

Causes and consequences of local anti-terrorism measures in the Karabakh economic zone of Azerbaijan

Причини та наслідки локальних антитерористичних заходів у Карабахській економічній зоні Азербайджану

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Purpose: is to analyze the causes of asymmetry between criminal ethnic demands and national state interests, the potential of internationalization and effective preventive measures.

Method: structural-functional and processual-dynamic.

Findings: The fight against dangerous and infectious diseases such as ethnic-separatism is considered to be a very effective way both from the point of view of security and from the point of view of not deepening the crisis of the international legal institution.

Theoretical implications: Ethno-separatism has become the object of big geopolitical games and mercantilist interests of organized criminal groups in the modern world. It is impossible to treat it as an internal problem of the state. The trend of ethnic-separatism becoming a hybridized threat is taking shape.

Practical implications: Practitioners should conclude from this article that dual approaches to the dangerous consequences of ethno-separatism such as secession, dangerous chaotic scenarios in polyethnic regions and military interventions under the rights of national minorities are inadmissible. Ethno-separatism cannot promote the principle of indivisibility of security.

Value: The main innovation in this article is to reveal the association of Armenian ethnic-separatism with destructive and dangerous military-political plans that are against international law. It is justified that the one-day local anti-terrorist measures carried out by Azerbaijan serve to strengthen national sovereignty and international law, to cleanse the region of criminal elements and to ensure the security of international oil and gas projects connecting the South Caucasus with Europe.

Research limitations: One-day local anti-terror measures against Armenian ethnic-separatism within the framework of international laws can be a retrospective scenario or regulation model for long-term unresolved conflicts in poly-ethnic regions.

Paper type: theoretical.

Мета роботи: проаналізувати причини асиметрії між кримінально-етнічними запитамися та національно-державними інтересами, потенціал інтернаціоналізації та ефективні превентивні заходи.

Метод: структурно-функціональному та процесуально-динамічному.

Висновки: Боротьба з такими небезпечними та інфекційними захворюваннями, як етнічний сепаратизм, вважається дуже ефективним способом як з точки зору безпеки, так і з точки зору недопущення поглиблення кризи міжнародної правової інституції.

Теоретичні висновки: Етносепаратизм став об'єктом великих геополітичних ігор та меркантилістських інтересів організованих злочинних груп у сучасному світі. Не можна розглядати це як внутрішню проблему держави. Тенденція до того, що етнічний сепаратизм стає гібридизованою загрозою, набуває форм.

Практичні наслідки: Практики мають зробити висновок із цієї статті про неприпустимість подвійних підходів до небезпечних наслідків етносепаратизму, таких як сецесія, небезпечні сценарії хаосу в поліетнічних регіонах та військові інтервенції щодо прав національних меншин. Етносепаратизм не може сприяти принципу неподільності безпеки.

Значення: Головне нововведення в цій статті полягає у виявленні зв'язку вірменського етнічного сепаратизму з деструктивними та небезпечними військово-політичними планами, які суперечать міжнародному праву. Виправдано, що одноденні локальні антитерористичні заходи, які проводить Азербайджан, служать зміцненню національного суверенітету та міжнародного права, очищенню регіону від кримінальних елементів і забезпеченню безпеки міжнародних нафтогазових проєктів, що з'єднують Південний Кавказ з Європою.

Обмеження дослідження: Одноденні локальні антитерористичні заходи проти вірменського етнічного сепаратизму в рамках міжнародного права можуть бути ретроспективним сценарієм або моделлю регулювання довготривалих невіршених конфліктів у поліетнічних регіонах.

Тип статті: теоретичний.

Key words: Second Karabakh war, local anti-terrorism (AT) measures, fortifications, Azerbaijan, Armenia.

Ключові слова: Друга карабахська війна, локальні антитерористичні (АТ) заходи, укріплення, Азербайджан, Вірменія.

