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**THE SECOND KARABAKH WAR: A CRITICAL TURNING POINT IN
AZERBAIJAN–TÜRKİYE RELATIONS**

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***Abstract.** Karabakh has caused a problem between states located in the region or having an interest in it and Azerbaijan due to its historical essence, natural resources and strategic geographical position throughout history.*

Karabakh, a region inhabited historically by the Turkish-Muslim population, has been attacked by armed Armenian gangs since the beginning of the 20th century. The main reason for this attack was the desire to realize the idea of "Greater Armenia from sea to sea". Since 1988, the Karabakh problem has entered a new direction, and the occupation process by Armenian has begun. This process accompanied by expulsion, massacre, genocide, occupation was temporarily stopped by the Bishkek protocol dated May 12, 1994, a ceasefire was declared, and with the military operations started on September 27, 2020, it went down in history

as the First Karabakh War. The Second Karabakh War, which took place between September 27 and November 10, 2020, ended with the victory of Azerbaijan.

The Karabakh problem has always been a priority topic of Azerbaijan-Türkiye relations. The main problem of Azerbaijan, which declared its independence on the eve of the collapse of the USSR in 1991, was the Karabakh issue. Türkiye was the first country that recognized our independence and declared Armenia, which occupied our lands, an occupying state and closed its borders with it. The second Karabakh war raised the relations that began to intensify with the independence of Azerbaijan to the highest level of strategic partnership and created an important intersection and turning point in the relations between the two countries, which are based on solid foundations.

Keywords: *Second Karabakh War, Azerbaijan – Turkey relations, Azerbaijan-Türkiye strategic partnership, Karabakh conflict, South Caucasus geopolitics, Azerbaijan-Turkey military cooperation.*

Introduction

The Karabakh conflict has long been a subject of extensive discussion not only in the context of Azerbaijan's national history, but also within the broader framework of international politics and geopolitics. Reflecting the competing interests of regional geopolitical powers, this conflict has significantly influenced the evolution of strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Türkiye. Armenia's expansionist policy toward Azerbaijan in the late twentieth century ultimately led to the outbreak of the First Karabakh War. However, the ineffectiveness of international efforts aimed at resolving the conflict made it imperative for Azerbaijan to resort to military means in order to restore its territorial integrity.

The prolonged failure of negotiations conducted under the mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group provided Azerbaijan with substantial grounds to strengthen its position in the region through the use of military power. In this regard, the Second



Karabakh War, which took place between 27 September and 10 November 2020, demonstrated Azerbaijan's determination to defend its rights within the framework of international law and showcased its military and political capabilities. During the war, Türkiye's political, diplomatic, and military support played a crucial role in reinforcing strategic cooperation between the two countries, while simultaneously contributing to the emergence of a new geopolitical configuration and stability in the South Caucasus.

This study aims to analyze the impact of the Second Karabakh War on Azerbaijan–Türkiye relations and to explore the new opportunities for cooperation that have emerged between the two states in political, military, and economic domains. By examining the significance of the Karabakh victory not only for Azerbaijan but also for the broader Turkic world, the research seeks to assess the implications of this triumph for the region's future development.

1. A Brief Overview of the History of the “Karabakh Problem” and the Factors That Made the Second Karabakh War Inevitable

In the November 7, 1918 issue of *Azerbaijan* newspaper, the official press organ of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, it was written: *“If Baku forms the body of our homeland, Karabakh constitutes its soul and essence. If Baku provides the material foundation of Azerbaijan, everyone knows that Karabakh sustains it spiritually. Karabakh has always granted the Azerbaijani Turks spiritual and moral wealth, shaping their intellectual character. Therefore, to firmly keep Karabakh in our hands is a matter of life and death for us.”* [11, p. 1]

Karabakh has always been a region of great significance – not only due to its historical, cultural, and moral attributes, but also because of its natural resources and strategic geographical location. For this reason, powers whose interests clash in the Caucasus have continuously attempted to seize Karabakh, an ancient Azerbaijani land. Consequently, the strategic and geographical position of Karabakh has



consistently generated tension between Azerbaijan and the regional or external powers seeking influence over it.

