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THE GEOPOLITICAL PERSPECTIVE OF FROZEN CONFLICTS IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH

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& NAHLA HAMDAN



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The Geopolitical Perspective of Frozen Conflicts in the Nagorno-Karabakh

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Executive Summary

Conflicts are variable, dynamic, multi-caused, and complex social phenomena. Their deepest roots are found in contradictions and contradictions between interests, values , or significant resources (material and spiritual) that the bearers of the conflict want to dispose of.

We determine closely if the conflicts take place with the use of violence, that is, whether they are armed or not, then the intensity of the conflict, as well as whether there are objective possibilities and readiness (will) to end the conflict.

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Introductory Remarks by the Editors

Josef Demergis & Marios Efthymiopoulos

Conflicts are deeply ingrained in human history and have shaped the world and its needs as much as geography has helped provoke and enhance these activities of human nature.

Frozen conflicts as an often forgotten but nevertheless very dangerous facet of human clashes cannot be possibly be resolved by themselves, never mind find and implement elegant solutions.

This monography deals with the frozen conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh where many countries play a major role beyond the two major combatants, notably Russia and where an anti-Western platform may be of political value to certain parties in resolving the conflict.

An astute analysis of the conflict and its vital constituents that help both fuel the conflict and hinder a solution are analysed and conclusions drawn. As the authors of this monography rightly point out, “when tension is maintained in the long term by political, economic, and propaganda activities, then the road to the renewal of the armed conflict is well paved.”

Introduction

Conflicts are variable, dynamic, multi-caused, and complex social phenomena. Their deepest roots are found in contradictions and contradictions between interests, values , or significant resources (material and spiritual) that the bearers of the conflict want to dispose of. Social conflicts can arise and develop gradually, but also spontaneously, which most often leads to their sharpening, escalation, and interweaving with other conflicts, while in the most extreme form, they can destroy the existing system, as in the case of revolutions or war. We determine closely if the conflicts take place with the use of violence, that is, whether they are armed or not, then the intensity of the conflict, as well as whether there are objective possibilities and readiness (will) to end the conflict. All this makes it difficult to precisely determine and specify some common models and rules for conflict resolution or to search for some universal ways to end them. However, regardless of the complexity of the problem, certain conclusions can be drawn if the collected experiences are considered in theory and practice.

Historical and contemporary experience shows that it is unrealistic to expect social conflicts, both within and between groups, to be resolved by themselves. One of the basic, oldest, and most prevalent ways of stopping the conflict is the agreements that arise as a result of material and human exhaustion due to which radical leaders or groups are unable to further mobilize people's anger. However, such an end to the conflict is self-limiting and short-term, because the agreement allows the conflicting parties a short respite in revitalizing the conflict potential for the resumption of confrontations. As a result, the possibility of a positive resolution of the conflict is largely determined by the conflict potential of the conflicting parties, the phase of the conflict, the importance of the object of the conflict, as well as the existence of a common intention to resolve or end the conflict.

Frozen conflicts, which occur in regions that are not under the control of the central authorities, but under the management of separatist movements, represent a major security challenge for certain former Soviet republics, but also an incentive for the involvement of major geopolitical entities. Due to the lack of non-violent, compromise and final solutions, these conflicts are doomed to remain unresolved, which results not only in a weakened position of the central authorities but also enables the expansion of the influence of external factors interested in controlling the region. Naturally, in the post-Soviet area, the Russian Federation emerges as a key player, which, struggling to expand its influence, very often acts as a destabilizing factor. In addition to the four frozen conflicts in the post-Soviet territory (Transnistria, i.e. Transnistria in Moldavia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, and Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan), which the Russian Federation instrumentalized to maintain its influence in this area (Davtyan, 2023). These frozen separatist conflicts in the post-Soviet space have their roots in the decisions on the territorial organization of the Soviet state made before the collapse of the USSR, where internal borders had a purely theoretical significance, but became real problems with the emergence of fifteen independent states after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Potocnak & Mares, 2023). After Vladimir Putin came to power in 2000, Russian foreign policy focused on keeping the former Soviet republics in the Kremlin's

sphere of influence and preventing them from approaching Western organizations. Ever since Bzezinski, that proctor has been the subject of permanent intelligence operations with the intention of the accession of those countries to the NATO group, and the aim is to gain geopolitical and strategic advantages concerning its main competitor, Russia. These conflicts represent internal conflicts with a historical background related to ethnicity, identity, or political control which, at some point, culminated in military confrontations. Violent conflict over secession was followed by the establishment of quasi-states that neither the international community nor the home countries recognized, which led the conflicting parties to a "stalemate". Conflicts are thus frozen and there is no obvious solution for them that all involved parties could accept.

