Project Work Written Report

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Title: Reasons for the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 General Background:

The 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war was an armed conflict between Azerbaijan and the Republic of Artsakh, a breakaway state from Azerbaijan with an ethnic Armenian majority, together with Armenia, in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding seven districts. It was the newest escalation of an unsettled dispute over the region, which is recognised as Azerbaijani territory internationally, but partially governed by the Artsakh.

Nagorno-Karabakh was acquired by Russia in 1813, and the Soviet government established it as an Armenian-majority autonomous oblast of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic in 1923. The modern phase of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh started in February 1988. During the dissolution of the Soviet Union, ethnic Armenians in the region wanted the transfer of their oblast to the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic. The Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic and the Soviet government strongly objected to this demand, leading to ethnic clashes between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis and eventually full-scale war in 1992. This war is known as the First Nagorno-Karabakh War. The war ended with Armenian forces controlling Nagorno-Karabakh and the seven surrounding Azerbaijani-majority districts. A ceasefire agreement was signed in 1994, but there have been multiple violations of the ceasefire.

War broke out once again on 27 September 2020, and ended on 10 November 2020, with a ceasefire agreement that saw Armenia withdrawing her forces from Armenian-occupied territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh. This paper will explore and evaluate the extent to which the insecurities of Armenia and Azerbaijan caused the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war.

1.2 Rationale and Objectives

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been ongoing for decades with no sign of ending in the near future. Hence, this paper seeks to explore the role the insecurities of Armenia and

Azerbaijan played in relation to the other reasons for the war due to its potential significance in affecting the conflict.

1.3 Research Questions

i.   How far did the context in the South Caucasus correspond with the four conditions of realism?

ii.   How did the insecurities of Armenia and Azerbaijan affect the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict?

i.   To what extent were the insecurities of Armenia and Azerbaijan the main reason for the Nagorno-Karabakh war?

1.4 Thesis Statement

The insecurities of Armenia and Azerbaijan is the root cause of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war.

1.5 Scope of Research

The scope of this paper will be limited to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 2020, but the paper would draw on literature on past clashes in the region as well to identify similarities in the reasons for the clashes.

1.6 Significance of Research

This paper analyses the reasons for the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war through a theoretical lens and evaluates the extent to which the two reasons led to the war in relation to the other factors. Moreover, this paper adds on to existing literature about the decision-making processes of small and new nation-states (Armenia and Azerbaijan) in terms of their foreign policy.

1.7 Limitations

This paper is limited in part by the limited access to sources or academic papers available on the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war due to its recency. Furthermore, there is difficulty in interviewing people from the different countries due to physical restrictions. In addition, certain academic papers or sources which reflect the perspectives of Armenia or Azerbaijan may be less accurate because of the limitations of translations. These limitations might compromise the accuracy of the paper.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Ethnic Differences

Ethnic differences refer to differences in race, nationality, religion, linguistic or cultural origin (Morin, 2020). In the South Caucasus, these differences make it difficult for ethnic Armenians and ethnic Azeri to accept each other, contributing to the war (DİYARBAKIRLIOĞLU 2020; Livingstone 2020; Serioli 2020). In 1923, during Stalin's reign, the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast was created to break up the large units of power and create divisions in the Karabakh region, to increase Stalin's control over the region (Livingstone, 2020). The effects of these divisions continue to be felt today, contributing to the demonisation of each other (International Crisis Group, 2005). Because of the clear divisions between the ethnic Armenians and ethnic Azeri there is a significant presence of identity politics in the region, where politicians make use of these ethnic differences to gain more support (Livingstone 2020; Serioli 2020). This does not help in the situation, especially because both Armenia and Azerbaijan must compromise heavily and cooperate on a large scale to resolve the conflict (YAMSKOV, 1996). However, it is also because both governments rely on the support of the public, whom they have conditioned to be antagonistic to the other side, that they are unable to make the painful compromises needed to resolve the conflict (Grono & Vartanyan 2017; Ismailzade 2011). Hence, ethnic conflict played an important role in causing the Nagorno-Karabakh war in 2020.

