

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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ABSTRACT

of the dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

RELATIONS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN WITH REGIONAL STATES AFTER THE SECOND KARABAKH WAR

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GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF DISSERTATION

Relevance of the topic and its degree of development. The uncertain and chaotic geopolitical situation that arose as a result of the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (hereinafter USSR) led to the expansion of Armenian separatism in Karabakh, which began in the 1980s, culminating in the First Karabakh War. Although the basic principles for the resolution of the conflict were accepted, Armenia's consistent introduction of new claims made peaceful regulation of the conflict impossible. In an interview with the US "OIL and GAS" news editorial office in 1997, national leader Heydar Aliyev expressed his views on Armenia's policy against the peaceful resolution of the conflict, stating, "Armenia wants to gain independent status for Nagorno-Karabakh. The international community and international organizations cannot agree with this, as this claim contradicts international legal norms. We cannot allow the creation of a second Armenian state within the territory of Azerbaijan."¹ Armenia's destructive stance has only served to delay the negotiation process. Even the change of power in Armenia in 2018 did not have a positive impact on the negotiation process.

It is particularly important to note that during the tenure of the new government formed after the change of power in Armenia, increasing tensions, steps taken without considering the national values of the Azerbaijani people, openly aggressive statements made by Armenian officials against Azerbaijan, and the intensification of military provocations along the front line from the beginning of 2020 led to the Second Karabakh War from September 27 to November 10, 2020. The Second Karabakh War fundamentally changed the regional security architecture in the South Caucasus region.

The restoration of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan played a key role in the beginning of a new stage in the region – a period of opportunity for peace and development. The outcomes of the

¹ Ümummilli lider Heydər Əliyev 1997-ci ildə ABŞ-ın "OİL and GAS" xəbərlər redaksiyasına verdiyi müsahibə: [Elektron resurs] / Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin rəsmi internet saytı, - Avqust 02, 1997. URL: <https://files.preslib.az/projects/heydaraliyev/musahibeler.pdf>

Second Karabakh War not only affected the relations among the three states of the South Caucasus region – Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia. The continuation of the new geopolitical reality in the South Caucasus in a long-term and peaceful manner, as well as the creation of an effective dialogue for the joint resolution of cooperation and security issues among the region's countries, became a necessity. The “3+3” or “5+1” cooperation formula, which has sparked extensive discussions, is quite effective for both the countries of the region and the regional powers with intersecting interests related to the region. This formula envisions joint cooperation among Azerbaijan, Russia, Turkey, Iran, Georgia, and Armenia, leading to an increase in economic turnover among these countries. The Zangezur Corridor, which has been the subject of extensive discussions recently, holds equal geopolitical and geo-economic significance for all six states. The political-diplomatic symbol of the new geopolitical reality is the “3+3” (“5+1”) formula, initiated by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, İlham Aliyev. Concrete proposals are being put forward for the realization of this formula.

The successful conclusion of the war for Azerbaijan significantly impacted its relations with the neighboring countries in the region. These relations began to transform in accordance with the new geopolitical situation, which changed in the context of Azerbaijan's historical victory and the new reality in the region. In his keynote speech at the VII Congress of the New Azerbaijan Party, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, İlham Aliyev, addressed the new geopolitical configuration and realities that emerged in the South Caucasus after the Second Karabakh War, stating, “Today, a new situation has arisen, and we have created this situation. We are a country that creates realities, and many projects implemented with our initiative in previous periods have brought innovations to the region and conditioned new formats of cooperation.”²

As mentioned above, although this problem has not been systematically studied as a separate research object until now,

² İlham Əliyev Yeni Azərbaycan Partiyasının VII qurultayındakı giriş nitqi: [Elektron resurs] / Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin rəsmi internet saytı, - Mart 05, 2021. URL: <https://president.az/az/articles/view/50798>

Azerbaijani, Russian, Turkish, and Western scientists have extensively addressed various aspects of the problem we are investigating in their works. Therefore, these works were used in the process of writing the dissertation. The opinions, scientific results, and forecasts related to the socio-political processes, events, and global changes occurring in the world and the country, presented in the works of researchers, are of great importance.

Regarding the problem, E.I. Ahmadov's book "Heydar Aliyev and the State Policy Based on National Interests of Azerbaijan" analyzes the works of the Great Leader Heydar Aliyev in the direction of building the republic, as well as the historical events such as the Second Karabakh War and the complete restoration of the sovereignty of the Republic of Azerbaijan during the post-war period.³

In N.A. Aliyev's book "Restoration of Territorial Integrity and Sovereignty of Azerbaijan: Legal Aspects," the migration of Armenians to historical Azerbaijani lands and their subsequent territorial claims are examined. The author investigates the legal aspects of the restoration of the territorial sovereignty of the Republic of Azerbaijan.⁴

I.M. Huseynova wrote a monograph titled "Ilham Aliyev and the Glorious Pages of Our Victory History." This monograph extensively researches the factors that led to the start of the Second Karabakh War, its progress, and the post-war reconstruction efforts.⁵

In the book "The Second Karabakh War and New Geopolitical Realities," co-authored by R.M. Sevdamaliyev and E.R. Sevdamaliyev, the changing geopolitical situation in the region after the Second Karabakh War is analyzed, focusing on the diplomatic

³ Əhmədov, E.İ. Heydər Əliyev və Azərbaycanın milli maraqlara əsaslanan dövlət siyasəti / E.İ. Əhmədov. – Bakı: Zərdabi LTD MMC, - 2023.- 200 s.

