Shifting Dynamics:
The International Order in a Post-Pandemic World

1st - 2nd of December | 2020

War and Peace:
The Fate of the Azerbaijan-Armenia Conflict

EXPERT ROUNTABLES

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War and Peace: The Fate of the Azerbaijan-Armenia Conflict

- The status-quo of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been permanently altered by Azerbaijan's military action. However, the broader Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict remains.
- The foundation of a regional security and cooperation platform that includes both Armenia and Azerbaijan is a vital next step preserving peace and stability, as well as opening the door to economic development.
- A transformation of Azerbaijan-Armenia relations is required to build mechanisms for peaceful co-existence and partnership.
- Russian-Turkish cooperation and mutually constructive relations are important to the construction of peacekeeping missions that will advance regional security and peace.
- Reforms in Armenian policies that have primarily been drawn from irredentist national myths have the potential to significantly contribute to a more stable and positive post-conflict environment.
- The West, especially the US and EU, needs to have an active and a constructive role in promoting adherence to international law, while blocking efforts to disrupt the advancement of effective regional cooperation.
- Pragmatism and realism should overcome ideological and ethnic differences in order to build sustainable economic infrastructure, mutual-trust, and long-standing peace in the region.

Summary of the Session

The expert roundtable "War and Peace: The Fate of the Azerbaijani-Armenia Conflict" discussed the latest developments in the South Caucasus, the Second Karabakh War along with the future of post-conflict resolution and reconstruction in the region.

In his opening remarks, the Assistant to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Hikmet Hajiyev stated that there is no Nagorno-Karabakh conflict anymore and new realities are emerging in the region, emphasising that Azerbaijan tore down a 30-year-old status quo. The importance of regaining control of three adjacent districts and the return of almost a million refugees to their homeland are also serious gains for regional stability. Hajiyev marked the importance of the role played by Russia and Turkey in brokering an armistice deal that may lead the way for an axis of future regional cooperation, which he defined as "Pax-Caucasia".

Laurence Broers drew attention to the Russian peacekeeping mission in Karabakh and argued that neither the victory of Azerbaijan or defeat of Armenia can be considered as total. He also firmly stated his hope for post-conflict reconstruction and the peaceful co-existence of Azerbaijani and Armenian communities in the future. Farid Shafiyev gave a historical perspective to the conflict and summarised the passive role played by international organisations. He pointed out the importance of Armenian integration to regional developments and the necessity of change in what he termed as the Armenian irredentist mindset. Sergei Markedonov brought a Russian perspective to the debate, arguing for the importance of Russian-Turkish relations and discussed various frozen conflicts as remnants of post-Soviet confrontations.

Panellists also engaged in debate with discussants from various national and professional backgrounds. During the dialogue, the importance of constructive rhetoric, positive diplomatic attitudes, the military dimension of the campaign, economic revival of the region, and recommendations for future generations all featured in the statements made by the participants.

Hikmet Hajiyev's Highlights

Head of Foreign Policy Affairs, Department of the Presidential Administration and Assistant of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Since November 2019, Hikmet Hajiyev has been Assistant to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Head of the Department of Foreign Policy Affairs of the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Azerbaijan.
Since 2000, he has been working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2003 he was posted to the Azerbaijani mission to NATO. Between 2008 and 2009 he served at the UN and with the International Security Department of the Foreign Ministry. In 2009 he was posted to the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Kuwait and in 2010 was transferred to the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Egypt.
Hikmet Hajiyev graduated from Baku State University's international relations and international law department with a bachelor's and master's degree. He continued his education at the NATO Defence College and Université Libre de Bruxelles.

"There is no longer the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, as it was eloquently said by my President [Ilham Aliyev]. I would rather say a new geopolitical order has emerged in the Caucasus region. Previously what we have seen, before the 27th of September, was a status quo based on an occupation, a status quo based on the ethnic cleansing of Azerbaijani IDPs and refugees, a status quo based on acquiring territory by use of force and changing internationally recognised borders. Azerbaijan has completely destroyed such a paradigm of regional security that the Armenian side has tried to impose on the region, and it has been shattered."