Historically, Karabakh has been inhabited by a Turkic-Muslim population. Even Russian imperial authorities were compelled to acknowledge this fact. The Kurekchay Treaty, signed on 14 May 1805 between the Russian Empire and the Karabakh Khan Ibrahim Khan, as well as Soviet Russia's recognition of Karabakh as an integral part of Azerbaijan throughout its existence, serve as clear evidence [1, p. 702-705]. Had the reality been otherwise, Russia – which consistently supported Armenians politically and militarily – would undoubtedly have taken a different approach.

Moreover, after the First World War, Great Britain, which exercised temporary control over the region, also recognized Karabakh as part of Azerbaijan. In addition to the declaration issued on January 28, 1919 by General William Thomson [27, p. 1], commander of British forces in the South Caucasus, affirming that the Azerbaijani government was the sole legitimate authority on Azerbaijani territory, the 1919 British military map of the Caucasus also depicted Karabakh as an area under the effective control of the Republic of Azerbaijan [21, p. 89]

Beginning in the early twentieth century, armed Armenian groups launched attacks on Azerbaijani territories, with Karabakh being one of their primary targets. The main motivation behind Armenia's actions in the region was the aspiration to realize the project of a "Greater Armenia from sea to sea." The massacres perpetrated by Armenians, supported by Russian military units, inflicted the greatest suffering upon Karabakh – especially the city of Shusha, which was predominantly populated by Azerbaijanis. Thousands of civilians were brutally killed there [22, p. 219-234].

Events continued in various forms until the 1980s, when the Karabakh issue entered a new phase in 1988 and the occupation process began. The cycle of displacement, massacre, genocide, and occupation was temporarily halted with the signing of the Bishkek Protocol on 12 May 1994, which declared a ceasefire.

However, with the renewed military operations launched on 27 September 2020, this period became known as the First Karabakh War. The ineffectiveness of the OSCE Minsk Group [35] – created to facilitate a peaceful solution – resulted in 28 years of fruitless negotiations, during which both sides repeatedly accused one another of violating the ceasefire, eventually leading to renewed military confrontation.

Despite the passing of many years after the First Karabakh War, Azerbaijan became toward resolving the issue. Consequently, Azerbaijan decided to strengthen its military potential with Türkiye's support to restore its violated rights. With the Military Doctrine adopted on June 8, 2010, Azerbaijan declared that – considering Armenia's occupation policy – it reserved the right to use all necessary means, including military force, to restore its territorial integrity within the framework of international law [5].

The ceasefire, repeatedly violated after the signing of the Bishkek Protocol [33], reached its peak in April 2016 with the Four-Day War – the most intense clash since 1994. Azerbaijan's liberation of the strategic heights around Talish village in Tartar district, Lalatapa in Jabrayil district, Cocuq Marjanli, and areas near Gulustan, Qazaxlar, and Sugovushan [3] signaled Azerbaijan's determination and military capability to reclaim its occupied territories by force.

Following the “Velvet Revolution” in 2018, Nikol Pashinyan, upon coming to power in Armenia, adopted a more aggressive policy toward Azerbaijan, escalating provocations. His declaration – “Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) is Armenia, period” [28] – during a speech in Khankendi in August 2019 further intensified tensions and effectively undermined the peace process. In response, President Ilham Aliyev proclaimed at the plenary session of the Valdai Discussion Club on October 3, 2019 the now-famous statement: “*Karabakh is Azerbaijan, exclamation mark!*” [38]

The clashes that erupted on 12 July 2020 along the Armenia–Azerbaijan border in the Tavush/Tovuz regions, leading to the death of Major General Polad



Hashimov, Colonel Ilgar Mirzayev, and five other servicemen, once again revealed the impossibility of resolving the conflict peacefully and demonstrated the necessity of military action [8]. The Tovuz events revived a sense of national unity among Azerbaijanis worldwide for the first time in decades. Citizens expressed full support for the Azerbaijani state and army, while diaspora organizations held more than seventy mass rallies in over thirty countries between July 12 and 31 [25].

