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ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**PRIORITY DIRECTIONS OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN
POLICY IN THE PERIOD AFTER THE 44-DAY
PATRIOTIC WAR**

Specialty: 5901.01 – International Relations

Field of Science: Political Sciences

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Baku - 2025

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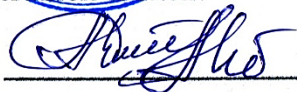
Dissertation council FD 2.30 of Supreme Attestation Commission under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan operating at Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

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GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESEARCH

Relevance of the topic and degree of elaboration. The Republic of Azerbaijan entered an important stage in the history of its statehood with the 44-day war of 2020. Thus, a new geopolitical configuration was formed in this important region located in the middle of Eurasia. Undoubtedly, the 44-day war, which resulted in the liberation of the occupied lands of Azerbaijan and the assurance of its territorial integrity, resulted in a reconsideration of foreign policy priorities. In this context, the formulation and declaration of new goals and objectives in the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan is one of the strategic steps taken by the country to protect and strengthen its national interests and statehood.

The ongoing negotiations with Armenia as a result of the 44-day war, and the approach of regional and international actors to these negotiations, make the topic even more relevant. Issues such as steps taken to ensure a lasting and stable peace in the region, accelerating economic integration, and strengthening cooperation with international partners make the topic important to study.

The study of the topic is also important for re-establishing the place and role of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the international arena, and for studying the multi-vector balanced foreign policy model it pursues. After the Second Karabakh War, Azerbaijan's new initiatives in the traditional energy and green energy sectors, its proposals within the framework of regional and international cooperation related to transport-communication and economic projects, and the deepening of its relations with a number of global actors have further strengthened the country's place and role in the world.

After the 44-day war, the Republic of Azerbaijan has become an important international actor in addressing global challenges. In this context, its position on dialogue between civilizations, the fight against Islamophobia, and especially its active global policy in the fight against neocolonialism make the study of the topic relevant.

After the war that took place in 2020, the return of Western Azerbaijan and the opening of the Zangezur corridor are other important directions of foreign policy. If for a long time, until the 44-day war, the main goal of Azerbaijan's domestic and foreign policy was

the liberation of Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur territories from occupation, after the war, the issue of Western Azerbaijan became one of the priorities. The term "Zangezur corridor" began to be used in bilateral and multilateral negotiations between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and the opening of this transport line became one of the main directions of the negotiations. It is no coincidence that in the current period of negotiations, the main attention of neighboring states and interested actors in the region is on the basis of which agreements the transport line in Western Zangezur will be launched.

Taking all this into account, it is important from both scientific and practical points of view to study the formation and determination of priorities in the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, to study these processes in the context of national interests, and to examine the impact of these processes on the region and the world.

After the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan was ensured, there were a number of innovations in foreign policy behavior related to priorities. Speaking about the foreign policy priorities of the Republic of Azerbaijan at the first meeting of the seventh convocation of the Milli Majlis, President Ilham Aliyev noted that the main evaluation criterion in this regard is the attitude towards the restoration of the state's sovereignty. During and after the war, states that support the restoration of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and recognize its sovereignty are accepted as friends and brothers, while, on the contrary, countries that support separatism and do not accept the new reality are approached in accordance with their policies.

From this it is understood that there is no place for elements such as "dictation" and "pressure" in the approach of international actors to Azerbaijan, and only relations based on mutual respect can be discussed. As the President of Azerbaijan noted, after the 44-day war and anti-terrorist measures, the country's international position and influence have been further strengthened, and currently the scope of Azerbaijan's foreign policy is expanding to wider geographies. President Ilham Aliyev, emphasizing that after the historic victory, the country's position in the international arena has been further strengthened, notes that Azerbaijan's status and influence in the world have now expanded further, active contacts have been established with many regions, and these relations have created new opportunities for

investment and multi-sectoral cooperation¹. All of this shows that after the 44-day war, Azerbaijan, in addition to developing relations with traditional partners, is open to new partnerships and cooperation, and that the country is pursuing a comprehensive policy aimed at strengthening its position in more regions of the world.

In analyzing the level of development of the research work, extensive use has been made of literature in various languages related to the topic. In N.Aliyev's monograph *"Restoration of Azerbaijan's Territorial Integrity and Sovereignty: Legal Aspects,"* the legal baselessness of Armenian territorial claims against Azerbaijan is examined, along with legal issues concerning the restoration of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity (2020) and the full establishment of its sovereignty (2023). In the collection of articles *"Restoration of Violated Legal Norms on Territorial Integrity is a Constitutional Obligation of the Azerbaijani State,"* the author analyzes the gross violations of international law by Armenians, as well as the legislation and legal-normative acts of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The book *"Day.az: In Anticipation of a Meeting with Shusha: Comments on the Armenian Tragedy"* compiles N. Aliyev's articles, commentaries, and interviews published on the Day.az information portal in 2021².

In R.Sevdimaliyev's book *"The Second Karabakh War and New Geopolitical Realities,"* the course of the war the Trilateral Statement and subsequent processes are analyzed in detail. The author provides an in-depth explanation of the new geopolitical realities created by Azerbaijan, the Shusha Declaration and the country's peace-oriented policy. This work is particularly significant for accurately studying the

¹ Azərbaycan Prezidenti İlham Əliyev yeddinci çağırış Milli Məclisinin ilk iclasında iştirak edib: [Elektron resurs] / President.az – 23.09.2024. URL: <https://president.az/az/articles/view/66895>

² Алиев, Н. Восстановление нарушенных правовых норм о территориальной целостности- конституционный долг Азербайджанского Государства. // - Харьков: Право восстановления территориальной целостности государства. Сборник статей, - «Факт», -2020. - с. 31.; Алиев, Н. Восстановление территориальной целостности и суверенитета Азербайджана: Правовые аспекты. / Н. Алиев. - Баку: Elm və təhsil, - 2023. -287 с.; Алиев, Н. Day.az: в ожидании встречи с Шушой: Комментарии к трагедии армянства. Вып. 2. / Н. Алиев. - Баку: Маариф, - 2022. -191 с

realities of the post-war period and the newly emerging geopolitical configuration³.

