



# Unraveling the Complexity: A Comprehensive Analysis of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict and Turkish Geopolitical Stance

**Tasnim Zerine Nizhum**

Department of Business Administration, Bangladesh University of Professionals, Dhaka, Bangladesh

E-mail: [tznizhum@gmail.com](mailto:tznizhum@gmail.com)

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## Research Article

### Abstract

*The Armenian Azerbaijani dispute, a 100-year-old conflict, has resurfaced in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, a region with a majority Armenian population. The Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict began after Russia's 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, with Azerbaijanis and Armenians fighting for sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh. After the USSR's dissolution in 1991, the conflict resulted in 20,000 deaths and over 1 million displaced persons. This paper examines the historical background of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, a region with a majority Armenian population. It also analyzes the reasons behind the escalation of the conflict in 2020 and Turkey's role in supporting Azerbaijan.*

*The study employs a descriptive secondary data analysis approach, reviewing various reports, journals, articles, and research papers. The findings reveal that the conflict stems from historical ethnic tensions and territorial disputes. Azerbaijan's military advantage due to increased energy resources, Turkey's political and military support, and the withdrawal of the United States from the region all contributed to the recent escalation. The war resulted in casualties on both sides and caused economic damage. Turkey aims to expand its influence in the area by supporting Azerbaijan. The paper concludes that the conflict will unlikely be resolved soon due to the complex geopolitical interests involved.*

**Keywords:** Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict, Regionalism, Conflict Resolution.

### 1. Introduction

Two former Soviet Union states of the Southern Caucasus, Azerbaijan, and Armenia, have fought many times for Nagorno-Karabakh. According to the facts obtained so far, Azerbaijan is in a relatively advantageous position, and Turkey's assistance has been a key factor in Azerbaijan's recent success in war. The 100-year-old conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan revolves around the Nagorno-Karabakh region, a region with a majority Armenian population. During the Soviet Union, Nagorno-Karabakh was included in Azerbaijan but given autonomy to Armenians. In the 1980s, Azerbaijan's Baku opposed Nagorno-Karabakh's independence, leading to war. Azerbaijan was defeated, and Armenia gained the authority of Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia has no boundaries in connection with Nagorno-Karabakh; that is why Armenians took possession of Azerbaijan's land, which is between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. After the war in 1994, Armenians built a state, which is adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan, closely connected with Armenia. This state is currently known as the "Republic of Artsakh." Artsakh, a region in Azerbaijan, has not been recognized by any UN member state, including Armenia.

Unlike other areas like Transnistria, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia, Artsakh is not recognized as an independent state. Armenians claim Azerbaijan will never grant them autonomy.

The 1988-1994 conflict, which escalated in late 2020, resulted in the unlawful killing, torture, and forced displacement of older people, causing lasting harm. Armenia's illegal exploitation of natural resources, including forest destruction, fire spread, flora and fauna destruction, river pollution, and fertile soil destruction, has caused irreversible environmental damage. The Azerbaijani war resulted in the looting of 900 villages, over 20,000 deaths, and 50,000 injuries. Armenian forces occupied 20% of Azerbaijani territory, putting the country's financial and economic security at risk. Inflation rose to 1,800% in 1994, and total GDP decreased by 60% between 1989-1994. The war destroyed six cities, 12 settlements, 830 provinces, 700 hospitals, 368 clubs, and 85 musical schools. Armenia also damaged water resources, causing 2.1 million square meters of polluted water to enter the Aras River (Baghirov, 2017). The war led to the closure of nearly 7,000 establishments, affecting Azerbaijan's economy. The destruction of the irrigation system in the Nagorno-Karabakh region left 120 hectares of land without irrigation, and over 1 million hectares of agricultural land were withdrawn from circulation. The ongoing conflict is attributed to Azerbaijan's desire to reclaim lost land from Armenia in 1994. According to Armenian officials, 3,825 soldiers and 85 civilians had died in the combat, and 21 civilians and 187 service members were missing. Furthermore, 541 Syrian mercenaries who were fighting for Azerbaijan were killed, according to records kept by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Significant savings on budgetary expenses due to the conflict would be highly advantageous for Azerbaijan and Armenia. Both countries could cut their military spending by 2% of GDP annually to bring them in line with other peaceful nations. Armenia may save 3% of GDP annually by avoiding annual costs of 0.9% to sustain the Nagorno-Karabakh local economy and 0.1% of GDP to cover interest payments. Eventually, Azerbaijan may save 0.4% of GDP annually on Support for internally displaced persons, cutting overall spending by 2.4% of GDP annually. By removing current financial restraints, such significant fiscal savings would allow both countries to significantly expand investment in socially beneficial areas like health and education while drastically reducing budget deficits (Yavuz, *The Consequences of the First War on Armenia and Azerbaijan*, 2022).