⁴ Əliyev, N.A. Восстановление Территориальной Целостности и Суверенитета Азербайджана: Правовые Аспекты / N.A. Əliyev. – Bakı: Elm və Təhsil, -2023.- 125 c.

⁵ Hüseynova, İ.M. İlham Əliyev və Zəfər tariximizin şanlı səhifələri / İ.M. Hüseynova. – Bakı: Füyuzat, - 2021.- 74 s.

contacts between Azerbaijan and Armenia and the activities of forces opposing the restoration of peace in the South Caucasus.⁶

In the extensive article “The Leader Who Writes History and Is Written into History” by E.X. Nasirov, the onset of Armenian separatism in Karabakh, the pre-war efforts leading to victory in the Second Karabakh War, and the impact of the victory on the Republic of Azerbaijan's relations with other states during the post-war period are analyzed.⁷

N.A. Aliyev, in his book “Azerbaijan's Victory in the Patriotic War,” conducts a geopolitical analysis of the First Karabakh War and examines the changing geopolitical configuration in the region in the context of the outcomes of the Second Karabakh War and their impact on the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan.⁸

A.A. Aslanli's book “History of the Patriotic War: The Personal Factor” includes a section titled “Azerbaijan's Victory in the Second Karabakh War and the New Geopolitical Situation in the Caucasus,” which analyzes the changes in the region following the signing of the tripartite statement, the influence of the post-war geopolitical situation on the development of Azerbaijan-Turkey relations, and the significance of the Shusha Declaration for both parties.⁹

In the research work, along with local scientists, studies by Turkish scientists related to the topic have also been utilized.

In the book “Armenia's Military Activities and Characteristics” by A.A. Yucel, an analysis of the Second Karabakh War is conducted,

⁶ Sevdamaliyev, R.M. və Sevdamaliyev, E.R. İkinci Qarabağ müharibəsi və yeni geosiyasi reallıqlar / R.M. Sevdamaliyev., E.R. Sevdamaliyev. – Bakı: AFPoligraf, - 2023.- 320 s.

⁷ Nəsirov, E.X. Tarix yazan və tarixə yazılan Lider [Elektron resurs] / Yeni Azərbaycan Partiyasının rəsmi internet saytı, Oktyabr 15, 2023. URL: <http://www.yap.org.az/az/view/news/78055/tarix-yazan-ve-tarixe-yazilan-lider->

⁸ Əliyev, N.A. Vətən müharibəsində Azərbaycanın qələbəsi / N.A. Əliyev. – Bakı: AFPoligraf,- 2021. - 1096 s.

⁹ Aslanlı A.A. “Vətən Müharibəsi Tarixi. Şəxsiyyət Faktoru” kitabında yer alan “Azərbaycanın İkinci Qarabağ Müharibəsində Qələbəsi və Qafqazda Yeni Geopolitik Vəziyyət”/ A.A. Aslanlı. – Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, - 2021. - 444 s.

along with an examination of the processes leading from a deadlock to a solution and the final outcomes of the war.¹⁰

The article “The Great Offensive Leading Azerbaijan to Victory: The Anatomy of the 44-Day War” by A.A. Ali and G.Z. Ozpinar analyzes the course of the 44-Day Patriotic War and the factors that led Azerbaijan to victory.¹¹

In the book “The Zangezur Corridor and the Transformation of Geopolitical Competition in the Caucasus” by A.A. Keskin, the transformation of geopolitical competition in the Caucasus and the issue of the Zangezur Corridor are examined.¹²

K.E. Hulya's article “Azerbaijan's Strength on the Negotiation Table One Year After the 44-Day Victory: 2021” analyzes the final results of the 44-Day Victory War and the first anniversary of Azerbaijan's achieved victory.¹³

In addition to Turkish scholars, references from English and Russian scholars were also used in the research work.

In the book edited by D.A. Baldwin, “Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary,” the debate between neoliberal institutionalism and neorealism gains new relevance. Neorealism and neoliberalism focus on issues of conflict and cooperation and their impact on international relations after the Cold War.¹⁴

R.E. Powell's book, “Anarchy in International Relations Theory: the Neorealist-Neoliberal Debate // International Organization,” presents studies on two of the most influential contemporary

¹⁰ Yücel A.A. Ermenistan'ın Askeri Faaliyetleri ve Nitelikleri, İçinde: Çıkmazdan Çözüme Karabağ Sorunu, / Ed. Muhittin Ataman, Ferhat Pirinççi. – İstanbul: SETA Yayınevi, - 2021., -ss. 271-29.