A.Nuriyeva's monograph *"Ethnopolitical Approach to the Principles of Territorial Integrity and Self-Determination,"* as its title suggests, thoroughly examines these two principles of international law, exposing Armenian falsehoods and substantiating the political and legal aspects of the 44-day war⁴.

H.Babaoğlu's books *"World Politics and International Relations"* and *"Foreign Policy,"* which are considered fundamental textbooks in international relations theory, are significant in terms of providing a scientific explanation of the victory in the 44-day war and the subsequent processes. The characteristics of foreign policy behavior are clarified more comprehensively through the integration of theory and practice⁵.

In his book *"Armenian Nationalist Irredentism and the Karabakh Wars,"* J.Valiyev examines the issue of irredentism in international relations and examines the Armenian territorial claims to Azerbaijani lands from this perspective⁶.

H.Mammadova's book *"The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict in the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan"* is of interest for analyzing the priorities of foreign policy before the 44-day war and retrospectively examining past events. K.Makili-Aliyev's work, which focuses on international law, security, geopolitics, and conflict resolution, attracts attention due to its broad spectrum of research. His book *"Disputed Territories and International Law"* is of interest in terms of comparing conflicts on the world map⁷.

³ Sevdimaliyev, R. İkinci Qarabağ müharibəsi və yeni geosiyasi reallıqlar / R. Sevdimaliyev. – Bakı: AzPoliqraf, - 2023. - 320 s.

⁴ Nuriyeva İ. Ərazi bütövlüyü və öz müqəddəratını təyinetmə prinsiplərinə etnosiyasi yanaşma / İ. Nuriyeva, elmi red.,S. Ramiz. - Bakı: Mütərcim, - 2021. – 352 s.

⁵ Babaoğlu, H. Dünya siyasəti və beynəlxalq münasibətlər. Dərslik. / H.Babaoğlu. Bakı: Çinar çap, -2010. -568 s. ; Babaoğlu, H. Xarici siyasət (dərslik) / H.Babaoğlu. - Bakı: ELM, - 2019.- 324 s

⁶ Vəliyev C. Erməni millətçi irredentizmi və Qarabağ müharibələri / C.Vəliyev. Bakı: BMTM, - 2024. – 116 s.

⁷ Məmmədova H. Azərbaycan Respublikasının xarici siyasətində Ermənistan-Azərbaycan Dağlıq Qarabağ münaqişəsi / H. Məmmədova. Bakı: Elm, -2009, -360 s. ; Makili-Aliyev, K. Contested Territories and International Law. A Comparative Study

A. Attar's book on the Karabakh victory provides information on Azerbaijan's military successes in the Second Karabakh War and the new balance created in the region under the philosophy of "one nation, two states." At the same time, this research conducts a historical analysis of the events⁸.

In *"The Historical and Political Lessons of the Patriotic War,"* A. Mirzəzadə examines the causes of victory and reviews the post-war period. This newly published work analyzes the historical and political aspects of Armenia's territorial claims to Karabakh, Armenian aggression in the 1990s, the course of the 44-day war, Armenia's capitulation, and the characteristics of the post-war period⁹.

The leader factor is crucial in foreign policy and the development of the state. E. Nəsirov, in his extensive articles written after the war, touched upon the leader factor in the historical victory and explained the special status of our country in the international arena today precisely with the systematic ideological and political line pursued by President İlham Aliyev¹⁰.

The books *"History of the Patriotic War: The Personality Factor"* and *"History of the Patriotic War: Restoration of Territorial Integrity. The Personality Factor,"* edited by K. Shukurov, address the role of personality—specifically, political leadership—in achieving victory. Various authors thoroughly analyze President İlham Aliyev's victory strategy, explaining the ideological, socio-economic, and diplomatic aspects of success¹¹.

In his article in *"History of the Patriotic War: The Personality*

of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict and the Aland Islands Precedent. – London & New York: Routledge, 2019. – 114 p.

⁸ Attar, A. Qarabağ zəfəri: 44 günün pərdəarxası. tərc.: K. Ələkbərova, S. Nağı. / A. Attar. - Bakı: Azərbaycan Dövlət Tərcümə Mərkəzi, -2021.- 158 s.

⁹ Mirzəzadə, A. Vətən müharibəsinin tarixi – siyasi dərsləri. / A. Mirzəzadə. – Bakı: Azərbaycan, - 2022. -282 s.

¹⁰ 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>

¹¹ Vətən müharibəsi tarixi: şəxsiyyət faktoru / Elmi redaktor: Kərim Şükürov.- Bakı: Şərq – Qərb, -2021. - 444 s.; Vətən müharibəsi tarixi: ərəzi bütövlüyünün bərpası. Şəxsiyyət faktoru / Elmi redaktor: Kərim Şükürov. – Bakı: Şərq- Qərb, - 2024. – 228 s.

Factor," E. Ahmadov extensively covers President Ilham Aliyev's diplomatic activities as the architect of victory. The article examines Azerbaijan's triumph in the Second Karabakh War through the lens of the president's victory strategy and diplomatic achievements. The books "*Heydar Aliyev and Azerbaijan's National Interest-Based State Policy*" and "*Shusha – Azerbaijan's Historical and Strategically Important Cultural Capital*" also highlight the leadership factor, clarifying both the occupation and post-occupation periods.¹²

When reviewing the historical developments following the 44-day war, it is essential to mention C. Cahangirli's book *Security and Cooperation in the South Caucasus in the Post-Conflict Period*. The book analyzes the geopolitical realities that emerged after the resolution of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and their impact on regional cooperation. Additionally, it examines the role of regional integration in ensuring stability and economic development¹³.

At a time when geopolitical contradictions around the region are becoming increasingly relevant, C. Eyvazov, in his work *Geopolitical Factors in the Security of the Caucasus*, compares the period before and after 2020, conducting analyses on the new situation and prospects¹⁴.

In the book *Regional Aspects of the National Security of the Republic of Azerbaijan* by V.Mammadzada and Kh.Isgandarov, the geopolitical interests of major powers in the South Caucasus and the foreign policy pursued by official Baku are analyzed in the context of the threats and security challenges faced by Azerbaijan¹⁵.