Introduction

During the past 3 years after the Second Karabakh war, it was quite natural that Azerbaijan conducted several anti-terrorist measures in the areas where Russian peacekeepers were temporarily stationed. The reason for this was Armenia's failure to fulfill its obligations in the tripartite statement on November 10, its failure to abandon the policy of revanchism, and its continued smear campaign against our country on an international scale.

Results

During the last few months, the military and political activity of Armenia did not go unnoticed. In particular, Armenia, whose biased and purposeful plans failed at the extraordinary meeting of the UN Security Council held on August 16, began to expand and intensify military provocations in the territory of Azerbaijan, where Russian peacekeepers are temporarily stationed. Those provocations were characterized by the following steps:

1. Fortification measures. Illegal Armenian armed groups in the territory of Azerbaijan, where Russian peacekeepers are temporarily located, tried to install long-term fortification facilities in front of the positions of the Azerbaijani Army located in Shusha, Khojavend, Khojaly, Lachin, Tartar and Aghdam regions. Such attempts were repeated several times in Shusha and Khojaly. As a result of urgent measures taken by the units of our army, the works were stopped immediately.

2. Increase in ceasefire violations. The units of the Armenian armed forces fired intensively at the positions of our army located in Yellice, Istisu and Zaylik of Kalbajar district, Daryurd, Galakand and Novoivanovka of Gadabay district, Karaagaj of Sadarak district of Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, Havush of Sharur district and Minkend and Ahmadli settlements of Lachin district and Fuzuli district, but the enemy was silenced by return fire.

3. Attempts at various military and non-military terrorist-sabotage activities. The use of radio jamming by the illegal Armenian armed groups in our territories where the Russian peacekeeping contingent is temporarily stationed against the GPS satellite navigation systems of the passenger planes of local and foreign airlines flying through the airspace of Azerbaijan has intensified. Although the command of the Russian peacekeeping contingent was informed about the fact, no action was taken. It should be noted that radio-technical interference in the operation of civil aviation is unacceptable and contrary to the rules established by the International Civil Aviation Organization [1].

In addition, illegal Armenian armed groups in the territory of Azerbaijan, where the Russian peacekeeping contingent is temporarily stationed, have installed technical surveillance and listening devices in the Karabakh economic region and areas close to our military positions in order to carry out terrorist-sabotage activities against the units of the Azerbaijani Army, but ensuring the safety of our military personnel as a result of the measures taken for this purpose, up to 30 technical surveillance and listening devices belonging to illegal Armenian armed groups were disabled [2].

In addition to the mentioned provocations, on August 16, a member of the intelligence-sabotage group of the Armenian armed forces was detained as a result of the vigilance of the units of the Azerbaijan Army, and one RPK machine gun, ammunition and military equipment were found on him [3].

Also, a quadcopter belonging to the armed forces of Armenia attempted to fly over the positions of the Azerbaijan Army located in the direction of the Hyderabad settlement of Sadarak district of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, but was detected and destroyed as a result of the vigilance of our units.

4. Illegal arms shipments. Accompanied by a combat vehicle belonging to the Russian peacekeeping contingent temporarily stationed in the territories of Azerbaijan, illegal Armenian armed units and the remnants of the Armenian armed forces were observed strengthening their combat positions along the Khankendi-Qaybali-Dukanlar-Khalfali route in the Karabakh economic

region. the movement of an ambulance filled with weapons, ammunition, as well as anti-personnel and anti-tank mines was recorded in the convoy. Also, during the period from August to local anti-terrorist measures, India continued to supply arms to Armenia in transit through Iran [4].

There is no doubt that after the Second Karabakh War, Armenia is making serious efforts and is busy diversifying its defense potential. It is as a result of this that in 2023, the defense costs of Armenia amount to 1.3 billion dollars. Compared to 2022, its military budget has increased by more than 40% and exceeded 1 billion dollars for the first time in the country's history [5].

Last year, Armenia ordered weapons and military equipment worth hundreds of millions (about 400 million) dollars from India. Among them are rocket launchers, artillery and wheeled mortars, as well as air defense systems.