¹¹ Ali A.A, Özpinar G.Z., Azərbaycan'ı Zafere Götüren Büyük Taarruz: 44 Günlük Savaşın Anatomisi // Avrasya İncelemeleri Dergisi, Cilt/Volume:10, Sayı/Issue: 1, Yıl/Year: 2021, ss 83-106.

¹² Keskin, A.A. Zengezur Koridoru ve Kafkasya'daki Jeopolitik Rekabetin Dönüşümü / A.A. Keskin. – Ankara: - 2021.- 134 s.

¹³ Hulya K.E. 44 Günde Gelen Zaferin Birinci Yıl Dönümünde Masada Güçlü Azerbaycan: 2021. / K.E. Hulya - Ed: Özgür Tüfekçi ve Fevzi Kırbaşoğlu, Karadeniz: 2021 Gelişmeleri Işığında Bölgesel Değerlendirmeler içinde -2022. -. 53-74 səh

¹⁴ Baldwin D.A. (ed.). “Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary” / D.A.Baldwin - 1996.-43 p

approaches to international relations theory, neorealism and neoliberalism. It analyzes some aspects of international relations theory.

P.E. Schoeder's article, "Historical Reality vs. Neo-realist Theory. // International Security,"¹⁵ covers contemporary political issues and investigates the historical and theoretical questions behind them.

K.M. Waltz, in his article "Evaluating Theories"¹⁶ explores international relations and concludes that neorealism does not provide an adequate explanatory basis for "the general functioning and dynamics of the modern European state system." Therefore, he advises historians "not to accept the neorealist paradigm" and international relations theorists "not to assume that the facts of international history support it."

The important source base of the research work consists of statements, reports, and speeches made during reciprocal visits by heads of state and foreign ministers. In this regard, the official materials of the speeches, reports, and statements of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, hold special significance in writing the dissertation. Additionally, statements issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding ongoing processes were extensively used as primary sources. Alongside these, periodical press materials published in Azerbaijan and abroad were also widely utilized in the process of writing the dissertation.

The object and the subject of the research. The object of this research is the relationships of the Republic of Azerbaijan with its neighboring countries in the context of the outcomes of the Second Karabakh War. The subject of this research is the scientific and political analysis of the changes (strengthened cooperation and contradictions) in relations with neighboring states based on the outcomes obtained after the war.

¹⁵ Schoeder P.E. "Historical Reality vs. Neo-realist Theory. // International Security"/ P.E. Schoeder- vol 19 no.1 (Summer)- 1994.-12 p

¹⁶ Waltz K.M "Evaluating Theories. //American Political Science Review"/ K.M Waltz -vol.91 no.4 (December)- 1997.-24-28 p

The goals and objectives of the research. The purpose and objectives of the research work have been determined considering the relevance and significance of the topic. The primary purpose of this research is to conduct a systematic political analysis of the measures taken to ensure peace in the South Caucasus region in the post-conflict period, as well as the mutual relations of the Republic of Azerbaijan with regional states within the framework of new geopolitical realities, based on current documents, statements, addresses, and speeches by heads of state, as well as existing literature. To achieve this purpose, the following tasks have been set and fulfilled in the research work:

- Analyzing the causes and historical necessity of the Second Karabakh War, as well as the final outcomes for both Azerbaijan and Armenia.
- Investigating the reactions of neighboring countries to the war during its onset and progression.
- Analyzing the mechanisms for combating disinformation policies carried out by Armenia against Azerbaijan during the war.
- Examining the new challenges formed in the post-war period for ensuring long-term peace in the region.
- Analyzing the impact of the final military-political outcomes of the Second Karabakh War on the geopolitical situation in the region.
- Investigating the overall political process of concluding a peace treaty between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the post-war period from the aspect of the conditions proposed by the parties.
- Analyzing the obstacles posed by the steps taken by the Armenian leadership in the post-conflict period to peacebuilding.
- Investigating the relationships of the Republic of Azerbaijan with neighboring countries (based on the principle of contiguous neighboring states) in the context of the results of the Homeland War.
- Conducting a comparative analysis of the pre-war and post-war relations with neighboring states, considering new geopolitical realities.

- Analyzing the geopolitical situation in the South Caucasus region as a result of ensuring the full territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Methods of research. At various stages of the research, economic-statistical methods, document analysis, comparative-analytical methods, content analysis, systematic approach, and statistical analysis methods were used to achieve these purposes and objectives and ensure the reliability of the obtained results. Given that the period covered by the problem is rich with documents, comparative political analysis was widely used in the writing process, with more frequent use of chronological and problem-chronological methods.

The main provisions of the defence are the following:

- The occupation of Karabakh by Armenia hindered the establishment of long-term peace in the South Caucasus region.
- The main obstacle to the normalization of Azerbaijan-Armenia relations and the conclusion of a peace treaty in the post-war period is the provocations carried out by Armenia (government, Gregorian Church, and diaspora).
- Despite contradictions and disagreements, the relationships of the Republic of Azerbaijan with neighboring states have entered a new development phase in the context of the war outcomes.
- Relations with regional countries (Azerbaijan-Turkey, Azerbaijan-Russia, Azerbaijan-Iran, Azerbaijan-Armenia, and Azerbaijan-Georgia) have completed the adaptation phase to post-war geopolitical realities.