One of the most significant elements of Azerbaijan's foreign policy after the 44-day war was its introduction of integration projects to regional states. In this regard, scholars had long emphasized that

¹² Əhmədov, E. Diplomatiik fəaliyyət. // - Bakı: Vətən müharibəsi tarixi: şəxsiyyət faktoru, – 2021. – s. 97-127; Əhmədov, E. Heydər Əliyev və Azərbaycanın milli maraqlara əsaslanan dövlət siyasəti. / E. Əhmədov. – Bakı: Zərdabi Nəşr, - 2023. – 200 s.; Əhmədov, E. Şuşa – Azərbaycanın tarixi və strateji əhəmiyyətli mədəniyyət paytaxtı. / E. Əhmədov. –Bakı: Zərdabi Nəşr", - 2021. – 180 s.

¹³Cahangirli, C. Post-konflikt dövründə Cənubi Qafqazda təhlükəsizlik və əməkdaşlıq. / C.Cahangirli. -Bakı: Elm və təhsil, - 2021. - 164 s.

¹⁴ Эйвазов, Дж. геополитических факторах безопасности на Кавказе. // Bakı: Beynəlxalq münəqişələr və təhlükəsizlik problemləri. Elm və təhsil, -2024. - s.26-37.

¹⁵ Məmmədzaadə, V. Azərbaycan Respublikasının milli təhlükəsizliyinin regional aspektləri. / V. Məmmədzaadə, X. İsgəndərov.- Bakı: Unicopy, - 2020. – 145 s.

conflicts posed significant obstacles to new integration models. In her book *Modern Integration Processes*, H.Hüseynova particularly highlights that conflicts in the region have been among the greatest obstacles to integration. Addressing the new cooperation projects initiated in the region by official Baku after the war, M.Aliyeva, in her article *The Emergence of a New Platform for Regional Cooperation Following the End of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, discusses collaborative projects with various states as a means of consolidating peace¹⁶.

In addition, in recent years, several collective academic publications have been released in this field. The book *Western Azerbaijan: Historical and Political Aspects*, led by project director Z.Mammadov and edited by N.Mustafa, provides a comprehensive historical and political analysis of the Western Azerbaijan issue, which has become one of Azerbaijan's primary ideological directions following the end of the occupation in Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur. Meanwhile, the publication *The Path That Led Azerbaijan to Victory in Resolving the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict* examines the political and military resolution of the conflict, emphasizing Azerbaijan's historic victory in the 44-day Patriotic War and its significance in the conflict's resolution. Both works serve as important academic sources in the context of Azerbaijan's national interests and the restoration of historical justice.¹⁷.

Among the journals published by think tanks in the post-war period, analytical materials issued by the Center for Analysis of

¹⁶ Hüseynova H. Müasir integrasiya prosesləri. Dərslik. / H.K.Hüseynova. - Bakı, - 2010. - 300 s.; Əliyeva, M. "Ermənistan – Azərbaycan münaqişəsinin bitməsinin regional əməkdaşlıqda yeni platformanın yaranması" // - Bakı: Beynəlxalq münaqişələr və təhlükəsizlik problemləri, Elm və təhsil, -2024. - S.61-70.

¹⁷ Qərbi Azərbaycan: tarixi-siyasi aspektlər (məqalələr toplusu). / Elmi redaktor: Nazim Mustafa. - Bakı: Elm və təhsil, -2023. - 360 s.; Ermənistan-Azərbaycan Dağlıq Qarabağ münaqişəsinin həllində Azərbaycanı zəfərə aparan yol. // Azərbaycan Respublikasının Qaçqınların və Məcburi Köçkünlərin İşləri üzrə Dövlət Komitəsi; Beynəlxalq Münasibətlərin Təhlili Mərkəzi, - Qanun Nəşriyyatı, - Bakı: - 2021. - 232 s.

International Relations (CAIR) are of particular interest¹⁸. Among the journals published by think tanks in the post-war period, analytical materials issued by the Center for Analysis of International Relations (CAIR) are of particular interest¹⁹. Additionally, analytical research reports compiled by experts from the Center for Social Research (CSR) should also be noted. These analytical materials employ various scientific methods, including statistical data, to analyze Azerbaijan–U.S. and Azerbaijan–EU relations, as well as clarify the challenges and prospects within bilateral relations.

Furthermore, various dissertation studies have been conducted on the South Caucasus policies of actors such as Turkey, Iran, the U.S., the EU, and Russia, as well as on Azerbaijan's foreign policy in the post-war period. Notable research in this area includes studies by A. Heydarov, G. Mehdizade, R. Karimova, G. Ismayilzade, and others²⁰.

When examining Turkic-language literature, various analyses can be found regarding the conflict's place and role in international politics, as well as its impact on the regional situation. In his work *OSCE, EU, and the Minsk Group's Nagorno-Karabakh Policy*, Y. Sait analyzes the policies and roles of international organizations in the conflict resolution process, discussing their effectiveness and limitations. A. Sapmaz, in his article *Iran's Foreign Policy Toward Azerbaijan: The Effects of the Second Karabakh War*, explores the impact of the Second

¹⁸ Azerbaijan – US relations. New momentum for reinvigorating partnership. // Baku: AİR Center, - 2022. – 30 p; European Union –Azerbaijan relations. // Baku: -AİR Center, - 2023. – 34 p.

¹⁹ Azərbaycanca qarşı sanksiyalarda erməni lobbiciliyi və siyasi korrupsiya. Şəbəkə, faktlar, ifşa. Analitik hesabat. // Sosial Tədqiqatlar Mərkəzi. MM-S. – Bakı. - 2024. – 100 s.

