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**POLITICAL AND CULTURAL TECHNOLOGIES OF COOPERATION.
(IN THE CONTEXT OF TURKEY-AZERBAIJAN RELATIONS)**

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ABSTRACT:

Bilateral relations or multilateral relations between countries aim to use the instruments of political, economic, cultural and regional management and ultimately achieve success. The model of using internal indicators in political management is important in the research process.

The article examines Turkey's policy towards Azerbaijan and various aspects of bilateral cooperation between 2010 and 2014. Energy security, diplomatic and political cooperation, military cooperation, attitudes towards regional conflicts and joint positions in international organizations between Turkey and Azerbaijan formed the basis of bilateral relations during this period. The article analyzes in detail the impact of TANAP and other energy projects, issues related to Armenia, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and relations with Russia on bilateral cooperation. As a result, the strategic partnership model between Turkey and Azerbaijan was assessed as an important basis for the stability and prosperity of the South Caucasus region.

INTRODUCTION

Relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan are based on a rich foundation of historical, cultural and ethnic ties. The years 2010-2014 were a period when these relations developed particularly dynamically. During this period, important steps were taken between the two countries towards cooperation in energy, diplomatic and other fields, and joint activities were demonstrated in regional and international processes. The aim of the study is to analyze Turkey's policy towards Azerbaijan during this period in the framework of energy projects, diplomatic initiatives and security issues, as well as to identify the strategic importance of bilateral cooperation. We also examine the impact of tensions with Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on Turkish-Azerbaijani cooperation. In this regard, the study presents important findings from the perspectives of both regional stability and international relations.

1. Sustainability towards energy security.

The suspension of the protocols between Turkey and Armenia on April 22, 2010 became an opportunity to restore bilateral relations with Azerbaijan. As is known, the energy issue has always been on the agenda of Turkish-Azerbaijani relations. In this regard, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline are important energy bridges.¹ Azerbaijan is also one of the most important countries for the NABUCCO project, which is supported by Turkey.

On June 7, 2010, an agreement on the sale, purchase and transportation of natural gas was signed between the two countries. On July 17, 2010, Turkey and Azerbaijan reached an agreement that Turkey will supply 500 million cubic meters of Azerbaijani gas to Nakhchivan annually without charging transit fees. As a logical consequence of all this, the first meeting of the Turkey-Azerbaijan High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council was held on October 25, 2011, chaired by President İlham Aliyev and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The meeting discussed issues related to the development of various areas of bilateral relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Later, major energy projects between the two countries were announced. The most important step in the energy sector was the signing of an agreement between the two countries on the construction of the Trans-Anatolian Gas Pipeline. According to the agreement, Azerbaijani gas was to be transported to Europe via Turkey.²

Cooperation has also expanded at the diplomatic level. Turkey and Azerbaijan have jointly fought against the biased steps of the French government towards Turkey. Thus, on October 24, 2011, the Republic of Azerbaijan was elected as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for a two-year term, receiving the votes of 155 out of 193 countries of the UN General Assembly. Thus, Azerbaijan began to actively lobby against the bill submitted to the French Senate regarding accusations of "Armenian genocide". Azerbaijan took a number of initiatives towards France in order to prevent the adoption of the law. Work was also carried out in various countries to popularize the Khojaly massacre at international venues. A monument symbolizing the Khojaly genocide was unveiled in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In response to France's actions, a crowded rally dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the occupation of Khojaly was held on February 26 in Taksim Square in Istanbul. Statesmen and public figures of Turkey and Azerbaijan gathered together and demonstrated their strength.³ Turkey welcomed Azerbaijan's non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council for 2012-2013, which increased its weight in political

¹ Kazimi, P. F. O., & Guliyeva, N. A. G. (2023). " Time" spent in youth's "global information space"(problems of satisfaction of reading or information need). *Procedia Computer Science*, 219, 720-723.

² The first meeting of the Türkiye-Azerbaijan High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council was held. <https://president.az/az/articles/view/3388/images/104>

³ Baskin Oran. Turkish Foreign Policy from the War of Independence to the present day, documents, comments (2001-2012), Volume III, Istanbul, 2013, 885 p.

processes aimed at establishing international peace and security. The struggle of both countries for the same goal has intensified.⁴

The Foreign Relations Committee of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey issued a statement condemning the Khojaly massacre, calling what happened in Khojaly a great shame for the history of mankind and a crime against humanity. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu stated that the adoption of the law by the French parliament casts a shadow on France's neutrality and that it should be removed from the co-chairmanship of the OSCE Minsk Group. This call was also supported by the Azerbaijani parliament. Davutoglu raised the Karabakh issue in his speech at the UN General Assembly on September 29 and emphasized that no concrete steps had been taken in this direction. At the meeting of ministers of the member countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization held in Baku on October 15, 2012⁵, it was stated that the opening of an airport in Khojaly would harm the process of resolving the Karabakh problem.