Our expertise in geopolitical analysis and conflict studies, combined with extensive research on post-Soviet conflicts, equips us to provide an in-depth examination of the Nagorno-Karabakh situation. Our academic background and research experience enable us to offer a nuanced understanding of the factors driving frozen conflicts and their broader implications.

Reasoning and Clear Statement

Frozen conflicts, such as the one in Nagorno-Karabakh, represent a significant challenge to international security and stability. These conflicts, characterized by a lack of resolution and persistent underlying issues, can destabilize regions and attract the interest of major geopolitical powers. This paper aims to explore the dynamics of frozen conflicts, with a specific focus on Nagorno-Karabakh, and assess their implications for regional and global stability.

Analysis with Brief Theoretical Background

Frozen conflicts can be understood as conflicts in which direct and immediate violence has been reduced, but the causes of disputes and the basic interests of the conflicting parties have not changed (Smetana & Ludvik, 2019). Their complexity is the result of the objectively specific nature of the conflict, but also the unwillingness of the conflicting parties to overcome their mutual differences. They are most often the result of a lack of progress in long-term peace processes, which over time led to peace fatigue and demobilized efforts aimed at achieving a sustainable solution to the conflict. In addition, the circumstances in which negotiation processes take place are rarely stable. Insecurity usually continues to be a major problem, and in most cases, low-intensity conflicts continue. In all three cases of frozen conflicts in the South Caucasus, there are occasional armed incidents, which increases the chances of their unintentional escalation (Onaciu, 2022). There are opinions that the very term "frozen conflict" is misleading. It is considered more adequate to talk about a prolonged conflict

because it cannot be frozen and put on hold. The very existence of a conflict, without a permanent solution, implies a long-term situation in which almost all involved parties try to influence the status quo in different ways (Smbatyan, 2022). Such a situation is not good for negotiations, because there are always those who will see an opportunity to realize their interests in such a blurred situation.

At the same time, for the United States of America, the new strategic environment contained a previously unimaginable combination of pressures and opportunities for engagement in the formerly communist East. Since the beginning of the nineties of the 20th century, the United States military has been involved in various programs of training, education, and equipping the armed forces of former adversaries (Chandler, 2019). The joint exercises brought American soldiers into direct contact with their counterparts from the host countries. Many international manifestations were held within the framework of NATO's Partnership for Peace program. As part of a bilateral initiative "in the spirit of Partnership for Peace", the partner countries participated with the US National Guard in several exercises and exchanges. Somewhat less frequently, US forces also temporarily used regional bases for their operational needs. Several such cases were within NATO missions in and around the former Yugoslavia. For example, from 1995 to 2004, the United States used Tasar Air Base in southern Hungary as a "transit airfield" to supply SFOR and IFOR peacekeepers in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Chandler, 2019). Camp "Able Sentry" (Able Sentry) in Macedonia had a similar purpose in a series of various NATO and UN missions during the same period. After 1999, the US Army built a new larger facility, the Bondsteel base, as a command of its forces at KFOR in Kosovo and Metohija (Iliev, Odzakov, & Glavinov, 2019). In recent times, US forces have also used regional facilities to support operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Bulgaria opened its airport in Burgas to US planes for refueling in the airspace during the campaign against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in late 2001. In early 2003, Hungary allowed the United States to train several dozen Iraqi exiles at the Tasar base.

When the Turkish government subsequently refused to allow its territory to be used for operations in Iraq, Bulgaria agreed to reopen the airport in Burgas and the nearby Sarafovo camp (which was already used to base a small US task force to organize transport to Macedonia and Kosovo) as a refueling base, and Romania allowed US forces to use its Black Sea port of Constanța and the nearby Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base as logistics centers for US forces moving to the Middle East (Onaciu, 2022). Arguing that deployments in Europe, and especially East Asia, are still too reminiscent of an outdated legacy of the Cold War, the administration has pointed to further reductions in troop levels on both fronts. Forces in Europe could be reduced by more than half. At the same time, the "diversification" of facilities would aim to develop much simpler and smaller "operational locations on the territory of foreign countries" (foreign operating sites - FOS) and "cooperative security locations" (cooperative security locations - CSL) (Onaciu, 2022)z (Smbatyan, 2022). Informally called "lily pads", i.e. "floating airbases", such positions would allow rotational replacement of force contingents and periodic access for training purposes while providing immediately "expandable" facilities with pre-deployed equipment. Those types of facilities would help build stronger partnerships and host nation capacity while providing the United States with low-cost, flexible platforms to respond to future crises. In that way, she secured part of the necessary activities to narrow the maneuver proctor of her opponent, Russia. To act towards

