

The Role of Regional Powers in the Conflict over Nagorny Karabakh Region

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Summary

The increased militarization of the Caucasus has a very detrimental effect on the peace process, the military build-up in the Caucasus has prompted both Armenia and Azerbaijan to consider the military option as the only way to resolve the Karabakh conflict, many Azerbaijanis believe that the NATO military training they received through the United States made them better able to retake Karabakh by force, at the same time Armenians believe that with Russian weapons and military aid they will be able to win any conflict about Karabakh, This has led to an increase in the level of aggression and reduced the incentive for dialogue and settlement on both sides, Although Karabakh is not as critical in Moscow's eyes as the conflicts in Georgia, Moscow still wants to maintain control in the South Caucasus and keep U.S. ambitions under control.

Keywords: Nagorno_Karabakh, Russian_Turkish rivalry, Iranian intervention in the Caucasus.

Introduction

The South Caucasus is one of the main regions of various historical conflicts due to its geopolitical location and natural resources, it represents a bridge between East and West, the post-Soviet period refers to a time when the countries of the region were seeking new national identities in their eternal and external policies, but on the regional level a period of geopolitical conflict began with the intervention of Russia, Turkey and Iran as regional actors along with global players such as the European Union, United States and others, the element that hinders the peace process Between Azerbaijan and Armenia, it is the politicization of Karabakh used to consolidate governance at an early stage of democratic transition, The weakness of domestic politics and the deterioration of the political situation prompted an increase in the participation of foreign countries in the politics of South Caucasus and in the conflict itself, and of all the conflicts that followed the Soviet Union, the war on Nagorny Karabakh received the greatest attention from the international community, where many regional and Western powers participated in mediating the Karabakh War but did not reach a final solution; accordingly, the research will be divided into three axes: first axis: Russian variable; second axis: Turkish variable; and third axis: Iranian variable.

Problem of the study

What are the repercussions and motives of the regional parties to the conflict around the Nagorno-Karabakh region?

Study hypothesis

study started from the hypothesis that, "The conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh region has its historical roots, which are renewed with the renewal of the political and economic interests of the regional and international powers surrounding this region, which explains their entry into the alignments of the last war that made the future of the region largely uncertain, as this war produced negative repercussions on the entire South Caucasus region."

Russian variable

Russia's policy is often described as contradictory as being supportive of Armenia, at the same time being a member and one of the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk negotiations (Sienrukos.H., 2006).

Thus, the shift in Russian policy towards Armenia and Azerbaijan can be seen compared to the nineties. there has been a shift from a policy defined by geopolitical competition and focused on maintaining hegemony, to a policy determined by economic factors more strongly, and against the background of an intensive strategic partnership with Armenia. Moscow has also established its cooperative relations with Azerbaijan in recent years regarding energy issues, but political differences between them can be observed on how to deal with "frozen conflicts" and the role of the West in the region, although Moscow has vital interests in the region and striving to limit Western influence, but they are taking a more realistic course with regard to Azerbaijan where economic and diplomatic tools are increasingly being used (Rasmussen.R.D., 2007).

Russia's actions towards Armenia and Azerbaijan are represented by the desire to perpetuate the conflict to keep the region under Russian control, as well as to keep Armenia and Azerbaijan weak and this allows Russia to have more control over the region's oil reserves and gives it greater influence with local leaders. Russia is a strong supporter of Armenia militarily and diplomatically since 1998 the two countries signed a treaty of friendship and mutual cooperation that included significant military assistance to Armenia. Russian parliamentary investigations have since found that Russia supplied Armenia with weapons during the Karabakh War, while both Azerbaijani and Armenian fighters took advantage of the weapons remaining in Soviet warehouses to arm themselves during the fighting. Russia secretly transferred weapons and military equipment to Armenian forces and these transfers included air defense missiles, tanks and small arms. Armenia partly welcomed Russian support to counter the threats posed by Azerbaijan and Turkey and traditionally looks to Russia as its protector in the region, despite its relationship with Armenia but Russia supports Azerbaijan as well as Moscow cannot completely alienate Baku because of its energy resources and geographical status (Cornell.S.E., 2005).