On June 8, 2012, the Foreign Ministers of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia met in Trabzon for a trilateral meeting. Turkey's relations with these two countries have already shown that they are moving from cooperation to strategic partnership. The meeting discussed the possibilities of developing regional cooperation on issues of interest to all three countries. In addition, an exchange of views took place on visa-free regime and free movement of goods. An agreement was reached on the Trilateral Sectoral Cooperation Action Plan for 2013–2015.⁶

Azerbaijan and Turkey expanded their joint efforts on issues related to Armenia. Relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan, which took an important step towards strategic partnership in 2012 with the implementation of the TANAP project, continued to develop in 2013. In particular, the most important event was the signing on December 17 of the final investment agreements on the development of natural gas to be produced at the Azerbaijani Shah Deniz-2 field and its transportation to Europe via the TANAP and TAP pipelines. The signing ceremony of this project, which is being implemented with huge investments of \$35 billion, was attended by high-ranking representatives of the governments of Azerbaijan, Montenegro, Greece, Georgia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Albania, Italy and the United Kingdom. Turkey was represented at the ceremony by the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Taner Yildiz. He noted that the implementation of this project will largely solve the problem of natural gas in Europe. On December 24, the Azerbaijani government responded positively to Turkey's request to increase its share in TANAP, and on the direct

⁴ Azerbaijan - United Nations (UN) relations. <https://mfa.gov.az/az/category/beynelxalq-teskilatlar/azerbaycan-birlesmis-milletler-teskilati-munasibetleri>

⁵ Tripartite Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Turkey-Azerbaijan-Georgia.

⁶ Cooperation in Eurasia/Eurasian Studies Center (Avim) Conference Books No: 14, 48 in light of the Turkic Council (Council) and developments in the region.

instructions of President Ilham Aliyev, Turkey's share in the project was increased from 20 percent to 30 percent⁷.

2. The importance of cooperation at the diplomatic and political level.

A significant upsurge was observed in political relations, especially after the presidential elections held in Azerbaijan on October 9, 2013. President Ilham Aliyev's first foreign visit to Turkey after the elections can be seen as an important indicator of the close relations between the two countries. Thus, on November 13, Turkish President Abdullah Gul presented Ilham Aliyev, who visited Ankara, with a state award, the highest award of the country, and Ilham Aliyev similarly presented Abdullah Gul with the "Heydar Aliyev Award". At the press conference held after the meeting of the presidents, A. Gul once again emphasized the importance that Turkey attaches to the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Ilham Aliyev drew attention to the importance of strategic relations between the two countries, using the phrase "The stronger Turkey is, the stronger Azerbaijan will be". During Ilham Aliyev's visit, the third meeting of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council between Turkey and Azerbaijan was also held.⁸

At a press conference held after the council, where seven agreements and protocols were signed between the two countries, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan congratulated re-elected President Ilham Aliyev and stressed the importance of Turkish-Azerbaijani cooperation in ensuring peace, stability and prosperity in the South Caucasus. Erdogan also recalled that the Kars-Tbilisi-Baku railway project is nearing completion, noting that once this strategic transport route is connected to the Marmaray line connecting Asia and Europe, uninterrupted communication from Beijing to London via the South Caucasus and Anatolia will be possible. Erdogan's words were also significant because they showed how important Azerbaijan is to the success of the "core country" strategy that Turkey has recently been pursuing. The meeting also included discussions on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. I. Aliyev criticized the failure to implement the decisions taken by the UN on this issue, and at the same time thanked Turkey for its great support to Azerbaijan in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh problem. Erdogan, in turn, noted that this issue is very important for Turkey in terms of ensuring peace and stability in the region, and stressed that Ankara's "unconditional support" to Azerbaijan in resolving the problem peacefully will continue. Erdogan also said that the United States, Russia and France, which are members of the OSCE Minsk Group, should make more efforts to resolve this issue. Similar views on this issue were expressed by Foreign Minister Davutoglu during his visit to Azerbaijan on July 16-17. Davutoglu expressed Turkey's position on this issue as follows:

"It is time to hold the international community accountable." The Minsk Group has been working on this issue for over twenty years. We appreciate these attempts, but they are not working. Everyone should ask themselves why the Minsk Group has failed. The co-chairs must work more actively. The

⁷ Emre Ershen. Turkey's South Caucasus Policy/ SETA Foundation for Political, Economic and Community Studies, Turkish Foreign Policy Annual 2013, Ankara 2014, 475 p.