Following Russia's 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, Azerbaijanis and Armenians fought for sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh. From 1920 to 1922, Azerbaijan and Armenia became USSR constituent republics. Nagorno-Karabakh was an independent province until 1991, with 77% Armenian and 22% Azerbaijani (Migdalovitz, 2020). After the USSR's dissolution in 1991, Armenian and Azerbaijani armed forces fought directly, resulting in 20,000 deaths and over 1 million displaced persons. In 1993, the UN Security Council passed resolutions calling for a cessation of hostilities, reaffirming the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Azerbaijani Republic, and withdrawing occupying forces from occupied areas of Azerbaijan (Khan, 2021). Following the battle between Azerbaijan and Armenia in July 2020, Turkey has been giving Azerbaijan much military support. Following this battle, Turkey and Azerbaijan organized a sizable Joint Military Exercise in Baku, Ganja, Kurdamir, Yevlakh, and Nakhchivan in Azerbaijan (Modebadze, 2021). Based on the above-mentioned background, the present study is designed to attain the following objectives.

- a. Examine the historical background of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, tracing its roots to understand the factors contributing to the ongoing tensions.
- b. Delve into the nature and extent of Turkish support for Azerbaijan, exploring diplomatic, economic, and military dimensions.
- c. Examine how the international community has responded to the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict and the role of major actors in mediating or exacerbating the situation.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Historical Background**

The root of the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict lies in the region's complex history. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, predominantly populated by Armenians, became an autonomous region within Azerbaijan SSR. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh reignited, escalating into a full-blown war in the early 1990's. The war resulted in Armenian control over Nagorno-Karabakh and animosity on both sides. Without effective efforts at mediation, continued ceasefire violations and heightened tensions pose a possibility of rekindling a major conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan (Action, 2024). Armenia, to sway the Azeri Muslims. Unfortunately, this was not the case for the Azeris. Iran, on the other hand, for a variety of reasons, gave Armenia its covert support in the battle (Cornell, 1998). population of 120,000 ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh have been forced to flee their homes after the latest Azerbaijani military assault (Scahill, 2023).

### **2.2 Geopolitical Influences**

Several regional powers play a significant role in the conflict. Russia, traditionally seen as the protector of Armenians, maintains a military base in Armenia and has provided military aid. Turkey, with strong cultural and ethnic ties to Azerbaijan, has emerged as a critical supporter, offering military equipment and diplomatic backing. The involvement of these external actors adds another layer of complexity to the conflict and hinders a peaceful resolution. After the USSR's collapse, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia's political elites failed to recognize the South Caucasus as a single region with shared economic, political, and social interests. (Avetisian, 2021) 'Post-secular' analysis of contemporary Azerbaijani politics challenges the idea that post-secular viewpoints solely apply to contemporary Western cultures (Hovsepyan, 2023).

### **2.3 Ethnic and Nationalist Narratives**

Historical grievances and ethnic tensions fuel the conflict. Both sides perpetuate narratives portraying the other as the enemy through education, media, and political discourse. This atmosphere of mistrust and animosity makes compromise difficult. Turkey and Azerbaijan share strong historical and cultural ties. According to reports, Azerbaijan was able to capture territory in 2020 thanks in large part to the warfare using drones built in Turkey, known as Bayraktars (Cornell, 1998). Turkey and Armenia do not have diplomatic ties, and in 1993, Turkey closed its border with Armenia to demonstrate support for Azerbaijan about Nagorno-Karabakh. (Yavuz & Huseynov, 2021). Despite not sharing a border, Armenia is Russia's close ally in the Caucasus region between the Black and Caspian seas, where it also maintains a sizable Russian military facility (Yavuz & Huseynov, 2021).