Russia, which has the advantage of the former Soviet infrastructure, has built a large military presence in the Caucasus, the Red Army has a large presence in Armenia where Russia maintains its military base in the country containing tanks, infantry combat vehicles, armored personnel carriers and cannons, for its part Armenia is a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization of the Commonwealth of Independent States dominated by Russia reflecting the strong military relations between the two countries, so Russia has about 80% of the country's power generation capabilities, therefore Armenia is heavily dependent on Russia, while in Azerbaijan Russia does not enjoy the same military occupation, yet Russia maintains a garrison, smaller military detachments and a radar station to track ballistic missiles in the town of Jableh (Akhmetova.A.T., 2021).

But many Armenians questioned Russia's reliability as a security guarantor and economic partner. After the change of Armenia's government in 2018, the country's political leadership followed democratic and governance reforms that put new pressure on its relationship with Russia. Russia guarantees Armenia's security through collective and bilateral treaties, both countries are members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and its member states are committed to defending the territorial integrity of other members in case of aggression. Russia and Armenia also have a bilateral agreement binding Russian forces stationed in Armenia. To provide Armenia's security, however, these obligations do not formally extend to Nagorny Karabakh (Welt, C, 2021).

The active pro-Western approach shown by Georgia's leaders after the "Rose Revolution" towards integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures including NATO, was very different in nature from the position of the Armenian and Azerbaijani ruling elite regarding Russia, so Russian-Georgian relations became complicated, due to Moscow's support for pro-Russian separatists in the regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which on August 8, 2008 led to an all-out war between the two countries, and a few days after its end Russia officially recognized the two territories as two states Independent. After this war it became widely understood that frozen conflicts endanger the stability of the South Caucasus region, in fact the Russo-Georgian War changed the basis of the international order that emerged after 1991 (Sushko, O, the End of International Order-1991: Impact of 2008 Russia-Georgia on Ukraine, 2008).

Russia seeks the West to recognize its sphere of influence in the South Caucasus clearly, arguing that its interests outweigh all other interests as the former dominant imperialist power and the current world superpower, and that it is the only truly sovereign state in this neighborhood while other countries enjoy emergency sovereignty, and Russia's economic and political interests always have priority (Others, 2015).

Russia is a major military resource for both Armenia and Azerbaijan, and before the autumn war of 2020 Russia followed a policy of parity so that neither side gains a significant advantage over the other, thus balancing Azerbaijan's purchases of advanced weapons by supplying Armenia with weapons and military equipment at subsidized prices and through loans. Russia provided Armenia with advanced capabilities such as short-range ballistic missiles K720 Iskander M9 and SU-30SM.24 fighters, but in recent years Russia was unwilling to supply Azerbaijan with its most weapons. Progress prompting Azerbaijan to diversify its arms purchases away from Russia and towards other international suppliers (Turkey and Israel) (Eglazarian, A, 2021).

The results of the recent war in Nagorny Karabakh and ceasefire negotiations indicate the following:- (Others S. a., 2021)

- 1 Moscow's growing pragmatism in the region and its ability to make accurate calculations based on securing key interests and willingness to make concessions on second-tier issues.
- 2 Highlight Russia and Turkey as independent superpowers that manage relations with their smaller neighbors without the interference of any Western powers or institutions.
- 3 Demonstrate the failure of international mediation efforts as the co-chairs of the Minsk Group were pushed to the sidelines, and the declining importance of Western powers in the security of the region where neither the United States or France had a role in or aftermath of the events.

- 4 The failure to reach a final solution for the Karabakh region is the inadequacy of the resolution of the conflict with Russia's role in relation to politics as a zero-sum game, as the Kremlin leadership sees no reason for it to engage in pushing the parties to the conflict towards a peaceful settlement, especially in recent years Putin has benefited from the conflict insofar as it has enabled it to leave the opposing sides in a constant state of insecurity, and to fuel the conflict by handing over weapons to the two sides depending on his desire to benefit financially from the conflict. These deliveries.
- 5 Russia is one of the regional powers that hinder the peace process, because it believes that the settlement of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict will open the way for Armenia to rid itself of Russian influence and further integrate into Euro-Atlantic structures, so dragging and withdrawing the peace process would be a way for Russia to continue to exert pressure on both Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- 6 Russia remains the most dominant player in the South Caucasus, Moscow simultaneously plays the role of peacemaker, troublemaker, arms supplier, regional policeman, economic hegemon and protector of traditional values, so Moscow has all the necessary tools to wage hybrid warfare.