2.2 Mutual Distrust

The lack of mutual trust between the Azerbaijanis and Armenians is the main obstacle to a political settlement of the conflict (TOKLUOGLU, 2011). The mutual distrust between both countries has led to an inability for both sides to successfully negotiate for a peaceful solution (Grono & Vartanyan 2017). This is made worse when considering the fact that mutual distrust has grown over the years due to broken human links and a lack of communication between the two countries (Grono & Vartanyan 2017; Ismailzade, 2011; TOKLUOGLU 2011). Moreover, both countries do not trust all the countries involved in the conflict (TOKLUOGLU 2011). Therefore, there is no

neutral actor which is willing to facilitate the negotiation process, and that both countries trust. In both countries, the public has grown increasingly frustrated with the failure of peace talks, causing an increase in pro-war sentiments (Ergun & Valiyev 2020; Grono & Vartanyan 2017; Ismailzade 2011; Kofman 2020; Serioli 2020). Therefore, the mutual distrust between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the other countries involved in the conflict led to the failure to negotiate a peaceful settlement, inciting the people to pressure their governments to go to war.

2.3 Military Confidence of Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan has been increasing in military strength over the past few years (Ergun & Valiyev 2020; Serioli 2020). This is because of two reasons. Firstly, Azerbaijan's economy has been improved significantly because of its oil and gas exports, allowing for more money to be spent on rearming and buying modern military equipment. (Companjen 2010; Cruickshank 2020; Grono & Vartanyan 2017). Due to Azerbaijan's economic edge over Armenia, Azerbaijan can build up its military power faster than Armenia. (Cruickshank 2020; Grono & Vartanyan 2017; Kofman 2020; Serioli 2020). Secondly, an increase in Turkey's military support and training has further improved Azerbaijan's military advantage. The Turkish army and military schools have been providing training to Azerbaijani army for a couple of decades, contributing to the formation of a well-equipped and strong army in Azerbaijan (Ergun & Valiyev, 2020). This has led Azerbaijan to overtake Armenia in military strength in the past few years, increasing the Azerbaijani population's confidence in their military. In addition, Grono and Vartanyan (2017) suggest that the April 2016 clashes in Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding areas, between Azerbaijan and the Artsakh Defence Army, which were backed by the Armenians, stoked up both parties' appetite for conflict, especially among the Azerbaijani population, which felt a new sense of confidence after reclaiming two strategic locations from Armenia's control. Cruickshank (2020) further explains that there is a lower political risk for Azerbaijan to go to war now because of the use of modern technology like drones in the war. Therefore, the military confidence of Azerbaijan significantly influenced the decision for Azerbaijan to go to war.

2.4 Foreign Influence

2.4.1 Passive Russian Involvement

Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh have been closely linked to Russia, being part of the USSR in the past. Despite seemingly being passive, Russia still holds many interests in the Nagorno Karabakh region. These interests include the influence of Russia on the South Caucasus, the strategic importance of the area in terms of connecting Europe and Asia, and business opportunities to sell weapons.

Firstly, Russian President Vladimir Putin seeks to restore the traditional dominant status of Russia in the region to protect Russian national security interests (Nation, 2015). In order to maintain Russian control over the region, Russia has to keep Armenia and Azerbaijan dependent on Russia for weapons and security in the conflict (Nation, 2015). This is especially so for Armenia, which is supported by the Russian military in a mutual defence pact (Serioli, 2020). However, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's pro-Western stance has caused Russia to seemingly withdraw her support to Armenia (Ergun & Valiyev, 2020). By withdrawing support for Armenia, Putin hopes that doing so would either put pressure on Pashinyan to lean more towards Russia, or reduce Pashinyan's popularity in Armenia so that he would be replaced by a pro-Russian Prime Minister (Ergun & Valiyev 2020; Modebadze 2021). Evidently, Russia is keen on preventing South Caucasian states from integrating into the Euro-Atlantic community (Ismailzade, 2011). Nation (2015) posits that the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh has increased the dependence of both countries on Russia and ensured some degree of leverage over all regional actors. Given that it is unfeasible for Russia to establish a hegemonic status in the region (Nation, 2015), such an amount of regional influence is ideal, and Russia will benefit from the delicate maintenance of the status quo, where tensions between both countries are high. Yazici (2020) goes one step further to argue that the Russian-brokered agreement that gave Russia exclusive peacekeeping presence around Nagorno-Karabakh is a strategic political manoeuvre by Putin, meant to reduce Turkish influence in the region.