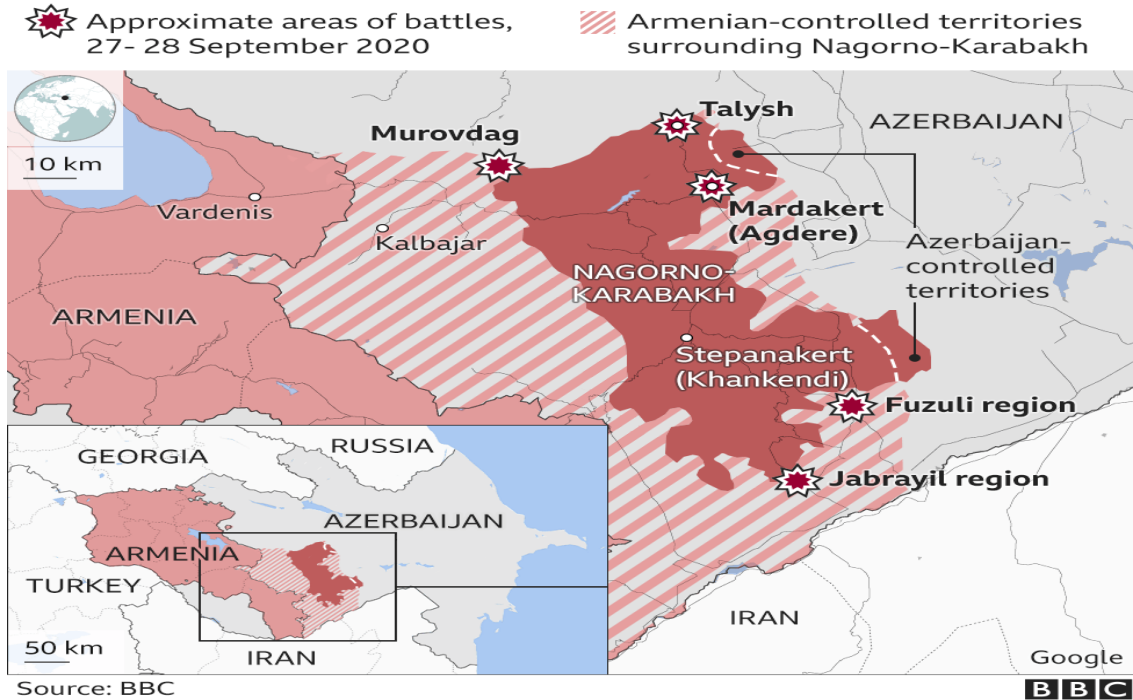
### **2.4 The Role of International Actors**

The international community has largely been unsuccessful in mediating a lasting peace agreement. The OSCE Minsk Group, co-chaired by France, Russia, and the United States, has been the primary forum for negotiations, but significant progress has been elusive. The long-term implications of the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict are far-reaching, encompassing economic stagnation, regional instability, and a heightened risk of renewed hostilities. The conflict diverts resources from development, hinders regional cooperation, and fuels an arms race. The unresolved issues of territorial claims, ethnic tensions, and historical grievances create an environment ripe for future flare-ups, posing a threat to regional and international security.

## 2.5 The 2020 War

In 2020, a new wave of violence erupted in Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan, with increased military capabilities and Turkish backing, launched a major offensive. The war started on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and ended with a ceasefire agreement on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020. It was the largest escalation of hostilities in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict since the ceasefire of 1994. The war resulted in a significant territorial loss for Armenia and a major victory for Azerbaijan. The six-week war resulted in territorial gains for Azerbaijan and a Russia-brokered ceasefire agreement. However, the underlying causes of the conflict remain unsolved.

### Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh



**Fig. 1: A Map Depicting the Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh**

## 2.6 Research Gap

In these research papers, the researchers emphasize the economic consequences, death, and other casualties due to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Another paper discusses the notion that post-secular perspectives exclusively apply to modern Western societies by examining contemporary Azerbaijani politics from a post-secular perspective. They also discuss how Russia is helping Armenia in this war.

In our paper, we emphasize the historical context of the Armenia-Azerbaijan War. We also analyze how Turkish support is helping Azerbaijan in this war and the reasons for Azerbaijan's involvement in the conflict with Armenia. This paper addresses a gap in the existing research by emphasizing the role of Turkish support in the recent escalation of the conflict. Previous studies have explored economic consequences and historical background. This paper delves deeper into the strategic motivations behind Turkey's involvement.