Russia, they opted for a strategy of indirect action, engaging indirectly as stimulators, protectors, and instigators through intelligence operations to change the perception of countries that were in a strong symbiosis with Russia.

The frozen conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh also found itself in the midst of intelligence games. The frozen conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh Nagorno-Karabakh is an autonomous region in Azerbaijan, where the majority of the population is Armenian. Tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh have existed since the late eighties of the 20th century, when Armenian deputies in the National Committee of Nagorno-Karabakh voted for the unification of that region with Armenia in 1988 (Council of Foreign Relations, 2020). Fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh escalated after Armenia and Azerbaijan gained independence.

The local Armenian population inhabiting Nagorno-Karabakh held a referendum in December 1991, after which independence was proclaimed and the establishment of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, which is not internationally recognized. Since an earlier Soviet proposal for greater autonomy for Nagorno-Karabakh within Azerbaijan did not satisfy either side, war broke out between Armenia and Azerbaijan (Smbatyan, 2022). In 1992 and 1993, Armenia defeated Azerbaijan and won not only Nagorno-Karabakh but also 20 percent of the surrounding territory, which is still under the control of Armenian forces.

At the beginning of May 1994, the representatives of the Republic of Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as the representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Russian representative in the Minsk Group of the OSCE, signed the Bishkek Protocol, which achieved a ceasefire (Davtyan, 2023). After the collapse of the USSR, the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh turned from an internal one into an international problem, and therefore subject to interpretation from the point of view of international law.

Any demand for the annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia represents a violation of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Resolution 884 of the UN Security Council in 1993 confirmed the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Resolution 1416, which was adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in 2005, states that a significant part of the territory of Azerbaijan is under the occupation of Armenian forces, and that separatist forces control the Nagorno-Karabakh region (Löhrer, 2022). The Resolution further warns that the occupation of foreign territory represents a serious violation of the obligations that Armenia has as a member of the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe called on Nagorno-Karabakh to refrain from calling elections, recalling that due to the armed conflict in the period from 1991 to 1994, a significant part of the population of the region was forced to leave their homes.

The Union also gave clear support to the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. It is interested in a peaceful solution to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh and encouraging regional cooperation that would contribute to the stabilization of the South Caucasus region.

Official negotiations on solving the Nagorno-Karabakh problem have been conducted since 1994 under the auspices of the Minsk Group of the OSCE, which consists of Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Sweden, Turkey and the USA,

which is co-chaired by three countries - Russia, France and the USA (Mirzayev, 2022). Partly due to the composition of the co-chairing countries, and partly due to the envisaged way of decision-making based on consensus - this negotiation process has not yet produced concrete results. The official positions of Baku and Yerevan remained very far apart. Azerbaijan's position is that Armenian troops should immediately withdraw from the Nagorno-Karabakh region, that all displaced persons must be allowed to return, and that the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan cannot be subject to negotiation. On the other hand, Armenia does not recognize that Nagorno-Karabakh is an integral part of Azerbaijan, proving this by the fact that Nagorno-Karabakh declared independence at the same time as Azerbaijan, and therefore both countries are successors of the Soviet Union (Smetana & Ludvik, 2019).

In this context, Armenia insists that the government of Nagorno-Karabakh participate in the discussion on the future of the region and refuses to cede the occupied territory to Azerbaijan, or to allow refugees to return to Nagorno-Karabakh so that their representatives can participate in the status negotiations (Yavuz & Gunter, 2022). The main disagreement between the two sides relates to the issue of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh. While Azerbaijan expresses its readiness to grant Nagorno-Karabakh "the highest status of autonomy that exists in the world", Armenia's position is that the residents of the region should decide their future. Azerbaijan sees this attitude of Armenia as a direct threat to its territorial integrity. In the 2006 referendum held in Nagorno-Karabakh, 98 percent of residents voted for the adoption of a constitution and the declaration of a sovereign state.