"There is no longer a Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, but there is still an Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. Azerbaijan is looking forward to wider comprehensive regional security, to build such regional security architecture, of course, with the participation of Armenia. Of course, Armenia should also make this strategic decision. Armenia now is at a watershed between past and future."

"We particularly highlight the role of the Russian Federation and brotherly Turkey. Both of them are regional countries and their engagement, their future cooperation are also key components and columns of the wider comprehensive regional security. Russian peacekeepers are fulfilling their mission in the region and the declaration signed between Russia and Turkey on the establishment of a joint ceasefire monitoring system will be fully operational. In the long-term, we are looking forward to the closer engagement of the two parties with Russia and Turkey, for further development and consolidation of peace and security in the region."

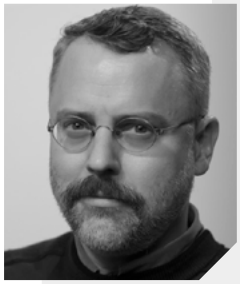
"We would like to change a fragmented region into an integrated region. With an integration process based on the trilateral statement that was signed with the mediation of Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia [will] open all channels of communication in the region. And we can call it a new 'Pax Caucasia'. The new 'Pax Caucasia' is an inclusive perspective, an inclusive vision from the perspective of Azerbaijan."

"Armenia should finally say that it is respecting the borders of its neighbours and also respecting the territorial integrity of its neighbours, first when it comes to Azerbaijan. Based on that reality, we can build new relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. And based on this vision, we can move forward. The same applies to Turkish-Armenian relations; Armenia should also put an end to all its territorial claims towards Turkey."

"So far, during the 30 years of Azerbaijani independence, we have managed to build the elements of such a security and economic architecture in the region. [This] first applies to Azerbaijan's relations on a bilateral basis with Turkey, brotherly Turkey and Azerbaijan, as in [there is] a special relationship. In the meantime, [there is] a strategic partnership and good neighbourly relations between Russia and Azerbaijan. And from another side, [there are] good neighbourly and close relations with Iran and Azerbaijan. And then, we try to apply it in a trilateral format of cooperation."

"A key, fundamental fact in every military operation: you can win a war, but it is always difficult to win peace. But from the Azerbaijani strategy, we have seen smart diplomacy, the application of military power in terms of enforcing peace and in the meantime, diplomacy and information power. All of this has come close to winning the peace as well."

Laurence Broers's Highlights



Director of the Caucasus Programme, Conciliation Resources & Associate Fellow, Russia and Eurasia Programme, Chatham House

Laurence Broers is the Caucasus programme director at London-based peacebuilding organisation Conciliation Resources. He has more than 20 years of experience as a researcher of conflicts in the South Caucasus and practitioner of peacebuilding initiatives in the region. He also serves as an associate fellow at the Russia and Eurasia Programme at Chatham House and is the author of Armenia and Azerbaijan: Anatomy of a Rivalry (Edinburgh University Press, 2019).

"Azerbaijan has won a military victory and Armenia has lost in a crushing defeat. Yet, neither was total. Politically, the project to restore Azerbaijani territorial integrity remains incomplete, and the countervailing project to establish a separate political identity in Nagorno-Karabakh survives, albeit in a much-truncated form. Both Armenia and Azerbaijan have been left with enough of a cause to continue their rivalry if they choose to do so."

"At the geopolitical level, Russia has succeeded in ending the bloodshed and appears to win with the deployment of peacekeepers to Azerbaijan. But Turkey's new role also forces recognition of the fact that Russia does not hold, and has not held for some time, the kind of patronage monopoly that characterises real hegemony at both levels, national and regional."

"A transformation in Armenian-Azerbaijani relations is necessary, and there is now an opportunity to craft an integrative peace, weaving the defeated party into a new regional structure, meeting sufficient needs to remove the basis for that structure to be contested in the future. The alternative is a punitive piece involving the kind of long-term humiliation that Azerbaijan itself had to endure for more than a quarter century. Azerbaijan now has an opportunity to refashion and retool its relationships not with a monolithic and mythologised enemy, but with a variety of real-world Armenian communities, most importantly, the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh and the Republic of Armenia."

"The fate of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, therefore, depends on whether a new situation evolves that ultimately weaves Armenia and Azerbaijan into a common structure defined more by interests than positions and establishing the possibility of partnership, rather than rivalry."