### **3. Methodology**

This research employed a descriptive secondary data analysis approach to examine the complex and multifaceted Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, focusing on the recent 2020 war and Turkey's role. Secondary data analysis involves systematically examining and interpreting existing data collected by others. This method was chosen due to the extensive literature available on the topic and the constraints of time and resources.

#### **3.1 Data Collection**

A comprehensive search strategy was employed to identify relevant and credible secondary data sources. This included scholarly journals, academic books, reputable news articles, reports from government agencies and international organizations, and policy papers from think tanks. The search used online databases such as JSTOR, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, and news aggregators like Nexis Lexis. The keywords used for the search included “Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict,” “Nagorno-Karabakh,” “2020 war,” “Turkey’s role,” “Geopolitical influences,” and “ethnic tensions.”

#### **3.2 Selection Criteria**

The selection of data sources was guided by the following criteria: (a) Relevance: The data source had direct relevancy to the research topic and addressed the research questions. (b) Credibility: Sources of information have been from a reputable and trustworthy source, such as a peer-reviewed academic journal, a well-established news organization, or a recognized government agency. (c) Currency: Digital sources have been used as recently as possible to ensure the inclusion of the latest developments in the conflict. (d) Objectivity: Data sources are objective and unbiased in presenting the conflict. Sources that were presented with a clear partisan viewpoint were excluded.

#### **3.3 Data Analysis**

The collected data was carefully analyzed to identify key themes, patterns, and relationships. A thematic analysis approach was adopted, where codes were grouped into broader categories. This process allowed for identifying the major factors contributing to the ongoing conflict, the role of external factors such as Turkey, and the challenges associated with finding a peaceful resolution.

The findings and analysis section is organized logically and structured, focusing on the causes, key players, and implications of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war.

We begin by outlining the factors that motivated Azerbaijan to start the conflict, emphasizing its increased military capabilities, Turkish Support, and the perceived strategic opportunity due to the US's decreased regional presence.

Then, we explore the specifics of Turkey's involvement. This part investigates the complex dynamics of Turkey's role, including its ambitions for regional influence and its strategic competition with Russia. In the impact of the conflict, I shift to the consequences of the war and the economic repercussions for both sides. I also address the uncertainties surrounding the conflict's long-term implications.

Our analysis progresses from the specific causes of the 2020 war to the broader implications for the region, providing a comprehensive overview of the conflict's dynamics.

### **4. Findings and Analysis**

#### **4.1 Reasons for Azerbaijan to Start the War**

Firstly, after the war of 1994, Azerbaijan’s abundant energy resources have multiplied its military and technological capabilities. Currently, the budget allocated for Azerbaijan’s defense sector is higher than Armenia’s budget. Therefore, Baku thinks that the military balance is now in their favor. Secondly, Azerbaijan’s neighboring country, Turkey’s influence. The leaders of Azerbaijan and Turkey use the phrase “One nation, two states” to describe the close relationship between the two countries. These two countries

are closely related to each other from linguistic, ethnic, cultural, religious, and historical perspectives. In 1918, when Azerbaijan first emerged as an independent state, Turkey then actively aided the state. When Azerbaijan departed from the Soviet Union, Turkey was the first to recognize them. Ethnic-cultural similarities and geographical interests, Turkey has given full support to Azerbaijan against Armenia. On the other hand, there is no such supporter for Armenia- Armenia's closest ally, Russia, is also an important partner of Azerbaijan at the same time (Ismayilov, 2016).

Thirdly, the United States has almost withdrawn from this region, which is why Baku considers this the ideal time to engage in the conflict against Armenia. Turkey has not officially participated in this war yet but has strongly supported Azerbaijan. Turkey may provide F-16 (made in the USA) warplanes to Azerbaijan- in response to such a possibility, Armenia has threatened to use Russian missiles.