The EU announced that it does not recognize the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh and that, accordingly, it will not recognize the results of the referendum either. The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group regularly visit the region and hold high-level talks with the parties to the conflict (Makili-Aliyev, 2022). At the end of 2007, in Madrid, representatives of the USA, France, and Russia, in their capacity as co-chairs of the Minsk Group of the OSCE, presented to Armenia and Azerbaijan a preliminary version of the basic principles for resolving the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The so-called "Madrid principles" call for, among other things, the return of the territories around Nagorno-Karabakh under Azerbaijani control, the granting of temporary status to Nagorno-Karabakh, the provision of guarantees for security and self-governance, the connection of the corridor of Armenia with Nagorno-Karabakh, the determination of the future final legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh (Davtyan, 2023).

Karabakh through a legally binding expression of will, the right of all internally displaced persons and refugees to return and international security guarantees that would include a peacekeeping operation. The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group indicated that the basic principles reflect a reasonable compromise based on the principles of the Helsinki Final Act on the non-use of force, territorial integrity, equal rights, and self-determination of peoples. It is believed that the acceptance of these basic principles by Armenia and Azerbaijan would enable the development of a comprehensive solution that should ensure peace, stability, and prosperity, both in Armenia and Azerbaijan and in the wider region. (Löhrer, 2022) Russia independently organized trilateral summits in which the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan also participated. The first such summit was organized at the beginning of November 2008 in

Moscow, and on that occasion, a declaration was signed by which the parties confirmed that they would respect the general principles of international law when solving the Nagorno-Karabakh problem. In a statement issued in November 2008, at a session of the OSCE Permanent Council, the EU welcomed the meeting between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan held in Moscow, assessing that it enabled the reaffirmation of the central role of the OSCE Minsk Group in seeking an amicable solution to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. It was further stated that the Union has full confidence in the co-chairs from France, Russia, and the USA and their ability to, in all aspects, advance efforts to achieve a political solution to the conflict, which is of vital importance for the future and stability in the region. The Union called on the parties to engage in a constructive dialogue as soon as possible and specify the basic principles for conflict resolution, based on those proposed in Madrid by the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group. In December 2009, a joint statement of the heads of delegations of the co-chairing countries of the OSCE Minsk Group and the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia was adopted. On that occasion, the ministers of foreign affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan submitted a report on the progress in achieving a common understanding of the basic points of the so-called "Madrid principles" and expressed the readiness of their countries to work dedicatedly on solving the remaining open issues. At the end of May 2010, the co-chairs of the Minsk Group of the OSCE adopted a statement regarding the holding of parliamentary elections in Nagorno-Karabakh in May 2010. Although the co-chairs expressed their understanding of the need for the de facto authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh to try to democratically organize the lives of their residents, it was pointed out that this area is not recognized as independent and sovereign by any state, including Armenia (Makili-Aliyev, 2022). Accordingly, this procedure should not in any way affect the determination of the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh. At the invitation of the President of Russia in June 2010, a meeting of the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan was held in St. Petersburg, which was supposed to contribute to the continuation of negotiations on the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. Immediately after the meeting, an armed incident took place on the dividing line, which the co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group condemned, judging that the use of military force, especially at this moment, can only be understood as an attempt to threaten the peace process.

The co-chairs reiterated that there is no alternative to a peaceful resolution of the conflict and called on the parties to show restraint on the ground, as well as to prepare citizens for peace, not war, in their public speeches. To assess the overall situation, in October 2010, the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group conducted a mission to visit the occupied territories of Azerbaijan surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh (Davtyan, 2023). On that occasion, the co-chairs were convinced of the devastating consequences of the frozen conflict and the failure to reach a peaceful solution. This reinforced their view that the status quo was unacceptable and unsustainable. Advocating for a peaceful and consensual solution, the co-chairs appealed to the leaders of all parties to the conflict to avoid activities that would prejudice the final solution or change the character of these areas. At the invitation of the President of Russia in October 2010, another trilateral summit was held at which the presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia exchanged opinions on various open issues. The meetings of the presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia were also held in 2011 in Sochi and Kazan and in February 2012 in Sochi.