As for Iran, this country secretly sent 600 Iranian-made missiles to Armenia. The sent rockets were not sold to Armenia, they were given as a gift. 500 units of the given missiles are "Dehlaviyeh" and 100 units are "Almas" type anti-tank guided missile (TAIR) complex. In addition, the facts about the shipment of Iranian-made kamikaze drones to Armenia were also leaked to the press.

5. Continuation of the political campaign in the direction of opening the corridor of Lachin. On August 16, 2023, Armenian diplomacy failed at the UN Security Council, but official Yerevan did not give up its interest in politicizing this issue again, the European Union Mission in Armenia, PACE, parliamentarians of a number of European Union countries, factions of Armenian friendly groups, the United States tried to involve some pro-Armenian congressmen in this issue.

In this case, the special zeal of France, distinguished by its anti-Azerbaijani and anti-Turkish character, has not gone unnoticed. In an interview with the local "Le-point" newspaper, French President E. Macron stated that "we are facing an unacceptable humanitarian situation around the Lachin corridor. France's role is to continue to press for a humanitarian exit, and we are doing our best in this direction" [6].

In addition, taking into account the fact that France is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Armenia planned to raise the issue of opening the Lachin Corridor with its help to the meeting of that organization. The French newspaper "Le Figaro" wrote that France is preparing to submit a resolution to the UN Security Council to help the people of Nagorno-Karabakh suffering due to the blockade of Azerbaijan [6].

It is an undeniable fact that Iran is involved in the provocation plans of Armenia. According to "Armenpress" information, at the economic exhibition held in Armenia on August 25, Mehdi Subhani, Iran's ambassador to Armenia, stated that "Iran protects the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Armenia". The main policy of Iran is the development of relations with the Republic of Armenia. Iran defends the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Armenia. Iran and Armenia, especially after Armenia gained independence, had no problems at any level and in any field [7].

Undoubtedly, before the start of local anti-terrorist measures, the provocations carried out by Armenia in the Azerbaijani territories where Russian peacekeepers are temporarily stationed, as well as in the international world, served to maintain the military-political tension in the region and the plans of foreign forces to create chaos in the region.

It must be admitted that if a favorable geo-environment had not been formed in the region, the listed threats would not have allowed Azerbaijan to start deliberate, fast and effective local anti-terrorist measures. The main reason for the great victory achieved by Azerbaijan in recent military events is the deepening of the political crisis in the relations between Russia and Armenia. At the root of that crisis is Armenia's departure from traditional geostrategy.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who called Armenia's 99 percent dependence on Russia a strategic mistake in an interview with the Italian newspaper La Repubblica, refused to sign the declaration of the organization's Collective Security Council at the CSTO Yerevan summit on November 23 last year.

In January 2023, Armenia did not allow CSTO to hold trainings on its territory, and it did not participate in the "Rock-2023" special training of rescuers of CSTO members held in Belarus on September 1-6, and related it to the situation in the country.

However, from September 11 to 16, the 101st Airborne Division of the US Army conducted "Eagle Partner-2023" exercises with soldiers of the 1st Brigade and the Kansas National Guard. About 85 Americans and 175 Armenian soldiers participated in that exercise [8]. Although Armenia has had a cooperation program with them since 2003, it has not shown such courage as this time.

The statement of the speaker of Armenia that "Russia gave Karabakh to Azerbaijan" indicates the deepening of distrust between the allies.

The anti-Russian position exhibited by the official Yerevan resulted in the summoning of the Armenian Ambassador Vagarshak Arutyunyan to the Russian Foreign Ministry and the presentation of a harsh note to him against the background of Yerevan's unfriendly actions. Among the issues reflected in the note were, in particular, the initiation of the ratification process of the Rome Statute, the visit of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's wife Anna Akopyan to Kyiv and the transfer of humanitarian aid to the Kyiv regime, as well as the holding of military exercises with the participation of the US military, insulting statements by the speaker of the Armenian parliament.

The ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) by the Armenian parliament angered its military ally, Russia. It should be noted that when Armenia joins the Rome Statute, the decisions made by the ICC will be implemented by the country. Russia said that this decision of Armenia is unacceptable. Thus, in March, the ICC accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of being responsible for war crimes committed in Ukraine and issued a warrant for his arrest. If Putin visits Armenia, according to the Rome Statute, he should be arrested in this country. The prime minister of Armenia has already deepened the gap between Armenia and Russia by signing that document.

As if all this was lost, the chairman of NATO's European Development Committee, Günter Fehlinger, called on Armenia to join the Alliance [9].

All these facts indicate that the foundations of the Russian-Armenian military alliance are being shaken, and that official Yerevan wants to diversify its defense and foreign policy.

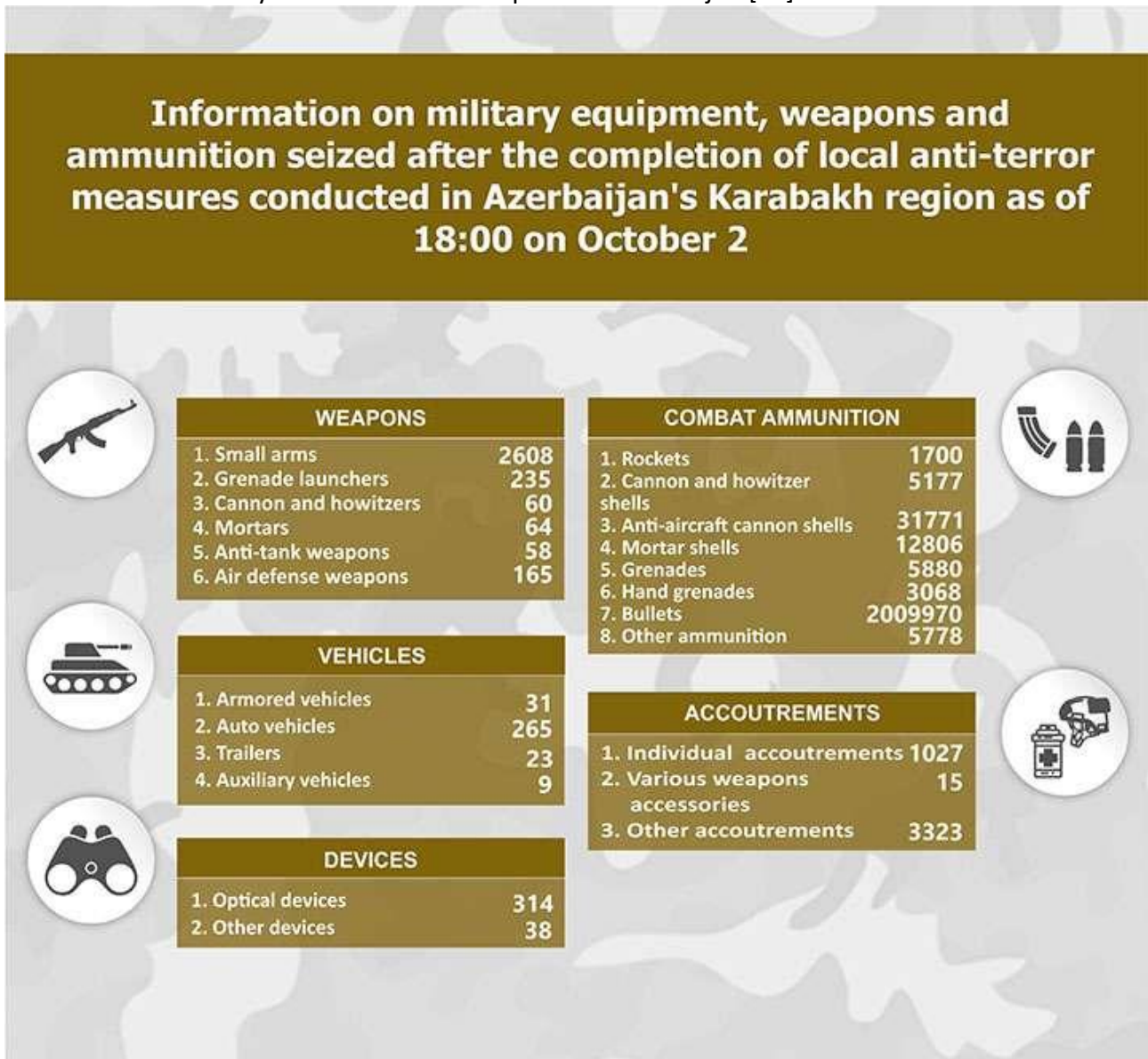
Nikol Pashinyan not only managed to create an anti-Russian myth in Armenia, but also introduced it into the minds of the Armenian people as a traitorous ally. Such a myth not only insures the inability of the authorities to solve the problems in the country, but also prevents them from mobilizing and restricting the activities of the pro-Russian opposition. It seems that Armenia is not looking for a way out of its current situation in Russia, but in the West, in the United States.