²⁰ Heydərov, Ə. Müasir dövrdə Rusiya Federasiyasının Cənubi Qafqaz siyasəti: / Tarix üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis. / - Bakı, 2022. -163 s.; Mehdizadə, G. Azərbaycan Respublikasının Şərq-Qərb enerji və nəqliyyat dəhlizlərini inkişaf etdirmək siyasəti: (1993-2003-cü illər): / Tarix üzrə fəlsəfə d-dis. avtoreferatı. /- Bakı, 2022. -30 s.; Kərimova, R. Ədalət və inkişaf partiyası iqtidarı dövründə Türkiyə Respublikasının Cənubi Qafqaz siyasəti: siyasi və müqayisəli təhlil 2002-2014: / Siyasi elmlər üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis. avtoreferatı. / - Bakı, 2024. - 22 s.; İsmayilzadə, G. Aİ-nin və ABŞ-ın Cənubi Qafqaz üzrə xarici siyasətinin müqayisəli təhlili: / Siyasi elmlər üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis. avtoreferatı. / -Bakı, 2022. -26 s.

Karabakh War on Iran-Azerbaijan relations and examines Iran's geopolitical stance in the region²¹.

In Russian-language literature, R.Arakelov's *"Nagorno-Karabakh: The Perpetrators of the Tragedy Are Known"* presents the author's unique perspective on the conflict, based on his firsthand experiences. The author provides a detailed account of the facts he encountered during this period, their interpretations, and his emotional reactions. Meanwhile, A.Shirokorad's *"Karabakh: A Millennium-Long War on Ancient Land"* examines the origins of ethnic, religious, and political conflicts in the region through the lens of the geographical and historical conditions of the South Caucasus. Additionally, the book analyzes the prospects of the conflict. Both works illuminate different aspects of the conflict, providing readers with a deeper understanding²².

When analyzing the theoretical aspects of the political, economic, cultural, and diplomatic dimensions of the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, several works that are considered essential reference books in the field of international relations attract interest. R.Gilpin's *"The Political Economy of International Relations"* explores the role of economic power in international relations and its impact on states' geopolitical strategies. The book explains how power dynamics in the global economic system influence intergovernmental relations and how political and economic interests are reconciled. J.Nye's *"Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics"* elucidates how states can exert influence in global politics through soft power. The book analyzes the advantages of achieving political objectives through culture, values, and ideology. These works provide a theoretical and practical understanding of how economic power, diplomatic balance, and soft power strategies can be applied in Azerbaijan's foreign policy²³.

²¹ Sait, Y. "AGİT, AB ve Minsk Grubunun Dağlık-Karabağ Politikası", Dünden Bugüne Karabağ Sorunu, Editör: Haydar Çakmak, Yenisey Yayınevi, Ankara, 2021, ss.161-177.; Sapmaz, A. "İran'ın Azerbaycan'a Yönelik Dış Politikası: İkinci Karabağ Savaşı'nın Belirleyiciliği", SDE Akademi Dergisi, Cilt 2, Sayı 4, 2022, (ss. 12 – 43).

²² Аракелов, Р. Нагорный Карабах: Виновники трагедии известны. / Р.Аракелов. - Баку: Ларец, - 2020. -146 с.; Широкоград, А. Карабах: Тысячелетняя война на древней земле / А. Широкоград . -Москва: Вече, -2024. -384 с.

²³ Gilpin, R. The political economy of international relations. Pinceton Universty press. -1987. – 472 p.; Киссинджер, Г. Дипломатия. – М.: Лодомир, 1997. –579 с.;

Z.Brzezinski's *"The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership"* explores various geopolitical and economic strategies the United States employs to maintain its leadership position in global politics. The author outlines ways in which states can enhance their influence in the global order through both hegemony and cooperation. His book *"The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives"* analyzes the strategies the United States has implemented to maintain its geopolitical dominance in the Eurasian region. The work particularly underscores Eurasia's strategic significance and its impact on the global balance of power. S.Huntington's *"The Clash of Civilizations"* examines the impact of intercultural conflicts on international politics in the post-Cold War era. The author argues that cultural and civilizational differences constitute one of the primary sources of contemporary conflicts. These works provide a valuable framework for strengthening Azerbaijan's foreign policy in terms of intercultural dialogue, regional leadership, and geopolitical maneuvering. Additionally, they help explain why Azerbaijan pursued a flexible and rational diplomatic strategy both before and after the Second Karabakh War²⁴.

Among English-language sources, T. Goltz's *"Azerbaijan Diary"* is noteworthy, offering a comparative perspective between the events of 2020 and those that took place 30 years earlier. Similarly, H. Yavuz and M. Gunter's *"The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Between Armenia and Azerbaijan: Causes and Consequences"* examines the path leading to the 44-day war and its outcomes. Another relevant author, Svante K., in *"The Changing Geopolitics of Central Asia and the Caucasus"*, discusses regional developments based on his long-term observations of the region's evolving dynamics²⁵. Another author, Svante K., in his

Nye, J. S. *Soft Power. The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs, 2004. – 192 p.

²⁴ Бжезинский, З. Выбор: мировое господство или глобальное лидерство. – М.: Международные отношения, 2004. – 288 с.; Бжезинский, З. Великая шахматная доска. Господство Америки и его геостратегические императивы. – М.: Международные отношения, 1999. – 256 с.; Хантингтон, С. Столкновение цивилизаций. – М.: АСТ, 2003. – 603 с.

²⁵ Goltz, T. *Azerbaijan diary*. Oxford: Routledge, 1998. 496 p.; Yavuz H, Gunter M. *The Karabakh Conflict Between Armenia and Azerbaijan: Causes & Consequences* Palgrave Macmillan. 2022. 224 p.

book “The changing geopolitics of Central Asia and the Caucasus”, as a person who has been closely following the region for a long time, touches on the processes in the region in the current changing situation²⁶.

Research object and subject

The research object is the foreign policy course pursued by Azerbaijan in the post-44-day Patriotic War period. The research subject, however, is the analysis of the priority directions in Azerbaijan's foreign policy in the aftermath of the 44-day war.

Research aim and objectives

The aim of the research is to study Azerbaijan's foreign policy and its priority directions following the 44-day Patriotic War.

In accordance with the goal, the following tasks have been identified:

- To examine the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan and its conceptual foundations within the context of international relations theories;
- To analyze the new geopolitical realities emerging as a result of the Second Karabakh War and Azerbaijan's foreign policy priorities;
- To investigate Azerbaijan-Armenia relations, which directly influence regional processes in the new geopolitical context;
- To study the behavior of international powers towards Azerbaijan during and after the war from a political perspective;
- To determine the directions of development in Azerbaijan's relations with Türkiye and the Organization of Turkic States;
- To explore the new aspects of Azerbaijan's relations with Russia and Iran within the existing geopolitical landscape of the South Caucasus;
- To analyze the distinctive characteristics of U.S.-Azerbaijan and EU-Azerbaijan relations against the backdrop of evolving geopolitical processes.