Although these meetings confirmed the willingness of the parties to find an acceptable solution to the frozen conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh through dialogue, they did not contribute to reaching an agreement on the key principles for its resolution. The last meeting of the co-chairs of the Minsk Group of the OSCE, with the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia, was held on May 17 of this year in Krakow (Davtyan, 2023). On that occasion, the ministers exchanged opinions on the current situation and confirmed their commitment to preserving peace in the region. In addition, the co-chairs reiterated the need to avoid activities or rhetoric that could raise tensions or jeopardize the peace process. They were also considered possible ways to improve the peace process, and in that context, measures were discussed that should help create an atmosphere suitable for building trust. Although the OSCE Minsk Group has been in existence for twenty years, negotiations on resolving the frozen conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh have not yet led to a compromise solution. The principles stated in the announcements of the numerous summits of the OSCE Minsk Group were not implemented in practice. There are many reasons for that. The most important are certainly the parties' refusal to cooperate and the objectively complex nature of the conflict. We should not lose sight of the OSCE's failure to develop an effective mechanism that would allow stability to be maintained and provide an acceptable solution to this conflict. It is often pointed out that the main shortcoming is that Russia, the USA, and France, as co-chairs of the Minsk Group of the OSCE, did not act as neutral mediators from the very beginning, which further contributed to the freezing of the conflict (Yavuz & Gunter, 2022). There are opinions that Russia is largely responsible for the failure of the negotiations, which, based on its interests in the region, supports the separatism of Nagorno-Karabakh. Although it had no role in the origin of the conflict, Russia monopolized mediation and peace efforts to resolve it to influence the internal and foreign policies of Armenia and Azerbaijan. In this context, it is emphasized that Russia's role as co-chair is ambiguous, due to its direct involvement in the conflict and its role as one of the key mediators (Makili-Aliyev, 2022). On the other hand, the frozen conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh is currently not a matter of priority interest for the US, which is why it is not ready to engage further to put pressure on the parties to the conflict to reach a compromise solution as soon as possible.

In a milieu of such circumstances, the anti-terrorist action, as the Azerbaijanis call it, and the forced emigration, the exodus of Armenians, which the Azerbaijanis call Genocide, took place. Two weeks after the renewal of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, Russia, as a mediator in solving this multi-decade problem in the South Caucasus, tried to initiate a truce (Davtyan, 2023). But shortly after the ceasefire agreement came into force (October 10 at 12 noon), the warring parties accused each other of new attacks. The talks between the ministers of foreign affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan were held in Moscow at the invitation of President Vladimir Putin, and the ceasefire was supposed to pave the way for the exchange of prisoners and bodies of the dead, as well as talks on resolving the conflict. However, despite international activities, a peaceful solution is still in question. Recently, Russia has been criticized many times for its vague and indecisive statements, which have left enough room for observers to speculate about the Kremlin's true intentions.

While Turkiya has openly supported Azerbaijan in its bid to regain control of Nagorno-Karabakh (an ethnic Armenian separatist enclave in Azerbaijan), Russia has refrained from