Scientific novelty of the research. Given the topicality and political significance of the researched subject, it is systematically investigated for the first time in a comprehensive manner, and the scientific novelty of the dissertation consists of the following:

- The political-diplomatic relations towards the conclusion of a peace treaty between Azerbaijan and Armenia are analyzed, noting the current progress and concluding that official documents, national symbols, and the activities of existing chauvinistic extremist groups in Armenia pose the main threat to signing the final peace treaty.

- The bilateral and multilateral relations of the Republic of Azerbaijan with regional states in the pre-war, wartime, and post-war periods are analyzed comprehensively based on comparisons according to the changing geopolitical configuration.
- In the relations between Western and Turkish civilizations, national (secular and statehood) factors take precedence over religious factors. From this perspective, the dual stance of Western states in the global Armenian issue and post-war diplomatic mediation activities is concluded to stem from the clash between Western and Turkish civilizations.
- The short-term and long-term benefits of ensuring peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia, both bilaterally and multilaterally, considering regional states, as well as a forecast analysis of the favorable geoeconomic environment that may be formed as a result of the opening of transport communication lines, are conducted.

Theoretical and Practical Significance of the Research. The materials of this research can be utilized in writing textbooks, teaching aids, and monographs on international relations and foreign policy issues in Azerbaijan, as well as comprehensive scientific works on conflictology subjects. The scientific arguments and opinions presented in the dissertation, along with the results of the conducted research, can be beneficial in determining the directions of future research on this topic and useful for departments dealing with practical foreign policy issues and specialists working in this field.

Approbation and application of the research. The content of the research work, the main provisions, the obtained results are reflected in the author's articles published in scientific publications inside and outside the country, in the materials of the republican and international level scientific conferences, where he participated and delivered speech.

The name of the institution where the dissertation work was performed. The dissertation was completed at the “International Relations and Foreign Policy” Department of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Structure of the Dissertation. The structure of the research work has been determined according to the nature of the topic. The dissertation includes the following sections: Title Page (420 characters), Table of Contents (2,181 characters), Introduction (18,538 characters), Chapter I (69,654 characters), Chapter II (58,625 characters), Chapter III (81,668 characters), Conclusion (7,952 characters). The total volume of the dissertation, excluding appendices and bibliography, consists of 170 computer-typed pages, amounting to 236,437 characters.

MAIN CONTENT OF THE WORK

In the introduction section of the dissertation, the relevance and degree of development of the topic, the object and subject of the research, the goals and objectives of the research, and the research methods are defined. The main points presented for defense, the scientific novelty of the research, its theoretical and practical significance, the approval of the research work, and the structure of the dissertation are described.

The first chapter is titled **“The Second Karabakh War: Military and Political Outcomes”** and consists of three subchapters. In this chapter, the theoretical foundations of relations with regional states are examined, the factors that conditioned the start of the Patriotic War and its outcomes are analyzed. The struggle on the political-diplomatic and information fronts and its application mechanisms are identified as key factors..

In the subchapter **“The Theoretical Foundations of Relations with Regional States in Contemporary International Relations,”** the characteristic features of international relations are noted. These characteristics indicate that it is very challenging to study international relations, generalize, draw concrete scientific conclusions, and provide scientific and practical recommendations based on its internal laws.

The main components of the science of international relations include the theory of international relations, the formation, development, and history of diplomacy in the international relations system, sociological research of the international relations system and

interstate relations, geopolitics, and international relations and contemporary world politics.

This section analyzes the theoretical schools of international relations. The theoretical aspects of the Second Karabakh War and relations with regional states are examined. Like other social sciences, the theory of international relations attempts to interpret events in the international arena through generalizations.

Some researchers believe that the main dividing line in the theory of international relations is the method used by different researchers. From this perspective, they focus on the debate between representatives of the “classical” and “scientific” methods in the analysis of international relations.¹⁷

Finally, another group of researchers, based on comprehensive criteria in international relations (Canadian scientist Baghat Korany), build the typology of international relations theories on both the methods they use (“classical” and “modernist”) and the conceptual perspectives that distinguish them globally (“liberal-pluralist” and “materialist-structuralist”). As a result, they differentiate directions such as political realism (H. Morgenthau, R. Aron, H. Bull), behaviorism (D. Singer, M. Kaplan), classical Marxism (K. Marx, F. Engels, V. Lenin), neo-Marxism, or the “dependency” school (I. Wallerstein, S. Amin, A. Frank, F. Cardoso). This section is analyzed based on these theories.

This section is analyzed based on these theories.