Research methods of the work. In the dissertation work, several basic research methods were applied to determine the priority directions of Azerbaijan's foreign policy after the 44-day Patriotic War. Through

²⁶ Svante E.Cornell. The changing geopolitics of Central Asia and the Caucasus. Afpc Press, 2023. 214 p.

the analytical method, the changing directions of foreign policy were comprehensively analyzed and correlated with theories of international relations. Using the historical method, the pre-war and post-war periods were compared, and the historical development line of Azerbaijan's foreign policy strategy was traced. Within the framework of the systematic approach method, the influence of various actors and the changing geopolitical configuration was assessed. Using the comparative method, the situations of cooperation and confrontation between different states were analyzed comparatively. The joint application of these methods strengthened both the theoretical foundations of the research and increased its practical significance.

Main provisions defended. As a result of the research, the following provisions were defended:

- Azerbaijan's multi-vector foreign policy and balanced approach have elevated the country to a strategic position as the center of global trade routes and the main guarantor of regional stability.

- The signing of the Shusha Declaration between Azerbaijan and Turkey means opening a new page in the history of our country. This is a very important document that determines the security and future of the region. The Shusha Declaration will not only affect the geopolitical configuration in the region, but will also result in neighboring states being more cautious towards Azerbaijan.

- The development of relations with the Turkic States is one of the main priorities of Azerbaijan's foreign policy.

- After the 44-day war, the rational and pragmatic steps taken by Azerbaijan in its international policy resulted in its gaining an even more dominant position in negotiations with Armenia, and our state sovereignty in the mountainous part of Karabakh was restored. The return to Western Azerbaijan and the opening of the Zangezur corridor were included among the main topics in bilateral and multilateral negotiations with Armenia.

- The fight against neocolonialism, as one of the new directions in Azerbaijan's foreign policy, has resulted in the protection of our national interests and the further enhancement of our international image.

- The South Caucasus is becoming one of the main regions where geopolitical contradictions and interests intersect between the US and

Russia. At a time when the conflict has shifted to the political and military level, the existence of a balanced foreign policy course based on our national interests, as well as the previously announced firm “non-alignment” foreign policy course in bilateral relations with the aforementioned states, are one of the main factors protecting Azerbaijan’s security.

- After the Second Karabakh War, Azerbaijan’s diplomatic relations with Russia and its rational-pragmatic approach towards Iran have created a strategic basis for strengthening our country’s leadership position in the new regional configuration that is being formed.

- Located in a region between international actors distinguished by their sharp positions towards each other, Azerbaijan is in a state of continuous diplomatic maneuvering, and is building a multi-vector policy by remaining open to cooperation and collaboration with leading regional and world powers, prioritizing its interests.

- The political, intellectual, demographic, economic, energy and geographical potential of Azerbaijan is the resource of its foreign policy. Multi-vector policy in the traditional energy sector, expansion of the area of cooperation in the oil and gas sectors, agreements signed with Eastern European countries on green energy projects and planned projects, and the growing role of Azerbaijan as a transport corridor for the access of various actors in Eurasia to world markets make our country an important partner for many states and deepen our bilateral and multilateral relations.

Scientific novelty of the study. The study contains the following scientific innovations:

- Unlike previous studies, this study has determined for the first time that Azerbaijan’s multi-vector foreign policy and balanced approach to balancing the interests of global powers such as the US, EU, Russia, Turkey and China in the South Caucasus has strengthened its central position in global trade routes with initiatives such as the Zangezur Corridor, creating conditions for it to act as a guarantor of economic and political stability in the region.

- It has been determined as a scientific novelty that the strategic cooperation between Azerbaijan and the Turkic world has strengthened Azerbaijan’s regional power position by strengthening integration within the framework of the Organization of Turkic States, and this

cooperation has also contributed to reshaping the geopolitical landscape of the region with initiatives such as the Zangezur Corridor, in addition to pursuing a balanced policy with Russia and Iran. This process has served to protect Azerbaijan's national interests and strengthen its regional stability and leadership position by increasing strategic solidarity with the Turkic states.

–After the Second Karabakh War, platforms for combating neo-imperialism and neo-colonialism play a special role in Azerbaijan's foreign policy, and systematic and continuous activities in this direction have not only enhanced our image at the international level, but also made Azerbaijan an important actor in the system of international relations.

- The regional factor has been brought to the fore in Azerbaijan's foreign policy activities.

- The resources and mechanisms of Azerbaijan's foreign policy have been comprehensively presented, and in addition to the country's traditional energy potential, attention has been paid to green energy and transport potential.

Theoretical and practical significance of the study. The theoretical significance of the study is that the results of the work expand the knowledge on the formation and development of Azerbaijan's foreign policy priorities after the 44-day war. The information obtained as a result of this study can play a source role in the preparation of textbooks, monographs and dissertations in the field of international relations and political science. At the same time, the theoretical framework of the work forms the basis for future research on this topic and contributes to the application of modern international relations theories in the Azerbaijani context.

The practical significance is that the results of the study can be useful for researchers working in a similar field, especially state officials, politicians, diplomats and foreign policy specialists. The analysis and proposals obtained in the work can be used in making strategic decisions in response to the challenges of Azerbaijan's foreign policy.

Approval and application of the work. The content of the dissertation, the provisions made, the results obtained are reflected in the author's articles published in scientific publications in Azerbaijan

and abroad, in the materials of scientific conferences of the republican and international level in which he participated and spoke.

The name of the organization where the dissertation work was carried out. The research work was carried out at the Department of International Relations and Foreign Policy of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Structure of the work. The dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, seven paragraphs, a conclusion, and a list of used literature. The total volume of the dissertation, excluding the list of literature, is 272 978 characters. The separate volume of the structural sections of the research work is as follows:

- Introduction – 23 611 characters;

- The first chapter 64 356 characters, the second chapter 66 735 characters, the third chapter 108 139 characters;

- Conclusion and suggestions – 7 786 characters.