Turkish variable

Turkey considered the dissolution of the Soviet Union a historic opportunity and described itself as a "regional power", which could be influential in the Turkish world spatially located in the North Caucasus and the Persian Gulf and stretch across the Adriatic Sea to the Great Wall of China, the main debate in this period was whether this situation could push Turkey into a position to impose its influence for the first time in its republican history in neighboring regions and have an important role in the Black Sea, the Caucasus and Central Asia, It is believed that Turkey had the opportunity to reach this goal through common historical, ethnic, religious and linguistic ties with the help of the fluidity of the world order, in this regard the preservation of the territorial integrity and independence of the newly emerging countries was the basis on which Turkey built its relations with the post-Soviet countries (Ibrahim, 2010).

Turkey and Azerbaijan can be defined as a society that favors each other, they refer to themselves as "two states in one nation" because of their cultural and linguistic continuity, their relations are not only tactical but long-term and strategic for both, alliance and rapprochement are deep in culture and society and are stable and well rooted, national interests may not always coincide but both Baku and Ankara show a good degree of caution when they are at risk of disturbing the partner, along with the high level of exchange and cooperation (Krikorian.O, 2012).

The events of 1915 described by Armenians as genocide led to the mass exodus of Armenians from Anatolia, the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Armenians due to violence or famine, and the creation of a large Armenian diaspora in Western countries such as France, the United States, Russia and the Middle East (Sammut.D., 2015).

But the modern government of Turkey denies the existence of genocide towards Armenians and indicates that hundreds of thousands of Ottoman Muslims died during the same period, and in 1993 Turkey closed its land border with Armenia, after Armenian forces captured the large mountainous region of Kilbajar between Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh, and the Turkish government said that the border will remain closed and diplomatic relations are not open until Armenian forces withdraw from Azerbaijani territory, and this policy remained in force for more than twenty years (Welt.c, 2013).

The secret talks began in 2007 in Switzerland when Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu was a very influential foreign policy adviser to Erdogan, the protocols were parts of the famous "zero-problem with neighbors" policy (Oğlua), and in 2009 the signing of the Zurich Protocols between Armenia and Turkey was a courageous initiative aimed at normalizing relations for the first time in nearly a century, it meant that the Turkish state took the initiative to follow a different line of policy than the one. Based on eternal hostility directly linked to the denial of the Armenian Genocide, Erdogan announced during his visit to Baku directly the Protocols before President Aliyev that he and his country would defend Karabakh (Well.T.D., 2010).

Although the South Caucasus region still faces a huge range of obstacles in terms of reform, democracy and regional stability, the diplomatic breakthrough between Armenia and Turkey represents one of the few positive trends in the region in recent years and heralds the beginning of regional stability, since the first historical and mutual visits of its kind by the Armenian and Turkish presidents to each country in what has become known as "football diplomacy", the promising process of "normalization" has once stopped significantly, yet there are signs Equally optimistic and equally important there is also a new opportunity to resume diplomacy and achieve expectations for normalization of relations (Giragosian.R., 2015).

Both Armenia and Azerbaijan have made two different choices for the development and application of military capabilities, as regional affiliations to a different partnership to build security and defense have caused two different approaches to how to develop military capabilities, which has brought strategic implications for both parties, data on the quantities of import of military equipment indicate that Azerbaijan has chosen a diverse network of arms suppliers, Turkey was identified as a supporter of armed unmanned aerial platforms and some other weapons systems just before the Nagorny Karabakh War, and Azerbaijan became a beneficiary of As Baku has sought the intensive development of its national military relations, these initiatives are an example of coordinated construction made between allies at the strategic level of security policy (Anglim.S., 2021).

Offset by an Armenian recession, before the last Nagorny Karabakh war the recession was evident in the field of military reforms, being a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization Armenia maintained close relations with Russia that openly guaranteed the supply of weapons, the presence of Russian troops and the ongoing joint exercises, this built security orientation guaranteed by the shepherd in Yerevan provided a political distraction from military modernization and suited well to adapt to the pragmatism of diplomatic and military initiatives by Russia, so Armenians were nominating themselves as a winning party based on From the previous war on Nagorny Karabakh in the nineties this belief involves strong self-confidence based on the ability to control important highland around Nagorny Karabakh (Bivainis.A, 2022).