Azerbaijan is using Turkish drones and other weapons on the battlefield. This war has been directly claimed as the "Turkish-Armenian war". Armenia claimed that Turkey has sent hundreds of Syrian mercenaries to the battlefield to help Azerbaijan. In the 1992-94 Nagorno-Karabakh war, Turkey helped Azerbaijan a lot. Turkey provided financial assistance to the newly independent country in conducting the war. Turkish intelligence provided arms and supplies to Azerbaijan. About 350 high-ranking Turkish military officials have trained and directed Azerbaijani troops. Besides, hundreds of Turkish volunteers took part in the battle. Despite the Turkish support, corrupt, untrained, and demoralized Azerbaijani soldiers were defeated in the war, and Armenia occupied Nagorno-Karabakh along with 7 more Azerbaijani districts (Shaikh, 2020).

Since July 2020, after the Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict, Turkey has been providing much military assistance to Azerbaijan. After this conflict, Azerbaijan and Turkey arranged a large-scale Joint Military Exercise in Azerbaijan's Baku, Ganja, Kurdamir, Yevlakh, and Nakhchivan. From 29<sup>th</sup> July to 10<sup>th</sup> August, almost 11000 Turkish troops participated in this Joint exercise. Analysts say a huge number of heavy weapons used in this joint exercise were left by the Turkish troops in Azerbaijan. On 27<sup>th</sup> September, after starting the war, Turkey expressed full support to Azerbaijan (Huseynov, 2020).

## 4.2 Turkish Support for Azerbaijan

Whatever the nature of Turkey's support, it is clear that it is taking an active part in this war. There are various reasons behind this move.

First, Turkey considers itself the leader of the greater Turkish world, and 'Greater Turkish Nationalism' has a profound influence on the Turkish state ideology. Erdogan's relatively Islamist government and previous secular governments have followed this policy. Many analysts say Erdogan's foreign policy has a combination of "Greater Turkish nationalism" and "Neo-Ottomanism." Since the end of Soviet rule in Central Asia and the South Caucasus in 1991, Turkey has sought to include Turkish states in the region in its sphere of influence (Mazanashvili, 2023).

Second, Azerbaijanis are part of the larger Turkish nation, so Turkey is naturally interested in incorporating Azerbaijan into its sphere of influence. As part of this process, Turkey has always supported Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In the current war, Turkey is supporting Azerbaijan for the same purpose. Turkey is not yet self-sufficient in energy resources and must import vast amounts of energy from other states. Much comes from Russia, where the Turks are largely exchange-dependent and often hostile. Turkey is willing to reduce its energy dependency on Russia in this context. The Turks have already increased their natural gas imports from Azerbaijan, and as a result, the amount of Russian gas exported to Turkey has dropped significantly. From Turkey's point of view, Azerbaijan is a more reliable partner than Russia. In addition, Turkey is interested in building a military base in the Nakhchivan region of Azerbaijan (RAUF, 2023).

But Azerbaijan is economically prosperous because of its huge energy reserves, and therefore Azerbaijani foreign policy is not dependent on Turkey or any other state. Turkey is willing to change this situation. If

Azerbaijan recaptured some of the territory in the ongoing war, it would be considered a great victory for Azerbaijan, and naturally, Turkish support would lead to the spread of pro-Turkish sentiment in Azerbaijan. On the other hand, even if Azerbaijan is defeated in the conflict, Azerbaijan will lean towards Turkey to strengthen its position. Whatever the outcome of the war, the war will increase Turkish influence in Azerbaijan.

Third, Turkey's geopolitical conflict with Russia is one of the reasons for the active role of the Turks in this war. Turkey and Russia are backing different sides in the ongoing war in Syria and Libya, and while the Turkish-backed GNA government has a relatively good position against the Russian-backed Libyan National Army in Libya, the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army in Syria is cornered by the Russian-backed Syrian government. Since Russia considers the South Caucasus part of its sphere of influence, Turkey has challenged Russia by intervening there. Some analysts believe that the Turks are interested in taking advantage of Russia in Syria and Libya by intervening in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Fourth, according to many analysts, Turkey's long-term goal is to include the Caucasus region in the Turkish sphere of influence. In addition to Azerbaijan, Turkey has forged close ties with hardline anti-Russian Georgia and is keen to influence the Russian-controlled republics in the North Caucasus (Yavuz, 2020).