MAIN CONTENT OF THE RESEARCH

In the "**Introduction**" section of the study, the relevance of the topic of the dissertation work is justified, the object and subject of the research, as well as the goals and objectives, the scientific novelty, theoretical and practical significance of the research are determined, the provisions put forward for defense are given, and the structure and scope of the work are briefly indicated.

The first chapter of the study is entitled "**Theoretical and methodological foundations of foreign policy in international relations and the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan**". This chapter consists of two subchapters.

The first subchapter, entitled "**Theories of international relations and the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan**", emphasizes that the modern system of international relations has become more complicated due to the influence of globalization and geopolitical struggle between international actors.

The first half-chapter, entitled "Theories of International Relations and Foreign Policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan", emphasizes that the modern system of international relations has become more complicated due to the influence of globalization and

geopolitical struggle between international actors. In the first paragraph of the research work, theories and approaches of international relations and Azerbaijan's foreign policy are compared, and theory and practice are shown with various examples. Azerbaijan's foreign policy is explained with various aspects of these theories. Within the framework of realism and neorealism, the state's policy of maintaining the balance of power and forces in resolving the conflict and ensuring regional security is taken into account. The liberal and neoliberal approach focuses on Azerbaijan's cooperation with international organizations, energy projects and contributions to global integration. In the post-war period, we can especially include projects related to green energy and communication-transport lines. At the same time, regional projects such as 3+3 (3+2) proposed to neighboring states, including Armenia. The constructivist approach emphasizes the importance of Azerbaijan's tolerant state image and multiculturalism initiatives. The postmodernist approach emphasizes Azerbaijan's strategies aimed at increasing its global influence by shaping its narrative in international discourses. Thus, Azerbaijan's foreign policy demonstrates a multifaceted approach in the unity of national interests, cooperation and ideas.

The second half-chapter, entitled **“Conceptual foundations of the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan”**, analyzes the processes, strategic changes and conceptual approaches taking place in the formation and development of Azerbaijan's foreign policy. It emphasizes the dominance of a rational approach in foreign policy with the coming to power of Heydar Aliyev in the 1990s and the transformation of the ideology of Azerbaijaniism into the basis of national policy. This ideology has provided national unity and civic harmony, giving impetus to Azerbaijan's worthy position in the international arena. Also, Azerbaijan's balanced foreign policy strategy is presented as a pragmatic approach to balancing relations with various power centers and protecting national interests. At the same time, the contribution of Azerbaijan's energy policy, economic and diplomatic resources to international integration under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev is emphasized. The paragraph also reviews normative and legal acts, including the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the National Security Strategy, the Military Doctrine, and predicts that

changes will occur in this area with the emergence of a new military and political situation in the region after the Second Karabakh War.

The 44-day war and the post-war period have led to significant changes in Azerbaijan's foreign policy, and the state's influence in the regional and global arena has increased with a smart combination of hard power and soft power strategies. Azerbaijan's active participation in the Non-Aligned Movement and the Turkic States Organization, as well as its role in energy projects such as TANAP and TAP, have strengthened its strategic position and increased its contribution to international security and regional stability. The balanced policy pursued under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev has created an opportunity to protect Azerbaijan's independent position and national interests by maintaining a balance between geopolitical powers. This approach has resulted in Azerbaijan renewing and strengthening its foreign policy in line with modern global challenges.

The semi-chapter also notes that the political course of President Ilham Aliyev is distinguished by strategic flexibility and a multi-vector approach in Azerbaijan's foreign policy. This course is aimed at ensuring regional stability and strengthening Azerbaijan's influence on global platforms, while prioritizing the protection of national interests. With a balanced policy model, I. Aliyev was able to create a balance between global powers, especially the United States, Russia, the European Union and China, and turned the country into an important strategic partner in Eurasia through the effective use of Azerbaijan's energy resources. At the same time, Azerbaijan's efforts to strengthen its integration with the Turkic world, promote regional cooperation initiatives and take a firm stand against neo-imperialism-neo-colonialism demonstrate the conceptual stability of this course and its effectiveness based on national interests.

The second chapter of the study is called **“Azerbaijani-Armenian relations in the post-war period”**. The first half of the second chapter, entitled **“The defeat of the Republic of Armenia, new geopolitical realities resulting from the Second Karabakh War”**, extensively analyzes the military, diplomatic and political measures taken by Azerbaijan to restore its territorial integrity. The path to war is being investigated, highlighting President Ilham Aliyev's statement after the April battles, "If an Armenian soldier does not want to die, he

should be go from Azerbaijani lands" and his warning to Armenians from the UN tribune a few days before the 44-day war^{27,28}. At the same time, the groundlessness of Armenia's aggressive policy towards Azerbaijani lands within the historical context and Azerbaijan's victory based on international law as a result of the 44-day Patriotic War are emphasized. It is noted that Azerbaijan created new realities in the region within the framework of the Trilateral Declaration, that the status of Karabakh is not a subject of discussion, and that Armenia's separatist policy has failed at the international level. In this context, the issue of the Lachin road and its importance in terms of Azerbaijan's sovereignty are brought to special attention.

It also discusses the steps taken by Azerbaijan to ensure state sovereignty in the liberated territories. This includes clearing mines, stopping illegal economic activities, and implementing reintegration efforts in the region. Azerbaijan's principled position is emphasized against the backdrop of Armenia's attempts to obstruct this process and provocations by separatist forces. Azerbaijan's peace initiatives and actions within the framework of international law are shown as key measures aimed at ensuring security and stability in the region. The economic, transport, and security policies implemented by Azerbaijan in the post-conflict period are extensively analyzed. Azerbaijan's initiatives, such as the Zangezur Corridor project, not only promote regional cooperation and economic integration, but also increase the country's strategic importance for global actors. Azerbaijan's foreign policy behavior is studied within the framework of international relations theories, especially realism, neorealism, liberalism, neoliberalism, constructivism, and modernism.