As for Georgia it is the only Caucasian country that has a coast on the Black Sea, and it is the geographical link between Turkey and Azerbaijan, and for Azerbaijan Georgia is a political and economic partner that helps build relations with the West and especially with Turkey, as well as being a strategic military partner of NATO, and aware of this importance and strategic relationship Turkey recognized the independence of Georgia simultaneously with the independence of other former Soviet republics on December 16, 1991, These countries preferred to work together to overcome the potential geopolitical isolation of the Caucasus by supporting Georgia's territorial integrity against separatist groups, Azerbaijan secured the transit of oil and natural gas pipelines through Georgia which increased its strategic weight on the international stage (Tokgoz.I, 2011).

Today, developments and acceleration of changes in the region and the world seem more suitable to start a new phase in relations between Turkey and Armenia, and to turn a heavy page on the legacy of the past after almost three decades of closing the border between them, Turkish Foreign Minister (Moulood Cavusoglu) revealed the following: (Basil, 2022)

- 1 The first meeting between Turkey and Armenia after the appointment of the special representatives will be held in Moscow, and it is clear that the chances of reaching an agreement between Ankara and Yerevan are greater than ever, especially after the end of the Armenian occupation of Azerbaijani territory, which are the reasons for which Turkey severed its relations with Armenia in 1993 and closed its land border with it in support of Azerbaijan, which today no longer objects to the signs of rapprochement as it was in 2009, and declared that it supports the normalization of relations by brotherly Turkey With Armenia.
- 2 Calculations in the three capitals (Ankara, Baku and Yerevan) changed after the 44-day war that ended in the defeat of Armenia changed the rules of the game, and under the ceasefire agreement Armenia handed over the occupied territories to Azerbaijan, and this means the absence of Ankara's original justification for severing relations, Moscow's ability to revive the diplomatic agreements negotiated between Turkey and Armenia in 2009, especially the opening of the land border between the two countries, with the implementation of many of the provisions of the Russian-sponsored agreement between Baku and Yerevan and its control over Nakhchivan and Lachin strategic methods, one of the main obstacles to the implementation of the protocols previously signed between Ankara and Yerevan has been removed.
- 3 Armenia's need for Turkey seems greater, it continues to suffer from the consequences of the recent war and economic crises deepened by its long dependence on the Russian economy, while Turkey seems more interested in normalization with Armenia under the previously proposed "3+3" plan, which is a regional forum composed of the countries of the South Caucasus and their neighbors: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia as well as Iran, Russia and Turkey.
- 4 Turkish-Armenian relations beyond borders are more complex with most Armenian "lobbies" in the diaspora rejecting and opposing normalization, and this process must be accompanied by addressing the root causes of tensions that would lead to an increase in the degree of trust between states.

Therefore, the Russian position on the attempts at rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia was concerned and hesitant, and a number of American specialists in strategic affairs have stressed that the improvement of relations between Ankara and Yerevan will not only contribute to the stability of the Caucasus region, but will also work to reduce Armenia's political and economic dependence on Russia and Iran, and that this will be in the interest of the United States, and not serve Russia's interest, so Russia is keen to be the dominant in the region and stresses that it will not be possible to solve any issue without its participation, As for Washington, it exerted some pressure on both countries and acted as an assistant to reach this agreement, especially since it has an interest in removing Armenia at least partially from Russian dependency, thus ensuring in the future that Washington will provide safe corridors for the transport of oil and natural gas through Armenian territory (Balci.B, 2021).

Turkey's active intervention in the Nagorny Karabakh war is linked to many interests, which are as follows: (Suss.K, 2021)