Finally, Armenia's shelling of civilian settlements in Tartar and Fuzuli districts early on the morning of September 27, and Azerbaijan's launch of counter-offensive operations in accordance with its right to self-defense, escalated into a 44-day war between the two countries [9].

Azerbaijan had numerous legitimate reasons for choosing the military option to resolve the frozen conflict after nearly thirty years. Armenia's irredentist policy provided a legal basis for military action. The ineffectiveness of the Minsk Group and the non-implementation of international resolutions made it clear that a diplomatic solution was no longer viable. Meanwhile, thirty years of occupation, displacement, human suffering, and societal frustration further intensified the demand for justice.

For the first time since the First Karabakh War, the Azerbaijani army achieved major victories. Large parts of the occupied territories – such as Jabrayil, Fuzuli, Zangilan, and Qubadli – were liberated, along with numerous villages. The liberation of Shusha – a city with crucial strategic importance and a key logistical role between Armenia and Karabakh – forced Yerevan to accept defeat [44].

The Second Karabakh War, which took place between 27 September and 10 November 2020, resolved a nearly three-decade-long dispute that diplomacy had failed to address. The war ended with significant Azerbaijani military success. The trilateral declaration signed on November 10, 2020, by Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, and Russian President Vladimir Putin formally ended hostilities. According to the declaration, a complete cessation

of military operations in the conflict zone began at 00:00 on November 10, with each party remaining in its existing positions. Thus, a new era of Azerbaijani dominance in regional geopolitics commenced [37].

2. Azerbaijan–Türkiye Relations Before the Second Karabakh War

The twentieth century was a highly contradictory period for both the Ottoman Empire and Azerbaijan. While the Ottoman Empire was on the verge of collapse, Azerbaijan emerged from colonial dependence and attained sovereignty. Later, as the Republic of Türkiye was established as the successor state of the Ottoman Empire, Azerbaijan was deprived of its hard-won independence and fell under the “colonial” domination of the Soviet Union. Consequently, relations between the two brotherly nations – rapidly developing in the early twentieth century on the basis of kinship – remained limited until Azerbaijan restored its state independence in 1991.

Türkiye was the first country to recognize Azerbaijan, which declared independence shortly before the dissolution of the USSR [17]. From that moment onward, Türkiye–Azerbaijan relations – grounded in ethnic, cultural, and religious ties – began to be shaped primarily by geopolitical considerations, energy interests, and the Karabakh conflict. Azerbaijan’s position as a Turkic state in the Caucasus with a direct border connection to Türkiye rendered it a region of special significance. In this sense, Azerbaijan became Türkiye’s gateway to the newly independent Turkic states (Turkestan) that emerged after the collapse of the USSR, while Türkiye became Azerbaijan’s gateway to the West. If Azerbaijan was the bridge connecting Türkiye with the Turkic states of Central Asia, then Türkiye facilitated Azerbaijan’s integration into the international system and its access to Western markets. In short, relations rooted in ethnic, cultural, and religious ties assumed great importance from a geopolitical perspective as well.

Following the restoration of independence, the primary challenge facing Azerbaijan was the Karabakh conflict. Already confronted with de facto warfare, Azerbaijan did not receive adequate military support from Türkiye during this



period. The main reason appears to have been Türkiye's cautious policy aimed at avoiding direct confrontation with Russia – which supported Armenia – and adherence to the principles of non-interference in the USSR's internal affairs and the preservation of its territorial integrity. A lack of sufficient knowledge about regional dynamics among Türkiye's political leadership at the time also likely played a role. In general, Türkiye preferred to seek a solution through international organizations rather than unilateral intervention, basing its foreign policy approach on maintaining the “status quo” and “balance.”

Notably, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was relatively low-intensity and localized between 1988 and 1991. However, with the collapse of the USSR, and Azerbaijan and Armenia gaining independence, the nature of the conflict dramatically changed. Russia's significant military support to Armenia increased both the scale and severity of the hostilities. The expansion of military operations beyond the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast and the occupation of Kalbajar marked a turning point in the international perception of the conflict. This prompted strong reactions from both Türkiye and the international community. The UN passed Resolution 822 demanding the withdrawal of Armenian forces from Kalbajar and other recently occupied Azerbaijani territories [30]. Türkiye, in turn, closed its borders with Armenia, imposed sanctions, and provided active support for strengthening the Azerbaijani Armed Forces [20]. It is an undeniable fact that Türkiye has always supported Azerbaijan regarding the Karabakh conflict; however, the form and extent of this support have not always been consistent, nor have they always met mutual expectations.

