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The end of the 44-day war and the Armenia – Azerbaijan conflict

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Purpose. This article aims to analyze the factors that led to the expansion of the second Karabakh war between Azerbaijan and Armenia. The factors are examined through the lens of conflict around political structures and shed light on the processes taking place within Armenia and Azerbaijan to this day. The article ends with an optimistic conclusion, ending the two-century-long Azerbaijan-Armenian conflict with our victory in the 44-day Patriotic War.

Method. While working on the article, the author made an effort to comprehensively systematize all sources and information based on specific historical analyses, to create a comprehensive picture of the topic. In the research process, historicity, scientificity, objective and critical attitude to historical processes, their comparative analysis were selected as the main research methods.

Scientific innovation: comprehensively investigated the position of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict on Nagorno-Karabakh; At the current stage, the results in the direction of resolving the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict have been interpreted.

Practical importance. The article has important scientific and practical importance in terms of studying all aspects of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict in the context of national interests. The article can be useful in writing research papers, textbooks and monographs in this field.

Conclusion. In conclusion, this article sheds light on the outcome of the 44-day war, covering it from various aspects. The war itself was related to many factors, including the failure of international mediators to help resolve the conflict and put pressure on Armenia, and the latter's increasingly destructive behavior. The article highlights the 44-day war, its impact on relations between Armenia and its diaspora, the economic impact of the war on the region as a whole, and its impact on international relations.

Key words: Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict, research, scientific approach, Patriotic war, victory.

Introduction. The 44-day conflict that transpired from September 27 to November 10, 2020, fundamentally changed the architecture of regional security in the South Caucasus region. The diplomatic negotiations facilitated by the OSCE Minsk Group reached an impasse due to the actions of the “revolutionary government” in Armenia, led by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. This government initiated several political and military provocations against Azerbaijan and reneged on previously established agreements and principles. The escalating animosity and hostilities during Pashinyan's leadership culminated in a substantial counter-offensive operation by the Azerbaijani military, marking a significant chapter in history as the 44-day war.

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Azerbaijan's restoration of its territorial integrity assumed a pivotal role in inaugurating a new era within the South Caucasus, characterized by prospects for peace and progress. Nonetheless, the repercussions of the 44-day conflict undeniably transcend the confines of the South Caucasus, imparting valuable lessons applicable to the broader international community.

This article endeavors to provide a comprehensive analysis and draw significant conclusions regarding the repercussions of the 44-day war, encompassing its ramifications within the region and on a global scale. The report's primary emphasis will be placed on delineating the war's chronology, assessing Armenia's impact on its interactions with its diaspora, evaluating the economic consequences for the broader region, and elucidating its pertinence within the context of international relations.

Main text. “The Armenian people and the subsequently formed Armenian state have a long-standing historical record of asserting territorial claims against Azerbaijan. The periodic emergence of these claims is intricately linked to the strategic objectives pursued by Russia and Iran to strengthen their positions in the South Caucasus. The origin of Armenians' explicit territorial assertions can be traced back to the Treaty of Turkmenchay in 1828, which marked the partition of Azerbaijan by Russia and Iran. During the Soviet era, this history was removed from the scientific and public opinion environment for a long time and was hidden

under the false veil of “friendship of peoples”. The fact that Armenians were relocated by Russia to the South Caucasus, including Karabakh, created conditions for the false history of Armenian claims [1, p. 89].

The Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict posed the predominant challenge to security and stability within the South Caucasus. This protracted conflict resulted in considerable human suffering and the involuntary movement of populations from one location to another.

In spite of the issuance of four United Nations resolutions (822, 853, 874, and 884) in 1993, which called for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all occupying forces from Azerbaijani territories, Armenia persisted in its occupation, thus contravening a fundamental tenet of international law. This situation has resulted in a deadlock in the peace process due to the international community's incapacity to facilitate a resolution to the conflict.

From the mid-1990s onward, diplomatic negotiations mediated by the co-chair countries of the OSCE Minsk Group (namely France, Russia, and the United States), including the formulation of the Madrid Principles in 2007 and their subsequent revision in 2009, resulted in the development of various mechanisms aimed at resolving the conflict. “These principles included arrangements for the Armenian Armed Forces to vacate the occupied territories adjacent to the mountainous region of Karabakh, employing special procedures for the Lachin and Kalbajar regions. Furthermore, temporary international security measures would be established in the region until a subsequent vote determining its status could be conducted” [1, p. 5; 7].