"In my book, *Anatomy of a Rivalry,* I wrote about this: there is a compliant Armenia that seeks to become a fully-fledged member of the international community, more along the lines of legality, complying with a broader sense of territorial integrity, negotiating on Nagorno-Karabakh and so on. And that was overtaken by a different vision, which I think Farid referred to in his presentation, which I call 'Augmented Armenia,' which is an enlarged territorial space [of a] homeland. And so, the question now is whether Armenia can revive the idea of compliant Armenia in ways that Armenians themselves can buy into, validate and find legitimate. And in a sense, that also produces a question for Azerbaijan: What can Azerbaijan do to promote and to foreground a compliant vision of Armenia over an augmented one? Augmented Armenia depends on the sense of absolute ethnic incompatibility. And so, we need a whole array. As I mentioned, a retooling of Azerbaijan's policy interfaces with Armenian communities to build confidence, to build trust."

"On both sides the question of normalisation is so easily blocked by examples of the other side's cynicism or bad faith. But normalising relations is the only route to de-securitising and de-internationalising this conflict and ending a situation where foreign troops are needed to keep a fragile peace."

"The last 25 years, when development worked around and embedded conflict, makes it more likely that we will see the emergence of a heavily securitised and segregated periphery populated by sparse, economically dependent and mutually hostile communities."

Sergei Markedonov's Highlights

Leading Researcher, MGIMO University & Editor-In-Chief of the Journal of International Analytics, Russia

Sergei Markedonov is a Leading Researcher at the Institute of International Studies at MGIMO-University and an expert at the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) and the Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Fund. From 2014 to 2019, he was an associate professor at the Russian State University for the Humanities. From 2010 to 2013, he was a visiting fellow in the Center for Strategic and International Studies' Russia and Eurasia Program, based in Washington, DC. Between 2001 and 2010, he was head of the Interethnic Relations Group, and Deputy Director at the Institute for Political and Military Analysis in Moscow.
Mr. Markedonov has also been a visiting fellow with the Russia and Central Asia Program at Fudan University, Shanghai and a visiting lecturer with both the Center of Central Eurasian Studies at the University of Mumbai and the German Council on Foreign Relations. He has authored several books and reports.

> "Azerbaijan managed to restore its control over lost territories. This is why, in the post-Soviet space, it became the second country after Russia that lost territories as a result of the first generation of conflicts in the '90s and then successfully managed to regain control. I mean, here, the Russian case in Chechnya and now Azerbaijan. I understand fully that there are no direct parallels, but nevertheless, some morals can be compared with [regards to] these parallels."

> "I suppose the case of Nagorno-Karabakh brilliantly demonstrates the absence of a universal approach of Russia to all ethno-political conflicts in the post-Soviet space. Russia has no universal recipe and it has a variety of different roads, dependent on various basic principles and developments."

> "The factor of Turkey and Russian-Turkish relations: I can quote my Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergei Lavrov, who said that, of course, we are not strategic allies with Turkey. At the same time, we have a lot of overlapping interests and we communicate in a lot of areas, be it Syria, Libya and the South Caucasus also. Yes, we have some areas of not full agreement, by the way. But at the same time, we value our cooperation and we have the necessity to strengthen and to develop [relations], to promote the exclusive Eurasian security model with no domination from external actors, the United States [or] the European Union."

> "The question directly addressed to me concerns the Turkish-Russian relationship with the dialectics and the perception of them as [being in a] rivalry. I suppose now we see two extreme poles in estimations of the Russian-Turkish relations. One of them is closer to characterising them as a rivalry. The other extreme pole concerns ideas of Eurasia and fraternity, brotherhood and containment of the United States and the West. I suppose we should find a medium between the two extreme estimates. I do not agree with the perception of our relations as a rivalry as just today we agreed on the joint monitoring centre on the cease fire agreement in Nagorno-Karabakh. It is not rivalry. Rivalry would mean something different."