The rapid advance of Armenia to the West is also worrying Iran. Although Iran considers the territory of Armenia as its "red line", it does not consider its joint exercises with the US Armed Forces acceptable. On the one hand, Armenia's bringing the civilian mission of the European Union to its territory (close to the border with Iran), and on the other hand, the desire to expand military-political relations with the United States, do not bode well for Iran. Iranian President Ibrahim Raisi did not hide his country's concern by calling the Armenian-US military exercises "suspicious exercises".

The involvement of the USA and the European Union in the Russia-Ukraine war could not be an obstacle to Azerbaijan's local anti-terrorist operation. It is also necessary to admit that both of the mentioned tandems have weakened their influence in the region due to the results of the Second Karabakh War. Even the power crisis in Georgia increases the possibility that the place of the West, especially the United States, will be replaced by China in that country. Since its inclusion in NATO is in question, Georgia considers it necessary to switch to a multi-vector policy course by signing a document of strategic alliance with China.

The favorable state of events made the local anti-terrorist measures of Azerbaijan inevitable on September 19-20. On September 19, the bloody incident caused by illegal Armenian formations

caused the start of local anti-terrorist measures and lasted for 24 hours. As a result of successful military actions, more than 90 positions of the Armenian armed forces came under the control of the Azerbaijani army. Information about military equipment, weapons and ammunition confiscated from the enemy as a result of that event was reflected in the infogram published on the official website of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan [10].



This measure is the disarmament and surrender of all illegal military units, the removal of illegal structures in Karabakh, for example, “presidency”, “parliament”, “ministerial”, etc. concluded with the request for release. By January 1, 2024, the separatist regime had to make a decision to release itself.

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As a result of the latest anti-terrorist measures, Azerbaijan was able to fulfill the task set before it to the maximum. Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev expressed these views during his meeting with Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Nakhchivan on September 25: “Five days ago, we fully ensured our sovereignty, within 24 hours, less than that, as a result of anti-terrorist

measures, the Armenian army illegally settled in the territory of Azerbaijan surrendered, accepted our terms" was confirmed in the opinion [11].

Regarding the international legal aspects of the local anti-terrorist measures implemented by Azerbaijan, the following points are considered to justify the compliance of the steps taken with international laws:

1. Azerbaijan used the right to individually protect its territorial integrity in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter;

2. This measure targeted military facilities and combatants, no purposeful action was taken against peaceful and innocent people, and the laws of war were fully observed; (The UN mission that visited Karabakh on October 2 issued a final statement. In that document, it is stated that no damage was done to civilian infrastructures in Karabakh during the local anti-terrorist operations carried out by the Azerbaijani army on September 19-20).

3. The inadmissibility and lack of perspective of separatism, terrorism and secession against the territorial integrity of the state was once again confirmed;

4. The main discussion of the non-military aspects of reintegration in the city of Yevlakh immediately after the end of anti-terrorist measures is considered a clear example of the Azerbaijan state's commitment to peace, dialogue, tolerance and multiculturalism.

In connection with these events, the phrase "Karabakh is the land of Azerbaijan" voiced by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the annual September meeting of the UN General Assembly essentially testifies to the legitimacy of Azerbaijan's fight against ethnic separatism and terrorism in its territories, and that any activity against the territorial integrity of the state is inadmissible.