The escalation of the Karabakh conflict, either directly or indirectly, led to significant casualties on both sides. Azerbaijan consistently advocated for a peaceful resolution to the conflict, and following the change in leadership in Armenia in 2018, there was hope for a peace agreement. Regrettably, Armenia's new government missed an opportunity to de-escalate tensions and support a peaceful resolution. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan exacerbated the situation when he questioned the Madrid Principles early in 2020, intensifying tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Simultaneously, Pashinyan disrupted peace talks by publicly expressing doubts about the negotiation format. Subsequent provocations, notably border clashes in Azerbaijan's Tovuz region in July 2020, severely undermined all peace efforts in the region. The Tovuz region holds strategic importance as it serves as a pivotal nexus connecting critical transportation and energy routes of Azerbaijan to the global markets. For example, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline, the South Caucasus natural gas pipeline (SCP) and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway pass through Tovuz region. As a result of those clashes on the border, 61 private houses were destroyed and agricultural fields were destroyed.

Furthermore, during this timeframe, Armenia engaged in deliberate provocations. The nation escalated reconnaissance and sabotage activities along the front line, with the Azerbaijani Ministry of Defense announcing on August 23 the apprehension of Senior Lieutenant Gurgin Alberyan, the commander of an Armenian sabotage group. Additionally, during this period, the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan also reported that several Armenian tactical drones trying to fly over the positions of the units of the Azerbaijani army were destroyed [Amashov, 2020: 4].

The provocations occurring in the frontline area were accompanied by political provocations, nationalist rhetoric, and cultural revanchism adopted by Armenia's current leadership as part of its foreign policy approach toward the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. Additionally, another factor exacerbating tensions was the reports of Russia dispatching military cargo to Armenia. During the July clashes and in the aftermath of hostilities, there were reports of nine such flights from the Russian Federation to Armenia. In response, the Azerbaijani side expressed its dissatisfaction with these developments.

Following the July clashes, Azerbaijan issued a warning that it stands prepared for potential provocations emanating from the Armenian border at any given time. Despite sporadic periods of relative calm in recent months, the situation has persisted as tense, marked by intermittent violations of the ceasefire. As a recent example, on September 22, Azerbaijan reported the loss of another soldier at the hands of the Armenian Armed Forces.

In his address at the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, President Ilham Aliyev advocated for the formulation of a revised timetable for the withdrawal of the Armenian Armed Forces from the occupied regions of Azerbaijan. He emphasized that UN Security Council resolutions are not subject to time constraints, as they remain in effect until their implementation. President Aliyev also underlined the imperative of not distorting the resolutions of the UN Security Council [2, p. 4].

Azerbaijan initiated this conflict in retaliation to a terrorist incident carried out by Armenia. On September 27, 2020, President and Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev delivered a national address, stating, “This morning, the armed forces of Armenia launched an attack on our towns and military positions, employing a range of weaponry, including heavy artillery, from multiple directions”.

As a result of enemy fire, there are casualties and injuries among the civilian population and our soldiers. May God have mercy on our martyrs! Their blood will not be left on the ground!” History is a witness that this promise of the Supreme Commander came true in 44 days... [3, p. 59–60].

On that very day, the Azerbaijani military initiated an extensive counter-offensive operation with the pri-

mary objective of safeguarding the civilian population. Notably, the Armenian army predominantly employed Russian weaponry such as the BM-30 Smerch, Tochka-U tactical missile system, and Scud missiles, whereas Azerbaijan actively deployed contemporary Turkish and Israeli armaments and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), in addition to Russian-manufactured weaponry. The Armenian Armed Forces incurred substantial losses in both personnel and military equipment throughout the conflict.

Following their defeat along the front lines, the Armenian military resorted to rocket attacks targeting Azerbaijani cities and critical infrastructure installations. On October 4, Armenia launched a rocket attack on the city of Mingachevir in Azerbaijan, specifically targeting Mingachevir's power station and water reservoir. Fortunately, Azerbaijan's air defense system effectively intercepted this attack, thereby averting a potential large-scale environmental catastrophe.

Throughout the conflict, Armenian forces launched attacks on the cities of Ganja and Barda using missiles such as the Tochka-U and BM-30 Smerch. These attacks resulted in numerous civilian casualties, with both injuries and fatalities. Importantly, it is worth noting that Ganja, at that time, was situated 100 kilometers away from the front lines [4, p. 5].