Immediately after gaining independence, Azerbaijan prioritized closer cooperation with Türkiye in its foreign policy. Numerous documents were signed between the two states, laying the foundation for a comprehensive legal and institutional framework for bilateral relations. Turkish President Turgut Özal's visits to Azerbaijan on 1-3 May 1992, and the “Joint Declaration” signed during this visit

– which outlined the basic principles and future prospects of cooperation – became a cornerstone of the strategic partnership between the two countries [31].

In the early years of independence, the themes of friendship and brotherhood became central to Türkiye–Azerbaijan relations. During President Heydar Aliyev’s official visit to Türkiye on 8–11 February 1994, his famous phrase “*One nation, two states*” became a widely adopted slogan symbolizing the deep historical, ethnic, and cultural ties between the two nations [18]. This expression highlighted the prominence of moral and cultural values in shaping foreign policy and shifted bilateral relations from pragmatic political considerations toward a fraternal framework, inevitably raising expectations.

Facing significant political, economic, and social challenges in the early years of independence – and despite possessing vast energy resources – Azerbaijan lacked the capacity to extract and export these resources independently. Therefore, it sought support from Western states by signing major international agreements. Although such agreements greatly contributed to Azerbaijan’s economy, they also temporarily limited the deepening of relations with Türkiye. However, the inclusion of the Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO) in the consortium that signed the “Contract of the Century” on 20 September 1994 demonstrated the strengthening trajectory of strategic cooperation between the two countries [34].

The energy factor has played a crucial role in Azerbaijan–Türkiye relations. Azerbaijan is a producer of oil and natural gas, while Türkiye is a major energy consumer and an important transit route for delivering energy to global markets. This dynamic brought energy cooperation to the forefront, fostering deeper bilateral relations. As a result of these partnerships, major strategic projects – including the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan (BTC, 1999–2006) oil pipeline, the Baku–Tbilisi–Erzurum (BTE, 2001–2007) natural gas pipeline, the Baku–Tbilisi–Kars (BTK, 2007–2017) railway, TANAP (2012–2018), and TAP (2013–2021) – were successfully

implemented. These projects strengthened both countries' regional influence and enhanced their global standing.

During this period, numerous agreements were signed not only in energy but also in military security, defense, visa policy, taxation, finance, education, and culture. Military cooperation expanded significantly each year: Türkiye played a major role in officer training, joint military exercises, strengthening Azerbaijan's logistical and technical capabilities, and transitioning the Azerbaijani Armed Forces toward NATO standards [2].

Relations with Armenia became a "red line" in Turkish–Azerbaijani diplomacy. Any Turkish initiative toward normalization with Armenia generated concern in Azerbaijan. The "football diplomacy" [24] efforts initiated in 2007 and the signing of the "Zurich Protocols" [26] serve as key examples. These attempts, however, did not yield the expected results and caused temporary strain in Azerbaijan–Türkiye relations. The situation was normalized following Turkish President Abdullah Gül's visit to Baku in 2010 [39].

In summary, during the first two decades after Azerbaijan regained independence, bilateral relations developed mainly on an ideological basis. Today, however, Azerbaijan–Türkiye relations have moved beyond ideology: cooperation is institutionalized, strengthened by large-scale strategic projects, and built on a robust framework of strategic partnership. Prior to the Second Karabakh War, relations between the two countries had already begun to deepen significantly – yet during and after the war, they reached an unprecedented level.