In order to overshadow Azerbaijan's success in local anti-terrorist measures, the meeting held at the UN Security Council on September 21 at the request of Armenia ended without results. At that meeting, Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan's attempts to label Azerbaijan's local anti-terrorist measures as ethnic cleansing failed. Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Mammadov emphasized that Armenia is keeping troops on the territory of Azerbaijan, which is unacceptable for a sovereign state, and declared that the official Baku is ready to guarantee all rights and freedoms to the ethnic Armenian residents of the Karabakh region in its constitution and relevant international human rights mechanisms. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, who could not get the necessary support from his supporters and could not take a stand in front of Azerbaijan's rightful position, was forced to leave the meeting.

That meeting of the UN Security Council ended with no documents being accepted, just like the meeting held on August 16. Azerbaijan managed to justify that the local anti-terrorist measures carried out on September 19-20 were its internal affairs and carried out in accordance with international law norms. The non-acceptance of the document related to these hearings in the UN Security Council should be considered as recognition of the legitimacy of the local anti-terrorist operation carried out by Azerbaijan in its territory.

The success of Azerbaijan in local anti-terrorist measures will not pass without affecting the geopolitical system of the South Caucasus. Brenda Shaffer, a teacher at the US Naval Academy and a foreign policy expert, rightly notes that the local anti-terrorist measures implemented by Azerbaijan against separatists, illegal armed groups and groups in the Karabakh region have led to strategic changes. The results of the steps taken strengthened Azerbaijan and weakened Iran and Russia, which supported the Armenians in this conflict [12].

The full restoration of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity will lead to our country becoming the leading state of the South Caucasus, the military and political interests of our military ally – brother Turkey in the region will be further strengthened, and the geostrategic influence of the Turkic world will expand. This successful operation will soon accelerate the demarcation and delimitation

processes with Armenia, the signing of the final peace agreement and the opening of the Zangezur corridor.

The restoration of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan not only saves the current Armenian government from a heavy burden called Karabakh, but also serves to eliminate its dependence on Russia, the necessity of the latter's military presence in Karabakh, and the weakening of Russia's military and political interests in the South Caucasus as a whole.

The US plans to expel Russia from the South Caucasus, and then from Ukraine. In this scenario, the possibility of the weakening of Armenia's relations with Iran cannot be ignored.

As for Russia and Iran, they are not expected to leave the South Caucasus easily. Russia is trying to change Nikol Pashinyan's regime in Armenia with a pro-Russian leader. Iran, by joining the anti-American BRICS organization, is trying to turn the region into an object of larger geopolitical games. On the other hand, Armenia's rapprochement with the United States prompts Iran to establish cooperation with Azerbaijan.

The bloody war started in the Middle East can lead to the focus of the US and the EU on that region, and the formation of a constructive environment for regional cooperation in the South Caucasus and the launch of the "3+3" formula.

Conclusion

The result:

1. During the last anti-terrorist measures, Azerbaijan managed to destroy the ideological, military-political supports of Armenian separatism, to completely destroy Armenia's plans to maintain a "grey area" in Azerbaijan;
2. Azerbaijan's military power and flexible diplomacy forced Armenia to diversify its defense potential and foreign policy;
3. Fully ensuring the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan will make a positive contribution to strengthening the idea of indivisibility of security in the region;
4. Ensuring the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan will give a serious impetus to the acceleration of the opening of the Zangezur Corridor, the political, economic, cultural, defense, etc. influence of Turkey and the Turkic world. It is not excluded that it will expand in the fields;
5. Ensuring Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and Armenia's desire to distance itself from Russia will turn Azerbaijan and Armenia into a zone of Russian-Western competition after Georgia in the South Caucasus;
6. In the new geopolitical conditions, Iran is doomed to make changes in the South Caucasus policy and adapt to the new reality.
7. The flare-up of war in the Middle East can reduce disruptive external influences on the South Caucasus and pave the way for regional integration.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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