During the 44-day conflict, there were reports indicating that Armenia had employed "Iskander" missiles against Azerbaijan. It's worth noting that Armenia had acquired the Russian-made "Iskander-E" tactical ballistic missile system (TBM) with a maximum operational range of 280 kilometers. They displayed these systems during a military parade held in September 2016. Armenia's possession of this weaponry posed a significant threat to Azerbaijan's strategic infrastructure. The remains of the "Iskander" rocket launched by the Agency for Demining the Territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan (ANAMA) in the city of Shusha were discovered. It should be emphasized that the remains of the missile with index code 9M723 belong to the Iskander-M type. This missile, which has a maximum range of 500 km, is only for the use of the Russian army. If Russia sold "Iskander-M" missiles to Armenia instead of "Iskander-E", official Moscow is violating the Wassenaar Agreement on Export Control of Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies. In addition, Russian officials have always suggested that "Iskander-M" will not be exported to other countries [5, p. 65].

The war came to a conclusion on November 10, 2020, following the signing of the Tripartite Declaration by Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Russia. As per the terms of this agreement, 1,960 armed military personnel, 90 armored personnel carriers, 380 vehicles, and specialized equipment were dispatched to the Karabakh region. Furthermore, a Russia-Turkey Joint Monitoring Center was established for the purpose of monitoring the ceasefire implementation, specifically in the Agdam region.

Turkey's involvement in the peace process holds significant pertinence for the establishment of enduring tranquility within the region, with the Tripartite Declaration serving as a pivotal document that effectively terminated hostilities. In accordance with the provisions delineated in the Tripartite Statement on November 10th, Armenia relinquished its control over the Aghdam, Kalbajar, and Lachin regions, thereby reinstating Azerbaijan's jurisdiction over these territories.

Azerbaijan has launched a large-scale program for the restoration of liberated territories and the development of infrastructure in the region, and many international companies are participating in this process. Notably, Azerbaijan has entered into agreements with both Turkish and Italian firms, which are presently engaged in the restoration and enhancement of critical components such as roadways, railways, and other infrastructure. These infrastructural developments constitute integral elements for achieving comprehensive economic integration within the region. Nevertheless, certain challenges and impediments persist in the implementation of all facets of the November 10 Tripartite Declaration, including Articles 4 and 9, which hold paramount significance in the realms of security and economic collaboration.

Article 9 of the agreement dated November 10, 2020 explicitly stipulates the unblocking of all communication channels within the region, including the reestablishment of connectivity between Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. The precise verbiage of Article 9 is as follows:

"All economic and transport links in the region shall be restored. The Republic of Armenia guarantees the safety of transport links between the western regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic in order to organize an unimpeded movement of citizens, vehicles and goods in both directions" [3, p. 59–60].

It should be noted, Zangezur region [Armenians call it Syunik) is very important in terms of regional economic integration, and as mentioned above, according to Article 9 of the November 10 Tripartite Declaration, all economic and transport relations in the region must be restored, and Russian border guards guarding the Armenia-Iran border will ensure the safety of transport relations between the western regions of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan. This means that Azerbaijan will be able to restore the old transport route to its enclave through the Zangezur Corridor, which has been closed for decades. Zangezur Corridor will hasten regional nations' economic integration and growth.

To understand the importance of the economic effects of the 44-day war, it is enough to look at the economic problems caused by the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. Especially the new economic situation after the 44-day war created opportunities to solve many of the existing regional cooperation problems. Throughout the period of Armenian occupation,

the economies and economic ties of regional nations sustained substantial damage. The closure of borders between Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Armenia effectively severed economic relations with Armenia.

On this eve, the release of several Armenian detainees, who had been taken captive by Azerbaijan during the anti-terrorist operations in Karabakh, represents a positive development. These Armenian soldiers had, in contravention of the terms outlined in the November agreement, persisted in combatting the Azerbaijani armed forces. An illustrative case is that on May 27, the Azerbaijani authorities apprehended an additional six Armenian soldiers attempting to cross the border within the Kalbajar region with the intent of laying mines along Azerbaijani army supply routes.

As part of its humanitarian aid efforts for the Armenian population in Karabakh, Azerbaijan has granted Armenians access to the Khudavang Monastery in Azerbaijan's Kalbajar region. Furthermore, Azerbaijan has allowed the transit of Russian natural gas to Armenia through its territory. These actions demonstrate Azerbaijan's lack of interest in escalating border tensions and its readiness to resolve disagreements through diplomatic negotiations.