In the subsection of the first chapter titled **“Factors Conditioning the Start of the Second Karabakh War, its Course, and Outcome,”** it is noted that in the mid-1980s, the initiation of “perestroika” and “glasnost” policies in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (henceforth USSR) was seen as an opportunity by Armenians. In this context, Armenia re-raised false and unfounded claims, announcing the desire to annex the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (henceforth NKAO) to Armenia. To realize this desire, from the late 1980s onwards, a movement based on the

¹⁷ Nəcəfov E.Ə. “Beynəlxalq siyasətə dair realist- idealist, elmi (bixə- viorist) – ənənəvi (tradiisional) yanaşmalar. // Beynəlxalq münasibətlərin aktual problemləri”/ E.Ə. Nəcəfov.- 2005. -№ 4.

ideology of “miatsum” (Armenian for unification) began in the former NKAO with the support of Armenia.¹⁸

The negotiation process between Azerbaijan and Armenia started after the ceasefire agreement, mediated by the Minsk Group. During the negotiation process, Armenia, for a long time, tried to freeze the conflict by covertly or openly rejecting peace proposals offered by states supposedly acting as mediators. There were three turning points in ending the status quo in the Karabakh conflict. The first was the April 2-5, 2016, April clashes or “four-day war,” the second was the July 12-18, 2020, Tovuz clashes, and the third was the Second Karabakh War that began on September 27, 2020.¹⁹

In the subsection of the first chapter titled **“Struggle on the Political-Diplomatic and Information Fronts and Its Implementation Mechanisms,”** it is noted that the struggle with Armenia in the Second Karabakh War was not only conducted by military means on the battlefield. The Patriotic War also continued on the information front. Since Armenia could not counter the successful military operations of the Azerbaijani army, it spread disinformation almost daily. As in the past, Armenia implemented strategies using political, legal, and religious practices to influence the international community and turn public opinion against Azerbaijan. Armenia also employed psychological warfare methods, such as disinformation and propaganda. From the beginning of the war, Armenia tried to cover up its defeats on the front by making several baseless claims.²⁰

President Ilham Aliyev repeatedly called on the military-political leadership of Armenia to put an end to provocations, but Armenia continued its attempts to maintain its occupation policy. One of the main reasons for this was the leadership's desire to boost its reputation among its internal audience and to showcase the “strength”

¹⁸ Nəsirov, E.X. Tarix yazan və tarixə yazılan Lider [Elektron resurs] / Yeni Azərbaycan Partiyasının rəsmi internet saytı, Oktyabr 15, 2023. URL: <http://www.yap.org.az/az/view/news/78055/tarix-yazan-ve-tarixe-yazilan-lider->

¹⁹ Qarabağın geosiyasi taleyi: İyul zəfərinin diplomatik atributları: [Elektron resurs] / URL: <https://stm.az/ru/news/225/qarabagin-geosiyasi-taleyi-iyul-zeferinin-diplomatik-atributlari>

²⁰ Mühəribə dövrünün erməni yalanları – Təhlili: [Elektron resurs] / URL: <https://oxu.az/politics/427570>

of the Armenian army, which had been attempting continuous provocations under the euphoria of the long-standing “invincibility” myth.²¹

The second chapter of the dissertation is titled **“The Process of Normalizing Azerbaijan-Armenia Relations and Its Characteristics”** and consists of four subsections. This chapter discusses the steps taken towards normalizing relations between the two countries and their characteristics.

In the subsection titled **“The Tripartite Statement of November 10, 2020: Implementation Process and Challenges,”** an analysis of the tripartite statement that ended the Second Karabakh War is conducted.²²

During his address to the nation regarding the implementation of the first clause of the statement, which concerned the ceasefire, the President emphasized that Armenia should be particularly cautious and ensure the ceasefire. Immediately after the statement, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief issued appropriate orders concerning the operation of the army and the ceasefire regime. The tripartite statement was both a military and diplomatic victory for Azerbaijan. By maintaining control over all the territories liberated within 44 days, Azerbaijan compelled Armenia to surrender three major cities/districts—Kalbajar, Aghdam, and Lachin—without a fight. Additionally, the statement did not include any provisions regarding the status and autonomy of Karabakh, which the Armenian Prime Minister had been asserting since 2019. In essence, the November 10 statement reaffirmed that Karabakh is an integral part of Azerbaijan, demanding and obligating the withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from the temporary responsibility zone of Russian peacekeepers.

In the second chapter, titled **“Political-Diplomatic Steps and New Mediation Formats in Normalizing Bilateral Relations,”**

²¹ İlham Əliyev xalqa müraciət edib: [Elektron resurs] / Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin rəsmi internet saytı, - Sentyabr 27, 2020 URL: <https://president.az/az/articles/view/40968>

²² Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin, Ermənistan Respublikasının Baş Nazirinin və Rusiya Federasiyası Prezidentinin Bəyannaməsi: [Elektron resurs] / Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin rəsmi internet saytı, - Noyabr 10, 2020., URL: <https://president.az/articles/45924>

political-diplomatic steps towards normalizing relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia are analyzed. Despite the clear resolution of the Karabakh conflict, a peace agreement has not been signed, and the borders have not been defined between Azerbaijan and Armenia. The primary focus of diplomatic contacts between Azerbaijan and Armenia after the war is based on these two topics:

1) The demarcation and delimitation of borders between the two countries,

2) The signing of a final peace agreement

The resolution of these two issues not only ensures peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia but also plays a crucial role in achieving long-term peace and stability in the South Caucasus region. There are two main mediators in the political-diplomatic steps taken between the two countries. The first is Russia, which also mediated the end of the Second Karabakh War. The second is the European Union, which, despite being outside the region, has closely followed the processes in the South Caucasus. Additionally, the United States and Georgia has also put forward mediation efforts.