- 1 In line with Turkey's new foreign policy strategy, active support for Azerbaijan to place Ankara in the position of direct opponent of Armenian supporters who are, from the Turkish point of view, the co-chairs of the Minsk Group (the United States, France, Russia).
- 2 Turkey's ambitions to become an influential international player competing with the United States and Russia.
- 3 The battle stopped when the Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders signed a peace agreement at Moscow's initiative, Baku left the battlefield as a clear victor, while Armenia suffered a bitter defeat, and the real winner of this war is Turkey, this victory represents a major geopolitical shift for Ankara due to the establishment of a road between Nakhichevan and Azerbaijan that crosses Armenia and thus creates a direct means of transport between Ankara and Baku.
- 4 Turkey's involvement in another war once again indicates a shift in Turkey's foreign policy and puts it at odds with Russia, this is not the first time that Ankara has found itself a competitor in a proxy war against the Kremlin, where Russia and Turkey (similar to Nagorny Karabakh) have divided conflict zones into zones of influence, so the fact that pipelines connecting Azerbaijan to Turkey and supplying the EU with oil and natural gas go closely through the conflict zone, and arouse additional international interest. Brussels is once again drawn to Turkey's actions.
- 5 Finally, both countries recognize the need to maintain constructive cooperation in the South Caucasus, where both Ankara and Moscow have overlapping interests such as the creation of a new, more cooperative Armenian government.

The Iranian variable

Iran has a long history in the South Caucasus, where records from the first century (BC) describe the region as the seat of rivalry between ancient Persia and the Roman Empire, Iran remains a powerful player in the region although its presence today is quieter, and Tehran is still mainly out of sight to avoid alienating Russia as it relies on it for military equipment, trade and technology, and therefore cannot afford to disturb Moscow, many analysts predicted that with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Iran will rush Turkey is to fill the vacuum in the South Caucasus and compete with each other for influence, but Russia remains so strong in the region that it has succeeded in preventing both Iran and Turkey from becoming too powerful (Hunter.S.T., 1994).

Iran was one of the first countries to offer to mediate the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, as it became increasingly concerned about the chaos caused by violence in the region and about the cross-border influx of refugees from Azerbaijan to its territory, and in an attempt to resolve the crisis in February of 1992, Iranian Foreign Minister brought together Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh to negotiate a settlement, but the previous ceasefire agreement was violated and Azerbaijan began to suffer heavy losses, A major turning point occurred when the Armenian army seized the town of Shusha while negotiations were ongoing, Tehran decided that the parties were not ready to reach an agreement and that mediation was not worth its effort, while Azerbaijan, humiliated by its losses in the war, blamed Iran for failing to stop Armenian victories and rejected Iran as a suitable mediator (Betts.W, 1999).

There is a feeling in Iran that Azerbaijan is making a historic mistake by granting the United States access to the Caspian Sea region, Iran strongly opposes the rapprochement between Azerbaijan and Israel, and the Iranian-Russian alliance is very fragile, in the long history of Russia's relations with Iran strategic alliances to ward off Turkish or Western threats have always been reluctant on Iran's part and short-lived, if Iran succeeds in Improving its

relations with the United States and attracting the transport of Azerbaijani oil through its territory, its interests will not coincide with those of Russia (Bigdeli.A, 2001).

The Israeli presence in the Caucasus represents for Iran a factor of instability, information indicates that the crisis between Iran and Azerbaijan was caused by Israel, as the entity has established bases and radar stations in Azerbaijan near the border with Iran to monitor military movements and monitor Iranian missiles in the event of their launch towards Israel, while the entity's companies are working to establish agricultural and industrial projects similar to the Zionist settlement system in southern Azerbaijan and 50 km from the border with Iran, and the entity is not satisfied with this role and presence Effective military, media and economic practicality in Azerbaijan, Iranian fears are that there is a Turkish-Azerbaijani plan to support the Zionist entity to control the Iranian-Armenian border in order to open a corridor between Turkey and Azerbaijan, and this leads to cutting off Iran's only route to Europe through Armenia, so the corridor crisis may revive the historical conflicts of the Caucasus (Azerbaijani-Iranian crisis and its impact, 2021).

To this end, the leaders in Yerevan made a concerted effort to reach neighboring Iran, since Armenia is landlocked and under siege and its neighbor Iran provides valuable trade opportunities and energy resources, Iran, which has been blacklisted to deal with the United States and withdrew from some large energy deals, has been keen to obtain a market that disburses its goods and energy in Armenia, as well as the power plant on the Araxis River that borders the two countries, Although Iran is not actively inciting conflict, the continuation of the Karabakh War indirectly helps Iran subdue two of its biggest regional threats by keeping it weak and dispersed, thereby maintaining the status quo in Tehran's interest (Sienrukos.H., 2006,).