The occupation of our lands, Armenian provocations, Armenian vandalism, and finally the "Armenian issue" were all put an end to during this 44-day Patriotic War [3, p. 59-60].

Due to the presence of abundant natural resources in the occupied territories, Armenia engaged in their unlawful exploitation, involving both Armenian and foreign corporations. The illegitimate administration ruthlessly extracted minerals, non-ferrous and ferrous metals, mineral waters, freshwater reserves, and forested areas, while systematically causing harm to the local flora and fauna [3, p. 59–60].

Beyond Armenian companies, foreign entities from countries such as Russia, France, the USA, Great Britain, Germany, and the Netherlands also engaged in illicit activities within the internationally recognized, albeit occupied, territories of Azerbaijan. These companies, involved in the extraction of natural resources in Karabakh, included "Vallex Group", "Base Metals", "GeoProMining", "GoldStar", "Aurubis AG", "Caterpillar", "FLSmith & Co.", "Tashir Group", and others. In addition to the mentioned economic problems, Azerbaijan lost its direct land connection with the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (AR). As a result, Nakhchivan MR became a landlocked enclave experiencing a humanitarian and economic crisis.

Conclusion. In an international context, this article underscores three primary consequences of the 44-Day War for international relations.

First, the failure of pre-war peace talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as the international community's unwillingness to apply pressure on Armenia to comply with international law, verifies

the Machiavellian view of international relations. The Armenian leaders' ignorance of international law and the impunity granted to them, as well as the absence of international reaction, harmed not only the peace process between the two South Caucasus nations, but also the international legal order and trust.

Second, its meaning was more militaristic in nature. The rapid change in almost all areas of our lives thanks to technological revolutions over the past decades, it turns out, has not escaped the military. The 44-day war, which Azerbaijan largely won thanks to modern weapons, was the confirmation of this revolution. And although this revolution is perceived as a challenge by some countries, there is a group of countries that see it as an opportunity.

The third notable outcome of the last Karabakh war highlighted in this article is the potential for small states to more effectively safeguard their national interests when facing off against larger states. This new dynamic has the potential to bolster the defense capabilities of smaller nations. Furthermore, it may escalate the costs associated with military conflicts for larger states, thereby incentivizing them to pursue diplomatic resolutions and negotiated settlements to international disputes.

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Кінець 44-денної війни та вірмено-азербайджанський конфлікт

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Мета. Метою цієї статті є аналіз факторів, що призвели до розширення другої карабахської війни між Азербайджаном та Вірменією. Фактори розглядаються через призму конфлікту навколо політичних структур та проливають світло на процеси, що відбуваються у Вірменії та Азербайджані до цього дня. Стаття завершується оптимістичним висновком, що завершує двовіковий азербайджано-вірменський конфлікт нашою перемогою у 44-денній Вітчизняній війні.

Метод. Працюючи над статтею, автор постарався всебічно систематизувати всі джерела та інформацію з урахуванням конкретного історичного аналізу, створити цілісну картину теми. У процесі дослідження як основні методи дослідження було обрано історичність, науковість, об'єктивне та критичне ставлення до історичних процесів, їх порівняльний аналіз.

Наукова новизна: всебічно досліджено позицію вірмено-азербайджанського конфлікту щодо Нагірного Карабаху; На нинішньому етапі інтерпретовано результати у напрямку врегулювання вірмено-азербайджанського конфлікту.

Практична значимість. Стаття має важливе наукове та практичне значення з погляду вивчення всіх аспектів вірмено-азербайджанського конфлікту у контексті національних інтересів. Стаття може бути корисною при написанні наукових праць, підручників і монографій у цій галузі.

Висновок. На закінчення ця стаття проливає світло на підсумки 44-денної війни, висвітлюючи її з різних боків. Сама війна була пов'язана з багатьма факторами, включаючи нездатність міжнародних посередників допомогти у вирішенні конфлікту і чинити тиск на Вірменію, а також деструктивнішу поведінку останньої. У статті висвітлюється 44-денна війна, її вплив на відносини між Вірменією та її діаспорою, економічний вплив війни на регіон загалом, а також її вплив на міжнародні відносини.

Ключові слова: Азербайджансько-вірменський конфлікт, дослідження, науковий підхід, Вітчизняна війна, перемога.