3. The Impact of the Second Karabakh War on Azerbaijan–Türkiye Relations

During the 44-day war, Türkiye supported Azerbaijan at the highest political, diplomatic, and military levels. Türkiye's senior state officials condemned Armenia's attacks, issued statements backing Azerbaijan, and defended Azerbaijan's legitimate cause across all international platforms in which Türkiye

held membership. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's clear and unequivocal declaration of support for Azerbaijan in the very first hours of the war not only boosted the morale of the Azerbaijani people but also deterred external actors considering intervention in the conflict. Following Armenia's attack on the Tovuz district, four political parties represented in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (AK Party, CHP, MHP, and İYİ Party) jointly condemned the aggression and emphasized that Armenia posed the greatest obstacle to peace and stability in the region [23]. In addition, high-level Turkish officials paid official visits to Azerbaijan. On 20 October 2020, the Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Mustafa Şentop, delivered a speech in the Milli Majlis, reaffirming Türkiye's unwavering support for Azerbaijan's just cause [10].

The legal foundation of military cooperation between Azerbaijan and Türkiye is the "Agreement on Strategic Partnership and Mutual Support" signed on 16 August 2010. One of the agreement's key provisions stipulates that in the event either party faces armed attack or military aggression by a third state or group of states, the sides shall provide mutual assistance – including the use of military force – based on Article 51 of the UN Charter and within the limits of their capabilities [4].

Following this agreement, joint military exercises were conducted between the two countries. These exercises enhanced the maneuverability of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces, while Türkiye's technical assistance enabled Azerbaijan to gain significant military advantages. Cooperation with Türkiye – whose defense industry had achieved notable progress – proved highly effective. Azerbaijan successfully used Turkish-manufactured UAVs/UCAVs and strategic weapons such as the long-range TRG-300 missile during the war [16]. The use of Turkish UAVs/UCAVs not only provided Azerbaijan with military superiority but also created substantial psychological advantage over Armenia.



One day after the signing of the 10 November statement, the defense ministers of Russia and Türkiye signed a memorandum of understanding establishing the Joint Russian–Turkish Monitoring Center in Azerbaijan. On 16 November, the Turkish government submitted a bill to the Turkish Grand National Assembly requesting authorization to deploy peacekeeping forces in Azerbaijan, and the proposal was approved the next day. Thus, Türkiye officially received permission to deploy military personnel in Azerbaijan, and the process of establishing the monitoring center commenced [29]. Although Russia initially proposed locating the center in Barda, Azerbaijan insisted on situating it in Aghdam. On 30 January 2021, the Joint Monitoring Center began its operations [7].

In addition to Türkiye’s political, diplomatic, and military support, the Turkish people demonstrated remarkable solidarity with Azerbaijan. They displayed Azerbaijani flags on their homes and workplaces, organized gatherings condemning Armenia’s attacks, and sent humanitarian aid, once again proving that Türkiye – and the Turkish people – are genuine allies of Azerbaijan.

The Second Karabakh War elevated the already strong relationship between the two countries to an entirely new level. During the Victory Parade held after the historic triumph, the presidents of Azerbaijan and Türkiye delivered speeches sending a clear message to the world about the strength of the unity between their nations and their unwavering support for one another [36]. Indeed, the Second Karabakh War marked a pivotal turning point in Türkiye–Azerbaijan relations.

The Karabakh victory is significant for several reasons. First and foremost, it sent a message to countries with territories under illegal occupation – particularly in the Turkic and Islamic worlds – that such situations cannot persist indefinitely. Moreover, the victory laid the groundwork for comprehensive cooperation across the Turkic World. Undoubtedly, this triumph marked the beginning of a new phase that will accelerate the process of economic, political, and military integration between Azerbaijan and Türkiye. The liberation of the occupied territories will



facilitate their integration into Azerbaijan's economy and create new investment opportunities, among which Turkish business circles are expected to play a leading role.

It would not be an exaggeration to assert that Azerbaijan and Türkiye emerged as the principal beneficiaries of the new era in the Caucasus triggered by Armenia's defeat in November 2020. Today, the Azerbaijan–Türkiye alliance plays a decisive role in shaping regional dynamics. As previously noted, the Caucasus is a critical geography for Türkiye – both as a gateway to Turkestan and due to its position along energy transit routes. One of the most significant tests for Türkiye's regional influence was the Karabakh conflict. The Second Karabakh War strengthened Türkiye's strategic position in the region and proved that it has become an indispensable actor in the South Caucasus. It became evident to global and regional powers that regional issues cannot be resolved without Türkiye's involvement. Türkiye's active role in the region holds great importance for Azerbaijan and is essential for preventing Russia's monopoly in the Caucasus. In fact, following the war, countries such as Georgia and Ukraine have increasingly perceived Türkiye as a key ally capable of balancing Russia's policies in the Black Sea basin.