vocally supporting Armenia, although it is considered its ally (Smbatyan, 2022). Nagorno-Karabakh, which has been outside the control of the Azerbaijani authorities since the end of the war in 1994, is, from an international legal point of view, the sovereign territory of Azerbaijan. Russia has no reason to punish Azerbaijan, because it does not consider it an enemy. Agreements on arms sales and in the energy sector confirm closeness with both countries. The situation in Nagorno-Karabakh deteriorated sharply on September 27, with fierce fighting claiming hundreds of lives. The new escalation is considered the most serious since the end of the armed conflict in the 1990s (Yavuz & Gunter, 2022). After the war, Armenia remained in almost complete isolation and a hostile environment. Russia is actually its only ally, which could, at least theoretically, provide military assistance. But, for now, Moscow refrains not only from military operations, but also from louder rhetorical support of Armenia. At this stage of the conflict, Moscow wants to be seen as an impartial mediator, which would probably give it a chance to exert much more influence throughout the region. Russian President Vladimir Putin called the conflict "a tragedy that Russia is very worried about." He claimed that people in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh "are not strangers to Russia". "Suffice it to say that we have about two million Azerbaijanis and over 2 million Armenians in Russia. "Many Russian citizens maintain close friendly and even family relations with both republics," Putin said (Mirzayev, 2022). Therefore, he made it clear that relations with both countries are equally important for Moscow. Putin reminded the public that Moscow bears obligations towards Armenia as a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, CSTO, however, as he stated, hostilities are not conducted on Armenian territory. In other words, Russia is theoretically ready to defend Armenia if it is attacked, but the obligations do not refer to the crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh, which is considered part of Azerbaijan. As long as the hostilities are conducted only on its territory, Moscow has no legal basis for intervention. In order to provide Yerevan with military aid, the Kremlin must be very highly motivated, according to political scientists in Moscow. In theory, there are reasons to intervene in the conflict, but realistically, a lot depends on the degree of Turkish involvement. The final defeat of Armenia in the eyes of the world would also look like the defeat of Russia, which, among other things, would lead to a drastic reduction of Russian influence in the region. This scenario is, of course, unacceptable for the Kremlin (Davtyan, 2023). However, for now, we should not expect a "final choice" from Moscow, because that would limit the Kremlin's room for maneuver. Neither the Russian authorities nor the Russian society have enough reasons to use military force against Azerbaijan, in the post-Soviet space, Azerbaijan is an example of a country that is capable of conducting an independent foreign policy, while at the same time cultivating good relations with Moscow, without quarreling with Putin. "Armenia is undoubtedly an important ally of Russia, but from the very beginning the Kremlin has viewed the Armenian government with caution and suspicion. The change of government in this country came about through protests, that is, the "color revolution", and this is a great sin in the eyes of the Kremlin. Pashinyan's government does not limit the freedom of the media, and welcomes the activities of Western non-governmental organizations, which is a security threat for the Kremlin. In addition, one should take into account the fact that not only Azerbaijan, but also Turkey, which stands behind it in Moscow, is not considered an enemy. "Turkey is an important partner for Russia, although a very difficult one (Smbatyan, 2022). The partnership with Turkey, despite all the contradictions and crises, allows Russia to remain in Syria without major losses and to conduct business in Libya. But the main thing is that this partnership helps create a situation where regional conflicts can be resolved without American involvement. For Russia, the possibility of solving problems without the omnipresent Americans is important in itself." The same opportunity is

important for Turkey. Therefore, the anti-Western platform is more important in this case than the so-called Christian factor in which hopes may be placed in Armenia.

How to Approach It

If addressing the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict were our responsibility, we would prioritize a coordinated diplomatic strategy involving all key stakeholders. This would include:

- **Engaging Neutral Mediators:** Involving neutral parties to facilitate unbiased negotiations.
- **Building Trust:** Implementing confidence-building measures to reduce hostilities.
- **International Support:** Garnering support from international organizations and influential states to apply pressure and offer incentives for a resolution.

Conclusion

Nothing happened suddenly. When talking about frozen conflicts, they should be connected with the determinants of cold peace and cold war. Cold peace is a state of relative harmony between two parties that have ended the war conflict and opted for (co)existence in the existing conditions, aware that the dispute has not been resolved, nor that it can be resolved in the foreseeable future.

The Cold War implies the maintenance of tension and the continuation of conflict through various political and economic means, continuous propaganda activities, and sometimes occasional armed skirmishes of lower intensity. It also implies waging indirect, proxy wars, but that possibility remains reserved for great powers, possibly some regional actors. The key danger for small states "stuck" in frozen conflicts is not realizing the likelihood that they will become a tool for conducting proxy wars with the big players. This, for example, happened to the unfortunate Mikheil Saakashvili, who rushed to war against South Ossetia. It was then through Georgia that an attempt was made to provoke a NATO proxy war against Russia.

When tension is maintained in the long term by political, economic, and propaganda activities, then the road to the renewal of the armed conflict is well paved. The thawing of the frozen conflict occurs as a result of heating the tension with constant provocations, which prolongs the Cold War situation. Modalities will be diverse, from proxy activities, and hybrid war to the renaissance cold war and cold peace. the main point is that this partnership helps create a situation where regional conflicts can be resolved without US involvement. For Russia, the possibility of solving problems without the omnipresent Americans is important in itself. The same opportunity is important for Turkey. Therefore, the anti-Western platform is more important in this case than the so-called Christian factor in which hopes may be placed in Armenia. It also implies waging indirect, proxy wars, but that possibility remains reserved for great powers, possibly some regional actors. When tension is maintained in the long term by political, economic, and propaganda activities, then the road to the renewal of the armed conflict is well paved. The thawing of the frozen conflict occurs as a result of heating the

tension with constant provocations, which prolongs the Cold War situation. Modalities will be diverse, from proxy activities, and hybrid war to renaissance cold war and cold peace.

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