President Ilham Aliyev has repeatedly stated in the political arena that Azerbaijan is ready for the delimitation of the border and the signing of a peace agreement with Armenia. In February 2022, Azerbaijan proposed five principles for normalizing relations with Armenia.²³

The five principles proposed formed the basis of diplomatic contacts and meetings between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the subsequent period. From these principles, it is clear that Azerbaijan is committed to international law and the sovereignty of states, and none of the principles put forward contradict the relevant normative acts of international organizations.

In the subchapter **“Armenia's Military Provocations as a Main Obstacle to the Peace Process,”** it is noted that despite ongoing peace talks between Azerbaijan and Armenia, military provocations and terrorism continued from Armenia. Instead of withdrawing its armed forces from the region after the declaration signed on November

²³ Tarixi Zəfərin simvolları: [Elektron resurs] / URL:
<https://mediatv.az/siyaset/113213-tarixi-zeferin-simvollar.html>

10, 2020, Armenia created combat positions and committed terror and provocations against the civilian population and soldiers of Azerbaijan.

The analyzed processes in this subchapter once again prove that even after the Second Karabakh War, Azerbaijan is interested in ensuring peace and establishing a sustainable cooperation platform in the region. As mentioned, as a result of anti-terror measures, Armenia lost its last argument in the negotiations – the resolution of issues concerning the Armenian population of Karabakh. Guided by the principle of sovereignty in international law, it can be said that the terms “Karabakh issue” or “the issue of the Armenian population of Karabakh” no longer exist. However, the ongoing military provocations show that Armenia is not willing to assess the real opportunities for achieving peace and instead, by relying on its patrons, is obstructing peace by committing new provocations.

In the subchapter **“Future Prospects for Achieving Peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia,”** the future prospects of relations between the two countries are analyzed. The legal framework formed by Armenia upon its separation from the USSR, which poses a threat to the formation of bilateral relations and the signing of a peace treaty, is clarified. At the same time, the implementation of the Zangezur corridor and its potential benefits for the regional states, especially Azerbaijan and Armenia, within the framework of international trade corridors, are examined. All nuances are summarized in this subchapter, and the challenges and steps in shaping the future dynamics of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia are analyzed.

The third chapter, titled **“Post-War Period: Relations with Regional Countries in the New Geopolitical Realities,”** consists of four subchapters. This chapter reflects Azerbaijan's relations with regional countries before and after the Second Karabakh War.

In the subchapter **“Azerbaijan-Turkey Relations: Strategic and Military Alliance,”** it is shown that diplomatic relations between the Independent Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey began immediately after Azerbaijan restored its independence. Over the past 30 years, relations between the two countries have reached a sufficiently high level in economic, political, social, cultural, military,

and ideological terms. Looking at the period before the Second Karabakh War, it is possible to see that relations between the two countries were strengthened by internationally significant projects and ultimately institutionalized. Joint projects implemented, and the historical friendship between the peoples have brought Azerbaijan-Turkey relations to the format of strategic partnership and alliance. The Shusha Declaration signed after the war is considered a new phase of the Azerbaijan-Turkey alliance. For the first time, this declaration, which shows the parties as allies, indicates the positive impact of the geopolitical configuration on the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey.

At the same time, in addition to the political and diplomatic support provided by Turkey during the war, Turkish citizens also gave great social support to Azerbaijan. The Turkish people showed their solidarity with their Azerbaijani brothers by hanging the Azerbaijani flag in their homes and workplaces. They held rallies to condemn the attacks of Armenia. This unconditional support once again showed that Turkey is Azerbaijan's true ally in the international arena. With its open support for Azerbaijan, Turkey demonstrated that it is a key actor in establishing peace in the South Caucasus.²⁴

In the subchapter **“Azerbaijan-Russia Relations in a New Phase: Development and Challenges”** of the third chapter, it is noted that there were already extensive and multifaceted mutual relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation before the Second Karabakh War. In 2018, a plan outlining the main directions of Russia-Azerbaijan cooperation for the period up to 2024 was signed. This program document included five “road maps”²⁵

In the post-war period, Russia began to mediate between Azerbaijan and Armenia for the conclusion of a peace treaty and the determination of borders. In 2022, Azerbaijan and Russia signed the

²⁴ Azərbaycan Türkiyəyə nə qədər yardım edib?: [Elektron resurs] / URL: <https://qafqazinfo.az/news/detail/azerbaycan-turkiyeye-ne-qeder-yardim-edib-umumi-mebleg-394729>

²⁵ Soçidə Azərbaycan Prezidenti İlham Əliyev ilə Rusiya Prezidenti Vladimir Putin arasında ikitərəfli görüş keçirilib: [Elektron resurs] / Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin rəsmi internet saytı, - Oktyabr 31, 2022. URL: <https://president.az/az/articles/view/57741>

"Declaration on Mutual Cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation". The declaration, which consists of 43 points in total, expresses mutual cooperation and strategic alliance between Azerbaijan and Russia in almost all fields. Clause 6 of the declaration states that "the Russian Federation and the Republic of Azerbaijan shall hold urgent consultations in order to settle a situation that, in the opinion of one of the Parties, may endanger the peace, disrupt the peace, or affect the security interests of one of the Parties, as well as if there is a threat of such a situation." they express their preparations for its implementation".²⁶

As can be seen, the outbreak of the war did not cause a decline in Azerbaijan-Russia relations. On the contrary, relations have entered a new stage of development according to the new geopolitical situation.