Fifth, Turkish President Erdogan is keen to establish Turkey as a major power. One of his goals is to bring Turkey into the five-member UN Security Council. Turkey wants to invalidate the "Minsk Group" formed by Russia, France, and the United States to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. For this, Turkey wants to bring the military balance of the South Caucasus in favor of Azerbaijan so that Russia is forced to sit in bilateral talks with Turkey to resolve the issue. But Russia considers the South Caucasus as its exclusive sphere of influence, so if Russia recognizes Turkey as an equal partner in the region, it will be a diplomatic defeat for the Russians and a major diplomatic victory for Turkey. In addition, if the Minsk group can be proven ineffective, it will be a simultaneous Turkish diplomatic victory over Russia and the Western world. Sixth, the Turkish-Armenian ethnic conflict is also one of the reasons for Turkey's support for Azerbaijan. The anti-Armenian attitude in Turkey and the anti-Turkish attitude in Armenia are very strong. The Armenians accuse the Turks of committing genocide against them, and the Turks have historically regarded the Armenians as "Puppets of the Russians" and "Enemies of the Turks." The recent Azerbaijani-Armenian war has been directly referred to in the Armenian media as the 'Turkish-Armenian War.'

This paper scrutinizes the intricate details of the Armeni-Azerbaijan conflict, particularly focusing on the recent 2020 war and the role of Turkey in supporting Azerbaijan. The key findings of the research are discussed comprehensively below:

#### **4.2.1. Historical Roots of the Conflict**

The root cause of the conflict lies in the region's complex historical background. Nagorno-Karabakh, a territory predominantly populated by Armenians, became an autonomous region within Azerbaijan during the Soviet era. The dispute over its sovereignty re-emerged after the USSR's dissolution in 1999, escalating into a full-blown war in the early 1990s.

#### **4.2.2 Factors Leading to the 2020 War**

Azerbaijan's increased military capabilities due to its abundant energy resources emboldened them to challenge Armenia's control over Nagorno-Karabakh. Their military budget surpassed Armenia's entire budget. Strong cultural and ethnic ties between Azerbaijan and Turkey motivated Turkey to provide Azerbaijan with significant military and diplomatic backing. Turkey views itself as the leader of the Turkic goals. The withdrawal of the United States from the region created a strategic opportunity for Azerbaijan, perceived as the ideal time to engage in a military confrontation with Armenia.

### **4.2.3 Turkish Involvement and Motivations**

Turkish involvement in the war, though not officially declared, was substantial. They provided Azerbaijan with critical military support, including drones and potentially F-16 fighter jets. Some have interpreted this involvement as a “Turkish-Armenian War.” Several Factors Drive Turkey’s Active Role in the Conflict: Pan-Turkic Nationalism: Turkey aspires to be the leader of the Turkic world, and supporting Azerbaijan aligns with this ideology. Both governments emphasize the close cultural and ethnic ties between the two nations.

### **4.2.4 Geopolitical Influence**

Turkey seeks to expand its influence in the South Caucasus region, potentially establishing a military base in Azerbaijan. Weakening Armenian control over Nagorno-Karabakh strengthens. Turkey’s position in the region.

### **4.2.5 Energy Security**

Turkey aims to reduce its dependence on Russia for energy imports. Azerbaijan is a potential alternative supplier, and a victory in the war could increase Turkish leverage in securing energy resources.

### **4.2.6 Challenge to Russia**

Turkey’s support for Azerbaijan can be seen as a challenge to Russia’s regional dominance. Both countries back opposing sides in various conflicts, and this intervention asserts Turkish power.

### **4.2.7 Weakening Armenia**

The long-standing Armenian-Turkish hostility also plays a role. Turkey’s support for Azerbaijan weakens Armenia and potentially discourages them from pursuing recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

## **4.3. Impact of the Conflict**

The six-week war resulted in significant territorial gains for Azerbaijan and a major setback for Armenia. A Russia-brokered ceasefire agreement ended the hostilities, but the underlying causes of the conflict remain unsolved. The war has had severe economic consequences for both Armenia and Azerbaijan. Significant concerns are the economic burden of sustaining a large military and the potential loss of future investments due to regional instability. The unresolved conflict threatens regional security, with the possibility of renewed violence in the future. Ethnic tensions and historical grievances continue to simmer, creating a volatile environment.