One of the most concrete examples of strengthened post-war cooperation was the signing of the “Shusha Declaration on Allied Relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Türkiye” on 15 June 2021 by Presidents Ilham Aliyev and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in the city of Shusha [6]. The declaration, which formalized principles of close cooperation in all fields and mutual assistance in matters of security and defense, marked a new phase in the historic relationship between the two countries.

Following this declaration, strategic alliance relations have continued to develop successfully across all sectors. Türkiye actively supports the modernization of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces to the highest contemporary standards, and joint military exercises are regularly conducted to enhance the professionalism of the



Azerbaijani military. Of particular significance were the joint military exercises held in Azerbaijan and Türkiye in September 2022 [13].

Türkiye once again expressed firm support during Armenia's provocations along the Azerbaijani–Armenian border on 12–14 September 2022 [15]. These events reaffirmed that Türkiye maintains a principled stance regarding the opening of the Türkiye–Armenia border and the restoration of diplomatic relations.

Turkish companies are also heavily involved in large-scale reconstruction efforts in the liberated territories. President Ilham Aliyev and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan jointly attended the inauguration ceremonies of Fuzuli International Airport (26 October 2021) [12], Zangilan International Airport (20 October 2022) [14], and other critical infrastructure projects, demonstrating Türkiye's strong commitment to the rapid reconstruction of these areas.

Economic cooperation between the two states has also continued to grow. For instance, Azerbaijani investments in Türkiye amount to approximately \$21 billion, while Turkish investments in Azerbaijan total about \$13.7 billion. Türkiye ranks first among countries investing in Azerbaijan's non-oil sector – a positive trend that continues to expand [19].

The devastating earthquake that struck Türkiye on 6 February 2023 – claiming thousands of lives and injuring tens of thousands – deeply affected the Azerbaijani people. Just as Azerbaijan had demonstrated solidarity during the Second Karabakh War, the country once again stood firmly beside Türkiye. Both state-level assistance and widespread public mobilization conveyed to the international community the profound importance Azerbaijan places on Türkiye, and Türkiye on Azerbaijan.

Türkiye also expressed strong political support for Azerbaijan's Anti-Terror Operation carried out in Karabakh on 19 September 2023. Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan stated that Türkiye fully supported Azerbaijan and emphasized that the military operation was justified, as Azerbaijan was taking necessary measures on its sovereign territory [40]. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, addressing the UN

General Assembly, declared: *“As is now universally acknowledged, Karabakh is the territory of Azerbaijan. Acting under the motto ‘One nation, two states,’ we support Azerbaijan’s steps to safeguard its territorial integrity.”* [41]

During the counter-terrorism operation, the support expressed by Turkish official circles for Azerbaijan’s legitimate rights highlighted the steady and progressive strengthening of diplomatic and strategic cooperation between the two countries. This trend was further reinforced in the statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye concerning the agreement reached on 8 August 2025 in Washington between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia on the establishment of peace and inter-state relations. In this statement, Türkiye once again underscored its principled commitment to Azerbaijan’s sovereignty and security priorities, emphasizing through the expression “we will continue to support the dedicated endeavors of our brotherly Azerbaijan” that Ankara remains firmly aligned with Baku’s efforts to promote stability, peace, and regional order [42].

This position indicated that Türkiye had begun to emerge as an active actor in post-conflict diplomacy. Indeed, it now defines its role not solely within the framework of military-political alliance, but also as an important participant in the post-conflict peace settlement, thereby expanding its capacity to influence the structuring of regional processes. The phrase “a historic opportunity for the South Caucasus,” employed in the official statement, showed that Türkiye seeks to determine the main directions of the emerging regional environment in close cooperation with Azerbaijan.