Secondly, the South Caucasus has great strategic importance as a bridge between Europe and Asia, playing an important role in increasing trade, economic and commercial links between

Europe and Asia (Modebadze, 2021). This role is made more significant when considering the fact that the South Caucasus borders energy-rich regions such as the Middle East, the Caspian Basin and Central Asia. Ergun and Valiyev (2020) go further and posit that the Russians were behind the July clashes in 2020 as it served their energy interests. Hence, Russia wants to have control over this region so as to have a greater control over the energy market (Modebadze, 2021).

Thirdly, the Kremlin sells weapons to Azerbaijan and Armenia (Serioli, 2020). Therefore, the continuation of the conflict would mean the continued demand for military supplies, creating business opportunities for Russia.

Cruickshank (2020) does not think that Russia's lack of engagement is due to the economic benefits that Russia stands to gain from the conflict, but rather that it stems from a political crisis in Belarus, a country with significantly more geostrategic importance to Russia than Nagorno-Karabakh. Nevertheless, Russian interests still play a significant role in shaping Russian decisions in the conflict (Companjen 2010; Ergun and Valiyev 2020; Modbadze 2021). Because of Russian interests in the South Caucasus, it does not benefit them to promote conflict resolution in the South Caucasus (Ismailzade 2011; Nation 2015). In the case of the Nagorno-Karabakh war in 2020, Russian unwillingness to demonstrate strong support for Armenia could embolden Azerbaijan to start the war (Cruickshank, 2020).

2.4.2 Turkey's Proactive Support for Azerbaijan

Turkey is another actor in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, playing an escalatory role in it (Cruickshank, 2020). Turkey and Azerbaijan have close bilateral ties influenced by their ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic affinities (Ergun & Valiyev, 2020). The current conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh is an opportunity for Turkey to intensify and deepen its existing relationship, cooperation and strategic partnership with Azerbaijan (Ergun & Valiyev, 2020). In addition, Turkey intends to strengthen its role in the region as a more prominent military and political actor (Clark & Yazici 2020; Ergun & Valiyev 2020). These interests explain Turkey's fervent military support for Azerbaijan. Ergun and Valiyev (2020) and Kofman (2020) suggest

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that Azerbaijan had made preparations with Turkey to conduct the offensive in September 2020, and that Turkey gave Azerbaijan military support in the form of mercenary fighters and drones operated by Turkish personnel.

2.4.3 Lack of International Involvement

The West has been slow to realise the potential for conflict in the Caucasus, and failed to communicate a concise and extensive policy towards the region (Nejad, 1995). Livingstone (2020) argues that external attempts for a peaceful settlement of the conflict cannot connect to the local, thus these initiatives have met immense resistance. As a result, mediation efforts have been delayed or are mostly ineffective. Ismailzade (2011) holds a similar view, that the European Union and the United States have been passive recently on the peace process, largely because of their own domestic and foreign policy problems. This indicates a lack of general lack of interest from the West in the conflict in the South Caucasus, which explains the lack of effort to achieve a peace settlement. Ergun and Valiyev (2020) posit that the current situation in Nagorno-Karabakh calls for a more tailored and swift approach to tackle the problem. They point out the ineffectiveness of the United Nations in the last couple of decades, as well as the failure of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group because of its disinterest and reluctance to act. Grono and Vartanyan (2017) add on by claiming that both Armenia and Azerbaijan have little confidence in the stalled conflict settlement process led by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group.