⁸ Araz Aslanli. Turkey-Azerbaijan Economic Relations/Manisa Celal Bayar University I.I.B.F, Management and Economy 25/1 (2018) 15-27.

countries that are part of the Minsk Group also bear responsibility. Turkey is also a member of the Minsk Group, but since the process is led by the co-chair countries, we cannot provide the necessary support. "We, as Turkey, will support all positive steps taken to resolve the problem"⁹.

In this context, it was noted that Ankara has intensified its diplomatic initiatives to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh problem, especially after Ilham Aliyev's visit to Ankara. For example, Erdogan, who visited Moscow on November 21-22, criticized the Minsk Group for not finding a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh problem at his meeting with Putin, despite its establishment in 1992. In addition, official Ankara closely followed the meeting between Ilham Aliyev and Serzh Sargsyan, which took place for the first time in two years on November 19 at the OSCE headquarters in Vienna. Although no press statements were made after the meeting, the foreign ministers of the two countries met at the OSCE session in Kyiv on December 5-6 and decided to continue negotiations on the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem.¹⁰

Despite all these positive developments, short-term clashes continued on the front line between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem. For example, on March 11, as a result of fire opened by Armenian security forces near the Fizuli region, an Azerbaijani serviceman was killed. Such tensions, on the one hand, weakened the possibility of signing a peace treaty between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and on the other hand, prevented Turkey from starting new relations with Armenia. Thus, the congratulatory message of President Abdullah Gul to Serzh Sargsyan, who was re-elected as President of Armenia, caused discontent among Azerbaijani officials.

Another key player that has a significant impact on the development of Turkish-Azerbaijani relations is Russia. Moscow's main goal, especially in 2013, with regard to the South Caucasus countries was to convince them to join the Customs Union under its leadership. In particular, for Moscow, Azerbaijan's accession to the Customs Union was of great importance in terms of the success of this project. In this context, Putin's working visit to Baku on August 13 after a seven-year hiatus is also of considerable interest. During Putin's visit to Baku, a number of important agreements were signed between Russia and Azerbaijan in areas such as energy, transport and aviation.¹¹

However, President Ilham Aliyev was very cautious about joining the Customs Union proposed by Russia. Thus, the visa facilitation agreement signed between Azerbaijan and the European Union at

⁹ Foreign Minister Davutoğlu "Turkey and Azerbaijan are two brotherly countries from time immemorial and forever." <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakani-davutoglu-turkiye-ve-azerbaycan-ezelden-ebede-iki-kardes-ulkedir.tr.mfa>

¹⁰ From Erdoğan to Putin, Let's Bring Peace to the Caucasus Together, Türkiye newspaper, 28 November 2013.

¹¹ Putin's 8th visit in 6 years. <https://modern.az/olke/482975/putinin-6-ilden-sonra-8-ci-seferi/>

the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius in November showed that Azerbaijan is pursuing a policy of balance between Russia and the EU. This policy was also appropriate for Turkey, which has important political and economic relations with both the EU and Russia. However, it can be predicted that the final choice that Azerbaijan makes between these two economic alternatives will also have a significant impact on Turkish-Azerbaijani relations in the medium and long term.

In April 2014, Prime Minister Erdogan paid a working visit to Baku and met with President Ilham Aliyev. During the meeting, R.T. Erdogan drew attention to the fact that he made his first foreign visit to Azerbaijan after the municipal elections held in March, emphasizing that this has already become a tradition for Turkish politicians. Thus, after winning the presidential elections held on August 10, Erdogan once again demonstrated the importance Turkey attaches to its relations with this country by visiting Azerbaijan immediately after his visit to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in September¹².