This approach demonstrated both the deepening geopolitical substance of Türkiye–Azerbaijan relations and the emergence of a new political concept aimed at transforming the South Caucasus into a space of stability and development.

Only a few months after the 8 August statement, the participation of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in the 2025 military parade in Baku marking the fifth anniversary of Victory not only reflected Türkiye’s strategic solidarity with

Azerbaijan but also indicated that political support for legitimizing the new status quo in Karabakh had acquired a sustained character. Erdoğan's remarks during the parade underscored Türkiye's complete alignment with Azerbaijan's position in ensuring long-term peace in the region, while also expressing that Türkiye constitutes one of the key pillars of the new political architecture taking shape in the post-conflict period.

In this strategic address – which combined regional policy, energy geopolitics, integration, and the peace agenda – political messages such as Türkiye's unwavering strategic unity with Azerbaijan, the legitimization of the new geopolitical order in the South Caucasus, and the strengthening of Turkic-world integration were emphasized. This, in turn, illustrated that relations between Azerbaijan and Türkiye had grown even stronger and that both countries would continue to cooperate closely to achieve joint political and economic objectives on regional and global scales [43].

Conclusion

The foundation of relations between the peoples of Azerbaijan and Türkiye has historically rested on ethnic, cultural, and religious bonds. Against the backdrop of global power struggles and the geopolitical restructuring that defined the early twentieth century, developments in the region brought about fundamental political and ideological transformations in relations between the two brotherly nations. From this period onward, "brotherly assistance" evolved into a historical mission. Although the significant political upheavals of the early twentieth century created stagnation in bilateral relations, the restoration of Azerbaijan's independence in 1991 marked a transition to a completely new phase. Unlike the first quarter of the century, the principal actors were now two independent states – the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Türkiye. In addition to ethnic and religious ties, geopolitical interests, energy cooperation, and the Karabakh issue transformed the two countries into key regional partners. The Second Karabakh War further elevated

these relations not only politically and diplomatically, but also militarily, economically, and socially.

During the Second Karabakh War, Türkiye played a significant role not only through political and diplomatic support but also militarily. Türkiye's highest-ranking political leadership provided unwavering support to Azerbaijan throughout the war – not only through words, but through concrete actions. The modern technologies used in the war, including unmanned aerial vehicles and other advanced military equipment, played a decisive role in Azerbaijan's victory. Moreover, Türkiye's psychological and moral support greatly strengthened the fighting spirit of the Azerbaijani people.

After the war, relations between Azerbaijan and Türkiye deepened even further. The signing of the Shusha Declaration established the formal basis for elevating the bilateral relationship to the level of strategic alliance. The declaration strengthened cooperation not only in security and defense but also in economic, energy, transportation, and cultural fields. With its adoption, bilateral relations became more systematic and institutionalized.

Additionally, Türkiye has been actively involved in the large-scale reconstruction and redevelopment efforts in the liberated territories. Major infrastructure projects – including the construction of airports, highways, and industrial facilities – have further solidified economic cooperation between the two states. Turkish companies are among the leading investors in these regions, contributing significantly to economic integration between the two countries.

Azerbaijan–Türkiye relations are not limited to political and economic spheres; they also entail closer collaboration in military and defense sectors. Joint military exercises are regularly conducted, and Türkiye plays a crucial role in the modernization of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces. Türkiye's military expertise and technological capabilities significantly enhance Azerbaijan's defense capacity.

This partnership has also manifested itself on the international stage. The Second Karabakh War strengthened Türkiye's influence in the South Caucasus, reinforcing its role as a major geopolitical actor in the region. Azerbaijan and Türkiye work jointly to ensure regional stability, strengthen security, and develop new transportation corridors. The projects associated with the planned Zangezur Corridor further expand the prospects for bilateral cooperation.

Throughout history, Azerbaijan and Türkiye have faced numerous challenges but have emerged from them united and strengthened. The Second Karabakh War fortified these relations even further. With the restoration of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, a new geopolitical reality has emerged in the region, and Türkiye has asserted itself as Azerbaijan's most reliable ally in this transformed environment. These relations are not only vital for the two states, but also hold significant importance for the broader region.

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