2.5 Insecurities of Armenia and Azerbaijan

Ismailzade (2011) suggests another reason for the Nagorno-Karabakh war, that Armenia and Azerbaijan are small and new nation-states. Therefore, their sovereignty is crucial to their identity. This creates a situation where they are unwilling to compromise on border issues, fearing a weakening of their national security as a consequence. Ismailzade (2011) points out that this is especially the case for Azerbaijan because of the presence of multiple ethnic groups in the country. However, his findings stop short of proving that this reason caused the conflict, instead implying

that this is a reason the conflict continued. Mikaelian (2020) offers another potential perspective to the insecurities of both countries, by providing analysis that Azerbaijan's move to start the war was to gain a positional advantage to safeguard its interests and to pave the way for it to be in a more favourable position.

2.6 Synthesis and Comparison

The literature on the Nagorno-Karabakh war is fairly comprehensive. The prominent factors, including ethnic differences (DİYARBAKIRLIOĞLU 2020; Livingstone 2020; Serioli 2020) and mutual distrust (Grono & Vartanyan 2017; Ismailzade, 2011; TOKLUOGLU 2011) have been built up over the years, making them significant reasons for the Nagorno-Karabakh war in 2020. However, regarding the issue of ethnic differences, Nejad (1995) doubts that it is the root cause of the conflict since there were no significant conflicts between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis in the past. However, in recent years, there has been an increase in the number of border clashes in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Hence, the relevance and accuracy of Nejad's (1995) findings are limited in the current context. In addition, the military confidence of Azerbaijan is often cited by existing literature to be one of the reasons for the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war (Ergun & Valiyev 2020; Serioli 2020). This is one of the key sources of support for the war. Foreign influence is also a major contributor to how the conflict is shaped (Companjen 2010; Cruickshank 2020; Ergun and Valiyev 2020; Ismailzade 2011; Modbadze 2021; Nation 2015) and has a relatively significant impact on the war in relation to the other factors. This paper aims to explore the potential for the insecurity of Armenia and Azerbaijan to be a cause of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. This factor, while not new, has been largely ignored by the literature on the Nagorno-Karabakh war. Even when this factor is mentioned, it is only briefly touched on (Ismailzade 2011; Mikaelian 2020). Hence, this is a relatively unexplored perspective and further research is needed to confirm the presence of such an issue. At this point, this factor is mere speculation and is not substantiated with evidence. Nevertheless, it has the potential of being a significant factor which prevents conflict resolution as well as promotes

aggressive behaviour. Therefore, this paper aims to bridge that gap in literature by evaluating the

validity of this cause of the war.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This paper will use the following theory to explain the Nagorno Karabakh war:

- Realism in International Relations

Realism is a theory commonly used to explain and understand international relations based on objective laws or patterns identified in human history (Antunes & Camisão 2018; Morgenthau n.d.). There are four assumptions of realism in international relations. The first assumption is that the state is the main actor in international relations. The second assumption is that the state is a unitary actor acting with national interest. The third assumption is that the state is a rational actor and its primary goal is survival. The last assumption is that states live in an anarchy, where there is no other entity above the state which can control its actions (Antunes & Camisão 2018; Wohlforth 2009). Given these four assumptions, realism posits that international relations are likely to be conflictual (Wohlforth, 2009).

This paper will predominantly be using secondary sources, such as books, newspapers and journals as its primary method of data and collection and analysis. This paper will be using primary sources like statistical data and interviews in smaller quantities, due to the difficulty of acquiring these sources.

Chapter Four: Discussion

4.1 Context of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

To understand the insecurities of Armenia and Azerbaijan, we must first look at the context in which the conflict takes shape. According to realism (Antunes & Camisão 2018; Wohlforth 2009), international relations are likely to be conflictual if four conditions are met. Firstly, the state is the main actor in international relations. Secondly, the state acts with national interest. Thirdly, the state is a rational actor and its primary goal is survival. Lastly, the state is situated in a context of possible anarchy. Realism is a common basis for foreign policy, influencing the foreign policies of both Barack Obama (Pillar, 2016) and Donald Trump (Cole, 2017). This is also the case for the foreign policies of Armenia and Azerbaijan as they meet all the four conditions of realism.