> "There [is a] potential change in the Armenian foreign policy priorities. On the one side, I understand that Nagorno-Karabakh is a land of myth became [of] the dominant discourse in post-Soviet Armenia, and now its loss is perceived as trauma. Now, Armenian policy is a reflection [of the] frustration and so on felt in society [of loss and trauma]. So, I am not sure that these foreign policy priorities would change immediately tomorrow or maybe in a year. But at the same time, we can see the growing, at least, [of] pragmatism. I am not sure that tomorrow Azeris and Armenians will love each other [and] demonstrate their desire to cooperate, but maybe they will think more [about a] pragmatic situation, and the discourse of pragmatism will be strengthened."

Farid Shafiyev's Highlights

Chairman, Center of Analysis of International Relations & Adjunct Lecturer at Ada University, Azerbaijan

Dr. Shafiyev is the Chairman of the Baku-based Center for Analysis of International Relations. His career began at the Azerbaijani National Academy of Sciences in the Institute of Ethnography and Archaeology. In 1996, Dr. Shafiyev joined the Foreign Service where he worked in the Political-Military Issues and the United Nations Affairs Divisions. Dr. Shafiyev has also served in the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the UN. He was appointed Ambassador to Canada in 2009 and then Ambassador to the Czech Republic in 2014.
Dr. Shafiyev is the author of numerous publications, including *Resettling the Borderlands: State Relocations* and *Ethnic Conflict in the South Caucasus*. Dr. Shafiyev was educated at Baku State University. He has a Master's in Public Administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and a PhD in History from Carleton University.

"As we know, the [modern] conflict began in February of 1988 with the Armenian nationalist demonstration in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan with the slogan of 'Miatsum', which in the Armenian language means 'unification'. And that was the project rooted in the mythologised concept of greater Armenia. Interestingly enough, during the Soviet Union, many Western policymakers and experts supported Armenian nationalists, seeing an opportunity to dismantle the Soviet Union and to redraw the borders of the former Soviet Union."

"While Russia was trying to maintain this uncertainty around conflict resolution, the Western approach was a bit different. Taking into account the strong Armenian lobbying in countries like France and the United States, they tend to support some of the Armenian territorial claims, especially some of the Western experts and policymakers. They tried to convince the Azerbaijani side that they should give up Nagorno-Karabakh for the return of the seven regions[1]."

"Finally, we have the second Karabakh war, which restored Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. But I agree that the conflict is not fully politically resolved. The military [aspect] is resolved; Nagorno-Karabakh [no longer] exists as a notion. And actually, it is an artificial notion, because historically there was only Karabakh and Nagorno-Karabakh was artificially created by Soviet authorities in 1921-1923. The second Karabakh war should be a reminder to the whole international community, especially to the United States, Europe and Russia — the principal mediators of the original conflict — that the ceasefire, no matter how long in length, remains only a temporary solution."

"Ignoring international law does not bring stability in any given region, despite whatever short term benefits, that the global and regional powers might gain from the freezing conflict, or leaving it unresolved, which are equally applicable to the past 27 years, since the adoption of the UN Security Council resolutions on Nagorno-Karabakh."

"I believe the international community, Western expert community and Russian policymakers need to convince Armenia to abandon the old narrative and embark on a new policy of cooperation."

"Russia looks like, for the time being, that it actually would like to have a solution, at least the implementation of the November 10th decision.[2] But from the United States and from the European policymakers, we do not really see a constructive approach. There are always lobbying efforts toward the Armenian cause that influence US and European policymakers. I am especially speaking about some of the possible changes [in US Congress] after Biden comes to power. So, I think [it] should be resolved there. Without [foreign] support, Armenian nationalists will not be able to promote this agenda."

"To reach a durable peace, we need a major revision of approaches. When [certain] experts stress the importance of the Armenians in Karabakh, I would like to stress that it is not only the problem with Armenians in Karabakh, but it is the overall lack of [will for] some Armenian policy makers [to live] with Azerbaijanis, either in Azerbaijan or even in Armenia. We should not forget the fact that 250,000 Azerbaijanis lived in Armenia."

[1] The Armenian-occupied territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh: Seven adjacent districts (Kalbajar, Lachin, Qubadli, Zangilan, Jabrayil, Fuzuli, Aghdam) were occupied by Armenia during the 1990s to create a buffer zone between Azerbaijan and occupied Nagorno-Karabakh.

[2] 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh ceasefire agreement or November 10 Armistice that put an end to the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War. The agreement was signed by Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

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