Iran is the only energy supplier to Armenia when Azerbaijan and Turkey isolated Armenia Iran sent aid to them which allowed them to survive and Armenia survived the Turkish blockade thanks to Iranian aid so Iran is Armenia's third trading partner after Russia and Germany, Iran is trying to weaken Azerbaijan and strengthen Armenia with economic aid because Azerbaijan is one of the most important oil producers in the world and it does not belong to OPEC which becomes more attractive to foreign investors That's why Iran retains Some conflicts with Azerbaijan for control of oil fields in the Caspian Sea (Shananahan.R, 2013).

For Georgia, it suffered greatly from the Iranian invasions that culminated in the burning of the capital Tbilisi in the late eighteenth century, which prompted the King of Georgia to decide that he had no alternative but to intensify relations with the Russians who were Christian Orthodox colleagues, but the latter gradually took over Georgia and then the entire Caucasus, and first overthrew Iran and then Turkey from the region, the wars with Iran left an indelible imprint on Georgian historical memory, The most prominent Georgian thinkers and authors relied on examples of Georgia's heroic resistance against Iranian oppression and as usual they created lavish legends that inspired Georgian national pride and served as a nation-building tool, anti-Iranian sentiment in Georgia was further reinforced in Soviet times as Iran was portrayed as Georgia's main rival, and that Georgia as a victim was finally saved by Russia (Sharashenide.T.,2013).

Despite concerns about issues such as the division of the Caspian Sea and the increase in the influence of the United States and Israel, Iran has pursued a relatively non-confrontational policy in the South Caucasus, especially when compared to its aggressive rhetoric and proxy support for Yemen, Bahrain, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Palestinian groups, *Res Militaris*, vol.13, n°1, Winter-Spring 2023

that Iran has not contributed to strengthening security in the South Caucasus, as its position on the Nagorny Karabakh conflict concludes that Tehran is a player in the status quo and is not in a hurry to see a solution to the conflict, yet in the case of The lifting of international sanctions on Iran and the normalization of diplomatic relations with the West Iran's role and influence in the region will increase significantly, this will change the balance of power in the region which will be a challenge to other regional powers such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Israel (Paul.A, 2015).

The end

During the Soviet period the South Caucasus worked as a regime, where Armenia owns most of the industries, Azerbaijan supplied energy, Georgia was a tourist and agricultural center, but when the Soviet Union fell the economic relations in the Caucasus changed dramatically, Georgia suffered from a terrible economic crisis, Azerbaijan began to export oil and gas abroad, and Armenia established a close relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran to get rid of the isolation and siege imposed on it, Therefore, the countries of the South Caucasus should reconsider increasing cooperation among themselves, and benefit from the experience of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline project that has missed the opportunity to deepen regional integration and independence, as future regional projects involving all Caucasian countries would increase regional interdependence and cooperation, giving all countries an interest in the stability and prosperity of the region.

Conclusions

- 1 The greatest challenge for both Azerbaijan and Armenia is the need to build their social and economic institutions on their own terms so that they can successfully transition to a more democratic society, the restructuring of social services will eliminate instability and enable society to be open and balanced in the discussion of the Karabakh issue.
- 2 The conflict in Nagorny Karabakh has been protracted by external factors, with some believing that the Armenian and Azerbaijani governments would have reached an agreement long ago had they been left alone, yet the South Caucasus region is far too important to be left alone, because of its rich energy resources and geostrategic location.
- 3 The most important countries in the region (the United States and Russia) are engaged in a dangerous arms race to secure access to Caspian oil supplies and regional pipelines and this exacerbates local tensions, and regional actors launch a diplomatic offensive to control the South Caucasus, that the militarization of these countries harms the peace process and increases the likelihood of a re-outbreak of war, as local leaders are increasingly confident that they will be able to win the Karabakh War with the help of their allies.

Recommendations

- 1 There must be an immediate cessation of aggressive and nationalist discourse full of triumph and provocation, and the narratives of hatred fueled by intolerant nationalism must cease.
- 2 Parties to the conflict should promote reconciliation, confidence-building and mutual understanding through governmental and non-governmental channels;
- 3 The countries of the South Caucasus need to realize that through the continuation of the conflict war will generate war and thus destroy all parties, so they should focus on new

forms of regional cooperation to generate a greater sense of security and social and economic development.

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