Firstly, in both Armenia and Azerbaijan, the state is the main actor in international relations. Both countries are unitary republics, and their leaders are actively involved in negotiations for peace and are the main actors making decisions for the country (Azadian, 2019).

Secondly, both Armenia and Azerbaijan act with national interest. Armenia and Azerbaijan are democratic countries with elections every five years, and politicians from both countries face significant pressure from their populations, especially on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. In Armenia, after news of the signing of the ceasefire agreement in 2020, there was an outpour of anger among the Armenians and many stormed the national assembly and assaulted parliamentary speaker Ararat Mirzoyan (Hess, 2020). It can therefore be said that the Armenian leadership is constantly kept on its toes when dealing with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Similarly, in Azerbaijan, President Ilham Aliyev is willing to adopt a hard line stance in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to appeal to the people of Azerbaijan (Azadian, 2019). It is this pressure that prevents the leadership of both countries from making the painful but necessary concessions to end the conflict (Ismailzade, 2011). Hence, the leadership of Armenia and Azerbaijan are often unable to act relatively flexibly and have to make decisions based on national interest to stay in power.

Thirdly, the states of Armenia and Azerbaijan are both rational actors with the primary goal of survival. This is more apparent in Armenia, where Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, calculating that the alternative of continuing the war would be too costly, had to make the painful decision to accept the ceasefire agreement (Hess, 2020). Pashinyan has also been wary of offending Moscow, which Armenia is dependent on for military support (Hess, 2020). This indicates that the ultimate priority of Armenia is survival, and that their leadership acts rationally to minimise the damage of the war. On the other hand, while Azerbaijan's initiation of the war may seem to be rash and irrational, the approach its leadership took to deal with the conflict can be said to be more strategic and rational than that of Armenia, with long term goals at the forefront of decision making. The timing of Azerbaijan's attack was strategic in two ways. Firstly, it timed the attack at a moment when the international community was still grappling with Covid-19 and when the major powers had many other more important issues to deal with. Secondly, it made sure that it had unquestionable military superiority over Armenia before starting the attack. This is most evident in 2016, during Azerbaijan's smaller-scaled attack and takeover of some territory previously occupied by Armenia, where Azerbaijan tested the water to approximate Armenia's military strength as well as Russia's willingness to support Armenia militarily. Even during the course of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, President Aliyev of Azerbaijan did not choose to go for a total military victory, but rather chose to seize some of the occupied territories to gain a strategic advantage for the future (Grgic, 2020). This was also after consideration that Russia could possibly intervene if Azerbaijan went for the former option (Grgic, 2020). Hence, Azerbaijan is a rational actor with the primary goal of survival.

Lastly, the states are situated in a context of possible anarchy. The west is uninterested in the conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, as seen from their lack of active involvement and intervention in the conflict (Hess 2020; Ismailzade 2011). The only other power which could possibly intervene in the situation is Russia. However, it does not benefit Russia to intervene heavily in the South Caucasus due to its national interests (Ismailzade 2011; Nation 2015). Hence, there is no meaningful actor which is capable of acting as an authority in the region to prevent conflicts from arising. In such a situation where Armenia and Azerbaijan are left to their own devices, it is unsurprising for war to break out.

Given that the four conditions for realism are met, the threat of conflict in the South Caucasus is extremely high, considering the history of repeated armed conflict between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis. Hence, there is a real concern for both Armenia and Azerbaijan that conflicts would arise and threaten both countries.

These concerns are made more important by the fact that Armenia and Azerbaijan are small and new nation-states, where their sovereignty is crucial to their national identity they are extremely aware of their national security (Ismailzade, 2011).