The second sub-chapter is entitled **“Azerbaijani-Armenian relations in the new geopolitical context”**. This subchapter analyzes in detail the state of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the period after the Trilateral Declaration, the meetings held, the statements made, the negotiations on a peace treaty, regional transport and

²⁷ A. Eyvazlı. Qalibiyyət: şəhidlər və şəhidlər / Eyvazlı A. – Bakı: Mütərcim, - 2019. – s.13

²⁸ Vətən müharibəsi: [elektron resurs } Azərbaycan Respublikasının Prezidentinin saytı. URL: <https://president.az/az/pages/view/azerbaijan/karabakh2>

communication projects, the delimitation-demarcation process, and international mediation efforts.

International mediation mechanisms, especially the role of the European Union in the negotiations and the diplomatic efforts of the United States are extensively analyzed. Although Armenia's acceptance of the 5 basic principles put forward by Azerbaijan by its peace initiatives after the war has encountered difficulties, Azerbaijan's constructive approach towards stability and cooperation comes to the fore. Armenia's unbalanced policy among regional powers, as well as its uncertain position on the Zangezur corridor and Western Azerbaijan issues, weaken its geopolitical position. In addition, Azerbaijan's position based on international law and the aim of expanding integration in the region through strategic projects such as the Zangezur corridor are noted.

The impact of the competition of international powers in the South Caucasus on Azerbaijani-Armenian relations and Azerbaijan's efforts to create new realities are also explained. Despite Azerbaijan's peace policy based on international law, Armenia's attempts to delay the negotiations are emphasized. At the same time, the mechanisms of the competition of the United States, the European Union and Russia in the region and the impact of these actors on Armenian-Azerbaijani relations are discussed. As a result of Azerbaijan's independent and strategic policy, it has gained a leading position in the region in terms of both border delimitation and the advancement of economic projects. Against the background of Armenia's weak influence on international platforms, Azerbaijan has managed to realize its geopolitical initiatives, and the peace process continues within the framework of official Baku's demands.

The last - third chapter of the study is called **“Balance of power in the region against the background of a changing geopolitical configuration: the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan”**. The first half of this chapter, called **“Development directions of Azerbaijan’s relations with Turkey and the Organization of Turkic States”**, extensively analyzes the rise of relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey from the level of strategic cooperation before the 44-day Patriotic War to the post-war military-political alliance and regional leadership stage. First, the deepening of economic relations between the

two countries through energy and transport projects, especially projects such as TANAP, TAP, and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, is emphasized. At the same time, military cooperation and joint exercises served to strengthen the Azerbaijani Armed Forces. After the 44-day war, Azerbaijani-Turkish relations gained a new strategic basis with the Shusha Declaration and rose to the level of a military-political alliance. This declaration not only strengthened military and security cooperation between the two countries, but also changed the balance of power in the South Caucasus in favor of Azerbaijan and Turkey.

In addition, the subchapter focuses on the strengthening of Azerbaijan's relations with the Turkic world, the acceleration of integration within the framework of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS), and the fact that the Karabakh victory further strengthened the unity between the Turkic states. Strategic projects such as the Middle Corridor, the Zangezur Corridor, and the common Turkic alphabet initiated by President Ilham Aliyev deepen the political, economic, and ideological integration of the Turkic world. This cooperation has an impact not only at the regional but also at the global level. Azerbaijan's active role in cultural, military, and economic relations with the Turkic world has made it the main unifying force among the Turkic states. Thus, the subchapter is based on the strategic nature of Azerbaijan-Turkey relations and relations with the Turkic world, creating new geopolitical and economic dynamics in the region.

In the semi-chapter, the author emphasizes that Azerbaijan's relations with Turkey play an important balancing role in the region. The strengthening strategic alliance between the two countries, especially in the fields of energy, defense, security and transport, serves to ensure a balance between regional geopolitical forces. Azerbaijan's proximity to Turkey also strengthens broader regional cooperation within the framework of the Organization of Turkic States, which results in a reduction in the sphere of influence of other regional actors. These relations play an important role in maintaining strategic stability in the region and Azerbaijan's independent position.

The second sub-chapter of the chapter, entitled **“New aspects of Azerbaijan’s relations with Russia and Iran in the current geopolitical situation of the South Caucasus”**, notes that after the Second Karabakh War, Azerbaijan’s foreign policy has created new

geopolitical realities in the region and has formed new dynamics in relations with regional actors such as Russia and Iran. Following the Trilateral Statement signed in 2020 and the anti-terrorist measures carried out in 2023, Azerbaijan's resolution of the separatist problem in Karabakh marked the beginning of a new stage in relations with Russia. At the same time, relations with Iran have become more complicated due to contradictions over the Zangezur corridor, anti-Azerbaijani rhetoric, and religious influence politics.

Azerbaijan's relations with Iran have been built mainly on energy, transport and economic cooperation. However, the new realities that emerged after the war, especially the Zangezur corridor project, have deepened the strategic competition between the two countries. Although Iran's cooperation with Armenia and its difficulty in digesting the new reality in the region have increased tensions, cooperation in the energy and infrastructure sectors continues. However, Iran's attempts to expand its influence in the region and its intention to spread religious ideologies are assessed as a threat to Azerbaijan's sovereignty.

After the Patriotic War, Azerbaijani-Russian relations have entered a new stage at the strategic level compared to the previous period. While before the war, relations were focused more on energy, trade, and maintaining stability in the region, after the war, security and the regulation of regional order came to the fore in these relations. In particular, after the Trilateral Statement of November 10, 2020, Russia sought to increase its influence in the region by deploying peacekeeping forces in Karabakh. However, after Azerbaijan's anti-terrorist measures in 2023, it had to take into account the current reality. In the post-war period, Russia has been more cautious about Azerbaijan's independent policy and wants to deepen cooperation with Baku against the backdrop of the West's increasing activity in the South Caucasus. Thus, Azerbaijan's growing role in the region and its multi-vector policy condition the development of relations with Russia within a more specific framework, but one based on mutual interests.

The paragraph also analyzes cooperation with Russia and other actors within the framework of Azerbaijan - China, BRICS and the CIS.