Ahmet Davutoğlu, who was elected Prime Minister in August 2014, also once again highlighted the close relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan by visiting first the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and then Azerbaijan in September. As can be seen, this pleasant tradition that has emerged between the two countries has also developed as bilateral relations have developed. They have even demonstrated this tradition at international events they have attended. For example, at the European Union Eastern Partnership Summit in Prague in April, when Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan accused Turkey of genocide and the closure of the Turkish-Armenian border, President Ilham Aliyev spoke to the Azerbaijani delegation as a representative of Turkey. This behavior once again proved the high level of strategic cooperation and mutual support between Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Since January 2014, minor clashes have been taking place along the line of contact between Azerbaijani and Armenian troops. Tensions between the two countries escalated further in late July. As a result of intensified armed clashes from July 31 to August 5, 14 Azerbaijani soldiers were killed. On the Armenian side, 50 soldiers were killed. On November 12, Azerbaijan shot down an Armenian military helicopter. These events have also complicated international efforts to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Despite several meetings between Ilham Aliyev and Serzh Sargsyan during the year, mediated by Russia, France and the United States, no concrete results were achieved in these negotiations. During this period, Turkey openly supported Azerbaijan. For example, both Erdogan and Davutoglu sent messages of condolence to the people of Azerbaijan following the clashes. In addition, on November 8, the Commander of the Special Forces of the Turkish Armed Forces, Major General Zekay Aksakallı, who visited Baku at the invitation of the Azerbaijani Ministry of Defense,

¹² Erdoğan's Visit to Baku: Turkey-Azerbaijani Union at New Level.

<https://politikaakademisi.org/2014/04/14/erdoganin-baku-ziyareti-turkiye-azerbaycan-birligi-yeni-seviyede/>

visited combat positions on the front line. This support demonstrated the strategic importance of Turkish-Azerbaijani relations¹³.

The close relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan have become evident, especially in recent times, from the multilateral cooperation initiatives in which both countries have participated. In this context, the third meeting of the foreign ministers of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Iran since 2011 was held in the city of Van on March 14. On May 26, the first trilateral meeting of the foreign ministers of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan was held in Baku. Turkish and Azerbaijani officials also met at the fourth summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking Countries, hosted by President Abdullah Gül in Bodrum on June 4-5.¹⁴

As mentioned earlier, regular meetings have been held between Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia since 2012. In this context, the foreign ministers of the three countries met in Ganja in February and in Kars in December. In August, this time, the defense ministers met in Nakhchivan. In addition, following the visit of President Abdullah Gul to Georgia in May, the first summit of the heads of state of the three countries took place. Since then, such trilateral meetings have been held regularly every year¹⁵. As can be seen, a very effective mechanism for regional cooperation has been established between the governments of Ankara, Baku and Tbilisi, especially in recent times. One of the main goals of this mechanism, supported by energy and transport projects connecting the three countries, was the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the region.¹⁶ Thus, at the trilateral summit held in May, the importance of observing the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders in resolving the conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia was emphasized, and it was also noted that these principles are also important in resolving the crisis in Ukraine.

CONCLUSION

The years 2010-2014 were a period of strengthening the strategic partnership in relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan. The main directions of these relations were the implementation of important energy projects such as TANAP, joint activities on diplomatic platforms, a common position in resolving regional conflicts, and cooperation in the military sphere. The impact of the TANAP project

¹³ Emre Ershen. Turkey's Russia and South Caucasus Policy 2014/ SETA Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Studies, Turkish Foreign Policy Annual 2014, Ankara 2015, 515 p.

¹⁴ Turkish Speaking Countries Cooperation Council IV. The summit was held in Bodrum.
https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turk-dili-konusan-ulkeler-isbirligi-konseji-iv_-zirvesi-bodrum_da-gerceklestirildi.tr.mfa

¹⁵ A meeting of the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan, Turkey and Georgia is being held in Ganja.
https://azertag.az/xeber/gencede_azerbaycan_turkiye_ve_gurcistan_xarici_isler_nazirlerinin_gorusu_kechirilir_video-54519

¹⁶ Kazimi, P. F. O., & Guliyeva, N. A. G. (2022). The concept of reliable information on the global network in times of crisis. *Technium Soc. Sci. J.*, 30, 742.

on the region's energy market, its role in ensuring Europe's energy security and the benefits Azerbaijan received from this project further deepened the relations between the two countries. Turkey's policy towards Armenia and its support to Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict led to deepening trust between the two countries. The article also examines the impact of the trilateral cooperation mechanisms between Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia on the balance of power in the South Caucasus region. The results of the article show that the strategic cooperation model created between Turkey and Azerbaijan provides an important basis for stability and development not only for these two countries but also for the South Caucasus region. Thus, the period 2010-2014 can be characterized as an important stage in strengthening Turkish-Azerbaijani relations both at the bilateral and regional levels.

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