## **4.4. Uncertainties and Future Implications**

The long-term implications of the 2020 war are yet to be fully understood. It is unclear whether Azerbaijan will be able to fully regain control over Nagorno-Karabakh or if the conflict will remain a source of tension for years to come. The role of external actors, particularly Turkey and Russia, will significantly influence the future trajectory of the conflict. Their competing interests and potential for confrontation add another layer of complexity to the situation.

Finding a lasting resolution to the conflict requires addressing the core issues of historical grievances, ethnic identity, and territorial claims. Confidence-building measures, international pressure, and a willingness to compromise from all parties are crucial for achieving sustainable peace.

In this conflict, Pakistan has expressed full support to Azerbaijan, and Russia, Iran, and the European Union have asked both sides for an end to the war. For this conflict, Moscow is in the most unprepared situation because prolonging the war will increase Turkey’s chances of intervening in the war for Azerbaijan. In this



case, Russia has to take sides with Armenia since Armenia is a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and European Economic Community. Nevertheless, if Russia takes Armenia's side directly, Azerbaijan will go completely out of the ring, which is undesirable for Moscow. Moreover, Turkey is very important to Russia geopolitically, and it will not be profitable for Moscow to be embroiled in a new conflict with Turkey. Predicting how much Azerbaijan will ultimately benefit from this conflict is difficult. In the current situation, it does not seem possible for them to regain Nagorno-Karabakh and the adjacent region. On the contrary, if there is a long-term war, then Azerbaijan and Armenia both will be economically disadvantaged. However, the economic risk is high for Armenia, without minerals and under siege by Turkey.

## **5. Conclusion**

The 2020 war in Nagorno-Karabakh marked a significant escalation in the decades-long conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. While the immediate outcome saw territorial gains for Azerbaijan, the underlying factors driving the conflict remain unresolved. This paper has demonstrated that the conflict is deeply rooted in historical grievances, ethnic tensions, and the geopolitical maneuvering of regional powers.

The findings underscore Turkey's critical role in supporting Azerbaijan. Driven by a combination of pan-Turkic nationalism, geopolitical ambitions, and energy security interests, Turkey has provided Azerbaijan with significant military and diplomatic backing. This support has significantly altered the power dynamics in the region, challenging Russia's traditional influence and increasing Turkey's strategic leverage.

However, the long-term consequences of this increased Turkish involvement remain uncertain. While Azerbaijan may have achieved short-term military gains, the potential for renewed conflict and regional instability remains high. The unresolved territorial disputes, the continued presence of Armenian forces in some areas, and the ongoing political tensions between Armenia and Turkey create a volatile environment. Furthermore, the conflict has significant economic and social costs for Armenia and Azerbaijan. The diversion of resources towards military spending, the displacement of populations, and the destruction of infrastructure have hindered both countries' economic development and social progress. Finding a Lasting Resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Requires a Multifaceted Approach. This Includes:

- a) **Direct Negotiations:** Continued diplomatic efforts within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group are crucial.
- b) **Conference-Building Measures:** Implementing measures to reduce tensions and build trust between the two sides, such as prisoner exchanges and the return of displaced persons.
- c) **Addressing Root Causes:** Addressing historical grievances, ethnic tensions, and territorial claims.
- d) **Regional Cooperation:** Fostering regional cooperation and economic integration to reduce the incentives for conflict.
- e) **International Pressure:** Maintaining international pressure on all parties to engage in constructive dialogue and avoid further escalation. The international community, including the United States, Russia, and the European Union, must be more active in mediating the conflict and promoting sustainable peace. The continued involvement of external actors, particularly Turkey and Russia, necessitates a delicate balancing act to prevent further escalation and ensure that the interests of all parties are considered.

In conclusion, the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict remains a complex and multifaceted challenge with significant regional and international implications. While the 2020 war may have shifted the balance of power on the ground, it has not resolved the underlying issues that fuel the conflict. A comprehensive and sustainable solution requires a commitment to dialogue, compromise, and a long-term vision for peace and stability in the South Caucasus region.

## 6. Limitations

This study has some limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, by relying on secondary data sources, the research is limited by the quality and availability of existing data. Second, a secondary data analysis approach does not allow for the collection of new information or for exploring under-researched aspects of the conflict. Finally, the complex and ever-evolving nature of the conflict makes it challenging to provide definitive conclusions.

**Conflict of Interest:** The author declares no conflict of interest.

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