In the subchapter **"Azerbaijan-Iran Relations and Their Complex Characteristics"** of the third chapter, it is noted that the establishment and development of relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran have a very complex structure. The relations between the two countries are divided into six stages over the 28-year period before the Second Karabakh War.²⁷ Azerbaijan-Iran relations have not always followed a consistent trajectory. Between 1991 and 2019, the relations between Azerbaijan and Iran have frequently become quite tense.

The onset, progression, and final outcomes of the Second Karabakh War had a significant impact on Azerbaijan-Iran relations. Azerbaijan's liberation of Karabakh within 44 days altered the region's geopolitical landscape that had persisted for 30 years. The liberation of territories along the Iranian border during the war was met with great enthusiasm in Southern Azerbaijan. During this period, the process of transporting weapons from Iran to Armenia continued. This

²⁶ Azərbaycan Respublikası ilə Rusiya Federasiyası arasında müttəfiqlik qarşılıqlı fəaliyyəti haqqında Bəyannamə: [Elektron resurs] / / Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin rəsmi internet saytı, - Fevral 22, 2022. URL: <https://president.az/az/articles/view/55498>

²⁷ Агазаде М.М. "Азербайджано-иранские отношения: основные направления и особенности в 1991—2019 гг. (историографический обзор)/ М.М. Агазаде 2021.- 67 с

situation caused serious protests among Southern Azerbaijanis. Consequently, one of the main routes used by Iran to transport weapons to Armenia was blocked by Southern Azerbaijanis.²⁸

In the period following the Second Karabakh War, significant political and diplomatic tensions were observed between Azerbaijan and Iran. Azerbaijan's historic victory as a result of the war did not align with Iran's geopolitical interests in the region. By liberating the regions occupied by Armenia, Azerbaijan regained control over its entire border with Iran.²⁹ The expansion of Iran-Armenia relations and incidents such as the armed attack on the Azerbaijani embassy in Iran are indicative of the tensions in the post-war period.

In the subsection titled **“Azerbaijan-Georgia Relations: Strategic Partnership and Its Key Features”** of the third chapter, the analysis shows that the cooperation and partnership format between Azerbaijan and Georgia remained at a high level both before and after the Second Karabakh War. The development of relations between the two countries at the level of strategic partnership can also be attributed to the geopolitical situation that emerged in the 1990s. Following the First Karabakh War, the impossibility of establishing any form of cooperation between Azerbaijan and Armenia without ending the occupation led Azerbaijan to see Georgia as a reliable partner in accessing Europe and in energy diplomacy. During the Second Karabakh War, Georgia's decision to close its airspace to military cargo also had an impact on Azerbaijan-Georgia relations. In the post-war period, Georgia acted as a mediator in reaching agreements on several issues between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

In the post-war period, Azerbaijan-Georgia relations expanded to a new level with new cooperation agreements. This expansion forms a significant foundation for the future joint implementation of highly profitable projects for both Azerbaijan and Georgia. The Azerbaijan-Georgia strategic partnership is crucial for the geopolitical situation in

²⁸İrandan Ermənistana silah daşıyan TIR-lar yandırıldı: [Elektron resurs] / URL: <https://axar.az/news/gundem/502899.html>

²⁹ Ahmet S., İran'ın Azerbaycan'a Yönelik Dış Politikası: İkinci Karabağ Savaşı'nın Belirleyiciliği // SDE Akademi Dergisi, Cilt/Volume: 2, Sayı/Issue: 4, Yıl/Year: 2022, ss. 12 – 43.

Central Asia and the Caucasus, as well as for the Western access to Central Asia. In this context, it is important to note that the East-West continental trade route, which connects Europe and Asia, is becoming increasingly significant.³⁰ Georgia's support for Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and sovereignty, as well as its backing on issues related to Karabakh, played a significant role in Azerbaijan-Georgia relations. Similarly, Azerbaijan consistently supported Georgia's stance on Abkhazia and South Ossetia, reinforcing Georgia's territorial integrity even in the post-war period. The successful regional cooperation between Azerbaijan and Georgia has led to the realization of large-scale global energy and transport-communication projects, as well as the formation of a green energy corridor, all of which contribute to regional peace and stability.³¹

The findings, proposals, and recommendations of the research are reflected in the Conclusion section of the dissertation as follows:

- One of the outcomes of the research highlights that Armenia's occupation of Karabakh and its aggressive policy against the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been a major obstacle to achieving long-term peace in the South Caucasus. The study extensively analyzes Armenia's military provocations aimed at delaying the negotiation process and maintaining the status quo.
- The post-war period relationships with regional states are thoroughly analyzed in the research. Although the Second Karabakh War ended the occupation of Karabakh, the reality remains that a peace treaty between Azerbaijan and Armenia has not yet been signed. Thus, another conclusion of the research is that due to Armenia's military-political provocations, a peace treaty between Azerbaijan and Armenia has not been achieved.