The last subchapter of the study is entitled **“Specific features of Azerbaijan-USA and Azerbaijan-EU relations against the background of changing geopolitical processes”**. This subchapter is

devoted to Azerbaijan's relations with Western countries, especially the US and the European Union (EU), and the strategic importance of these relations. The subchapter emphasizes the geopolitical position of Azerbaijan and the importance of its energy resources for the West; Also, aspects such as Azerbaijan's cooperation with international organizations, the policy of combating neo-imperialism, and the development of an independent foreign policy are examined in detail.

Relations with the US are analyzed within the framework of energy security, regional stability, and geopolitical dynamics. After the Second Karabakh War, the strengthening of Azerbaijan's regional leadership and the US military presence in Armenia, and the anti-Azerbaijani policy of the Biden Administration have created certain tensions in relations. At the same time, Azerbaijan's energy exports, green energy projects, and the work done to reduce the West's dependence on Russian gas have increased the strategic importance of Azerbaijan-US relations.

Relations with Europe are more related to cooperation in the field of energy security and green energy, and there are some disagreements on political and geopolitical issues. However, Azerbaijan's energy resources are shown as the main alternative for Europe's energy security. Strategic cooperation between Azerbaijan and Eastern European and Balkan countries is emphasized. Projects related to green energy and traditional energy with the participation of Georgia are discussed. The effective policy of Azerbaijan against French neocolonialism is discussed, and the activities of institutions such as the Council of Europe and PACE based on double standards are analyzed.

In the **“results and suggestions”** section of the study, the author notes that the 44-day Patriotic War opened a new stage in Azerbaijan's foreign policy, strengthening the country's regional leadership position and increasing its influence in the international arena. The geopolitical realities that emerged after the war brought strategic initiatives in the direction of energy, transport and sustainable peace to the forefront in Azerbaijan's foreign policy. Azerbaijan's policy of expanding international cooperation, strengthening integration with the Turkic world and ensuring regional security has strengthened its position as a key stabilizing actor in the South Caucasus. Projects such as the Zangezur corridor and the Southern Gas Corridor have both increased

Azerbaijan's economic potential and demonstrated its ability to conduct a balanced policy among international powers. At the same time, Azerbaijan's multi-vector and balanced foreign policy strategy has allowed it to effectively manage relations with global actors such as the US, the EU, Russia and China. Despite tensions with Iran, Baku continues to create platforms for global and regional cooperation through regional stability and peace initiatives. Azerbaijan's global position in the energy sector, its initiatives within the framework of COP29 and its resolute stance against neocolonialism have increased its influence both regionally and internationally. Goals such as the Zangezur corridor and the return to Western Azerbaijan have given special weight to official Baku's position in the negotiations.

The author also recommends that Azerbaijan's multi-vector foreign policy in the post-war period should be studied in more depth within the framework of international relations theories, which can allow for a more comprehensive understanding of how Azerbaijan gained strategic advantages in the context of new geopolitical realities and its impact on the balance of power in the region. The balanced policy model that Azerbaijan established in strategic projects such as energy and communications in the post-war period should be studied as an experience. It would be appropriate to analyze in detail the main aspects of this policy - diversification of energy routes, partnership with regional power centers and involvement of international organizations in the processes, and develop strategic approaches that can operate in similar realities. In particular, it may be important to study in more depth Azerbaijan's strategy for maintaining the balance of power in order to manage cooperation and competition in parallel with competing power centers - the United States, China, Russia and the European Union.

The following scientific works have been published by the author in connection with the dissertation research:

1. Exposure of Armenian vandalism and constructive policy in the liberated regions. // Journal of Humanity and Biosphere. Baku, 2022. pp. 219 -226.
2. Normative and legal basis of the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan and current realities. // Public Administration: theory and practice. №1, 2023, pp. 273-281.

3. The international image of Azerbaijan against the background of modern regional challenges. // Materials of the international conference. – Baku: Azerbaijan University, - 10 -march - 2023. pp. 155-157.
4. Return to the historical lands of Azerbaijan is our national priority. // Materials of the scientific-practical conference of doctoral and dissertation students on the topic of Heydar Aliyev and the new period of development of modern Azerbaijan. -Baku: State Administration Academy,- 12 -july -2023. pp. 36-42.
5. Relations with the Turkic world and the Republic of Kazakhstan in the context of new realities of Azerbaijan's foreign policy. // Public administration and civil service, Kazakhstan. No. 2 (89), 2024, 107-114.
<https://journal.apa.kz/index.php/path/article/view/1228/917>
6. Russian direction in the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan. // VSU Bulletin. №1, 2024
URL:<http://www.vestnik.vsu.ru/pdf/history/2024/01/2024-01-12.pdf>
7. President Ilham Aliyev's pragmatic foreign policy philosophy and diplomatic successes within the framework of the Non-Aligned Movement. // Geostrategy Journal. No. 3 (81), 2024, pp. 16-20.
URL:<https://geostrategiya.az/pdf/2024/0381.pdf>
8. Modern foreign policy activities of the Republic of Azerbaijan and theories of international relations. // Development trends of the scientific community in the era of global changes. Collection of articles based on the results of the International scientific and practical conference. Omsk: - March 09, 2024 - pp. 24-29
9. Features of the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan before and after the 44-day war. // Scientific and practical conference on the topic "The role of Heydar Aliyev in the formation of sustainable development in the Republic of Azerbaijan". - Baku: Academy of Public Administration, -2 May - 2024. - pp. 130-134. [Electronic version].
URL:<https://dia.edu.az/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Konfrans-materiallari-2024.pdf>
10. Relations between Azerbaijan and the EU: political and economic prospects and challenges. // Dövlət İdarəçiliyi: nəzəriyyə və təcrübə. No. 2, 2024, s. 229-237



The defense of the dissertation will be held on " 15 " may 2025 at 12³⁰ at the meeting of the Dissertation Council - FD 2.30 of Supreme Attestation Commission under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan operating at Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Address: AZ 1001, Baku, Lermontov Street, 74.

Dissertation is accessible at the library of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Electronic versions of the dissertation and its abstract are available on the official website of Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Abstract was sent to the necessary addresses on " 19 " april 2025.

Signed for print: 03.04.2025

Paper format: A5

Volume: 40.733

Number of hard copies: 25