently called for a peaceful resolution through dialogue and negotiations, in line with international law and the United Nations Charter.

One of NAM's fundamental tenets is the respect for the territorial integrity of states. In the context of the Karabakh conflict, NAM has generally supported Azerbaijan's territorial claims, emphasizing the importance of upholding internationally recognized borders. This stance aligns with UN Security Council resolutions calling for the withdrawal of occupying forces and the return of (Strakes, 2015) displaced persons.

During periods of intensified fighting, such as the 2020 escalation, NAM expressed deep concern over the loss of life and the humanitarian impact of the conflict. The movement condemned the violence and called for an immediate ceasefire. NAM member states collectively urged the parties to respect international humanitarian law and protect civilian lives and infrastructure.

Following Azerbaijan's military victory and the subsequent changes in territorial control, NAM has acknowledged the new realities on the ground. The movement has reiterated its support for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, while also calling for respect for the rights and security of all communities in the region.

In the post-conflict phase, NAM has emphasized the importance of reconstruction and development efforts in Karabakh and surrounding areas. The movement has called on the international community to support initiatives aimed at rebuilding infrastructure, restoring public services, and promoting economic development. NAM has stressed the need for inclusive development that benefits all communities and fosters long-term stability.

NAM continues to advocate for peace and reconciliation in the region. The movement has urged Armenia and Azerbaijan to engage in constructive dialogue to address outstanding issues and build mutual trust. NAM has highlighted the importance of confidence-building measures, such as the release of prisoners of war, the exchange of information on missing persons, and cultural exchanges, to promote reconciliation and coexistence.

The Non-Aligned Movement's reaction to the Karabakh war and the subsequent victory reflects its commitment to the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and peaceful resolution of conflicts. By consistently advocating for dialogue, humanitarian assistance, and inclusive development, NAM seeks to contribute to a peaceful and stable South Caucasus region.

6. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation and supportive reaction

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), formerly known as the Organization of the Islamic Conference, is an international organization founded in 1969, consisting of 57 member states. It aims to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony.

Regarding the Karabakh conflict, this region is a landlocked area in the South Caucasus, primarily populated by ethnic Armenians, but internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan. The conflict over Karabakh has its roots in the early 20th century but escalated into a full-scale war following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Despite a ceasefire in 1994, skirmishes and conflicts have continued intermittently, with a significant escalation in 2020.

The OIC has generally supported Azerbaijan's territorial integrity in the Karabakh conflict. The organization has passed multiple resolutions condemning Armenian actions in the region and calling for the withdrawal of Armenian forces from occupied Azerbaijani territories. The OIC's stance is influenced by its principle of supporting member states' sovereignty and territorial integrity, aligning with Azerbaijan's position on the conflict. (Anglim, 2021)

7. NATO-indirect involvement in conflict resolution process

Actually, NATO involved South Caucasus with his Partnership for Peace program and offered its peacekeeping force to be deployed in the conflict zone. This has bought, within the compass of NATO, efforts and activity of twenty seven countries, from Central Europe going through Ukraine and Russia into Central Asia. Actually, NATO has given greater political meaning to Partnership for Peace by creating a new Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council that enables its forty-three members to help direct the course of PFP. In reality, NATO refrained from direct involvement in the conflict resolution process and focused on civil emergency planning, civil-military relations, defense policy and reform. Let me indicate that Armenian cooperation with NATO is limited. This is because of their cooperation with Russia for military assistance. Actually, the desire for membership was boosted by NATO Secretary-General Robertson who mentioned that NATO's doors "remain open" for everyone. Of course, Russia developed tensions that lost Georgia and Azerbaijan to NATO. Since 1992, Armenia's policy

keeps a balance between Russia and the West. But the post-11 September mood has affected Armenia and its relations with NATO and especially with the US and Russia. Armenian leaders have stressed that Armenia is not seeking NATO membership.

NATO, as an international military alliance, has not been directly involved in the Karabakh conflict. However, it has encouraged peaceful resolution and negotiations through established international frameworks like the OSCE Minsk Group. NATO emphasizes the importance of sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states and partners, urging both Armenia and Azerbaijan to refrain from military actions and resolve their differences through dialogue (Cornell, 2017). The complex dynamics of the region mean that any resolution needs to address the deep-seated grievances and aspirations of both Armenian and Azerbaijani people, alongside geopolitical interests of major powers like Russia and Turkey.

8. Turkish states Union and Karabakh victory

The idea of a Turkish state's union refers to the potential political, economic, and cultural alliance among Turkic-speaking countries, primarily including Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. This concept aims to foster greater cooperation and solidarity among these nations, leveraging their shared linguistic, cultural, and historical ties.

The "Karabakh victory" generally refers to the outcome of the 2020 Karabakh war, where Azerbaijan reclaimed significant territories previously controlled by ethnic Armenian forces. This conflict was marked by intense fighting and significant casualties on both sides. The war ended with a ceasefire agreement brokered by Russia on November 10, 2020, leading to a shift in control of several key areas to Azerbaijan (Gök, 2017).

9. Implications of the Karabakh Victory

- 1. Azerbaijan's Position:** The victory strengthened Azerbaijan's regional position and national pride, reinforcing its territorial claims and sovereignty over the Karabakh region.
- 2. Turkey's Role:** Turkey's support for Azerbaijan during the conflict, including military and diplomatic backing, highlighted the strong alliance between the two countries. This support further solidified Turkey's influence in the South Caucasus.
- 3. Geopolitical Dynamics:** The outcome altered the geopolitical dynamics in the region, with Russia playing a key role in the ceasefire and deploying peacekeeping forces, while Turkey emerged as a significant regional power broker.

The vision of a Turkish states union, combined with the strategic implications of Azerbaijan's Karabakh victory, reflects the evolving dynamics in the region and the potential for deeper collaboration among Turkic nations.

Conclusion

The 2020 Karabakh conflict and its aftermath significantly reshaped regional dynamics, with profound implications for international relations and the role of global organizations. Azerbaijan's military victory and the subsequent ceasefire agreement brokered by Russia marked a pivotal shift in the balance of power in the South Caucasus. This conflict highlighted the complexities of regional geopolitics and the influence of external actors. International organizations played varied roles throughout the conflict. The United Nations, while expressing concern and calling for restraint, struggled to exert substantial influence in the resolution of the conflict. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, which had long been involved in mediation efforts, faced criticism for its limited impact on preventing the escalation. The role of Russia, as a key mediator and peacekeeper, underscored its strategic interests and influence in the region, while Turkey's support for Azerbaijan demonstrated its growing assertiveness and regional ambitions.

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