³⁰Baghirov, O. New Zangazur Corridor Will Unleash Regional Development Opportunities : [Elektron resurs] / URL: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/17062021-new-zangazur-corridor-will-unleash-regional-development-opportunities-oped/>

³¹ Buxarestdə Azərbaycan, Gürcüstan, Rumıniya və Macarıstan Hökumətləri arasında yaşıl enerji sahəsində strateji tərəfdaşlığa dair Saziş imzalanıb: [Elektron resurs] / Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin rəsmi internet saytı, - Dekabr 17, 2022. URL:<https://president.az/az/articles/view/58222>

- The formation of new geopolitical realities in the region following the Second Karabakh War brought changes not only to Azerbaijan-Armenia relations but also to Azerbaijan's relations with neighboring regional states. Azerbaijan-Turkey relations transitioned to a new stage of strategic alliance within the framework of new geopolitical realities. The signing of the historic Shusha Declaration can be seen as both advancing relations to a new stage and formalizing new post-war realities.
- Azerbaijan-Iran relations experienced historical contradictions. Particularly, the development of Iran-Armenia relations, Iran's reluctance to accept changing geopolitical realities, and its stance against the formation of the Zangezur corridor significantly strained relations in the post-war period. However, eventually, Iran's foreign policy adapted to the new realities, and from the end of 2023, an improvement in relations was observed.
- During this period, Azerbaijan-Georgia relations further developed, culminating in an agreement on green energy between the two countries. Georgia's neutrality during the Second Karabakh War and its active involvement in mediation between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the post-war period positively impacted bilateral relations.
- Azerbaijan-Russia relations also transformed according to post-conflict realities. A strategic cooperation agreement was signed between Azerbaijan and Russia. Additionally, the anti-terror operations in Karabakh established that the Republic of Azerbaijan is the sole party discussing all matters related to the Karabakh region, a stance accepted by other states, including Russia. Therefore, it can be concluded that Azerbaijan's relations with regional states have transformed according to new geopolitical realities, and Azerbaijan's status as the leading state in the South Caucasus is recognized by its neighboring countries.

The main content of the research is indicated in the following scientific studies of the author:

1. Geopolitical and Geostrategic Situation in the South Caucasus Region After the Second Karabakh War // Scientific-Practical Conference of Doctoral and Dissertation Candidates on “The Ideas of Statehood of Heydar Aliyev and the Main Factors Determining Our Historical Victory in the Patriotic War” – Baku: Academy of Public Administration, May 6, 2022. – 2022. – pp. 167-175.
2. The End of the 44-Day War and the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict. Politicus. Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, South Ukrainian National Pedagogical University named after K. D. Ushinsky. Ukraine, 2023, No. 4, pp. 56-60.
3. Adaptation of Azerbaijan and Armenia to the New Political Reality. Bulletin of the Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University. Series of Humanitarian, Social, and Pedagogical-Psychological Sciences. Vol. 71, Baku, 2023, No. 3, pp. 121-132.
4. The Significance of the Zangezur Corridor for the Republic of Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus Region. Academy of Public Administration. State Administration and Theory. Scientific-Theoretical Journal. Baku, 2023, No. 3, pp. 209-221.
5. The Problem of Delimitation and Demarcation of the Azerbaijan-Armenia Borders and Its Solutions. Geostrategy. Scientific-Theoretical Journal. Baku, 2023, No. 6, pp. 41-46.
6. Restoration of the Sovereignty of the Republic of Azerbaijan After the Patriotic War. Civilization. Scientific-Theoretical Journal. Baku Eurasian University. Vol. 12, Baku, 2023, No. 5, pp. 80-86.
7. The Impact of the Second Karabakh War on Azerbaijan-Turkey Relations. Geostrategy. Scientific-Theoretical Journal. Baku, 2024, No. 1, pp. 73-78.
8. The Last Breaking Point in the Armenian Issue: The Second Karabakh War. International Symposium on Current

Developments in Science, Technology, and Social Sciences.
France-Paris, October 24-26, 2023, pp. 372-373.

9. The Second Karabakh War: Historical Justice and Necessity // Republican Scientific-Practical Conference on “National Security and Modern Military Art” dedicated to the 100th anniversary of National Leader Heydar Aliyev and the third anniversary of victory, - Baku: Institute of Military Management of the National Defense University of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan, November 1-2, 2023. – 2023. – pp. 141-144.
10. Azerbaijan-Iran Relations After the Second Karabakh War // Conference on International Conflicts and the Peace Process, - Baku: Academy of Public Administration, April 15, 2024. – 2024. – pp. 125-132.



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