4.2 Impact of the insecurity of Armenia and Azerbaijan

Having established the conditions which led to the insecurity of Armenia and Azerbaijan, it is important to identify the impacts of such an attitude. As Ismailzade (2011) points out, this insecurity renders the prospect of both countries giving up on their territorial integrity impossible. However, the unwillingness to compromise is not the only effect of the insecurity of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Rather, this insecurity is what motivates both countries to actively seek control of the territory of the other party. This is the reason Armenia continued to maintain control over Azerbaijani territory in the first Nagorno-Karabakh war – to act as a bargaining chip as well as a buffer against an Azerbaijani attack. Similarly, in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Azerbaijan sought control over militarily strategic territories to advance their position of security and strengthen their ability to seize more territory (Mikaelian, 2020). In this situation, both countries view attacking to be the best way to defend their territories and their sovereignty.

4.3 Evaluation of the impact of the insecurity of Armenia and Azerbaijan

It is evident that the insecurities of Armenia and Azerbaijan have affected the conflict in the South Caucasus profoundly. However, this reason for the war does not exist in a vacuum, and there are four other significant reasons for the war (ethnic differences, mutual distrust, the military confidence of Azerbaijan and foreign influence) which are worthy to consider in tandem with the insecurities of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

4.3.1 Ethnic Differences

One of the most popular reasons cited for the war is the ethnic differences between the ethnic Armenians and Azerbaijanis. While there were no significant conflicts between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis in the past (Nejad, 1995), ethnic conflict is a factor that has been gradually built up over time, especially by the governments of both countries. Ethnic conflict has set the groundwork for prolonged support and appetite for the war in both countries, and normalised the conflict in the region to be another manifestation of conflict from ethnic differences, shifting attention away from efforts to solve the conflict. However, ethnic differences mostly affect the populations of both Armenia and Azerbaijan. Hence, it is not directly involved in the decision making of both governments to start a war. Nevertheless, it can be said that ethnic tensions have some part to play in exacerbating the insecurities of both states as both states are much more likely to feel threatened at the point in which they are aware that the population in the neighbouring state is receptive to clashes in the region.

4.3.2 Mutual distrust

Another popular reason cited for the war is the mutual distrust between both Armenia and Azerbaijan. This reason complements the insecurities of Armenia and Azerbaijan, as both causes feed on each other. Mutual distrust contributes to an increasing sense of uncertainty in the region and therefore an increased desire to feel secure. Similarly, an increased sense of insecurity increases the level of distrust when both sides prepare for the worst and are unwilling to make compromises premised on the cooperation of both sides. However, there is a fine line between both causes, where mutual distrust impacts the negotiating process more, while the insecurities of both countries lead to them acting more aggressively.

4.3.3 Military Confidence of Azerbaijan

Similar to ethnic differences, the military confidence of Azerbaijan has made it easier for the Azerbaijani population to support military conflict. This has helped to further tilt the decision making of Azerbaijan's leadership to start the war. The military confidence of Azerbaijan is a separate factor from the insecurities of both states, but both factors significantly contributed to the war.

4.3.4 Foreign Influence

The last cause of the war, foreign influence, has to be evaluated in three parts – general international involvement, Russian involvement and Turkish involvement.

Regarding the first part of general international involvement, the lack of any powerful state to control the situation in the South Caucasus provides the context of anarchy which is one of the conditions for conflict in the region. This is important in providing cause for Armenia and Azerbaijan to believe that conflict between themselves is highly likely.

As for Russian involvement in the conflict, it has made it more difficult for peace to be achieved, as Russia benefits from the existing conflict. However, the extent to which Russian influence caused the conflict is limited, as Russia has taken a relatively passive stance in Nagorno-Karabakh of late, merely exploiting the existing conflict to its advantage. Nevertheless, Russia plays a role of facilitating conflict in the region, which makes both Armenia and Azerbaijan more insecure as their safety is more easily threatened with Russia lending some support to both states based on its interests.

The most significant foreign influence on the conflict is the Turkish involvement in the conflict, where Turkey backed Azerbaijan militarily and politically. This factor could potentially have decreased the level of insecurity of Azerbaijan. However, given that foreign support often changes according to interests, political shifts and other external factors, the continuation of Turkish support in the long term is not guaranteed. Hence, acting in the interests of long term security, the Turkish involvement in the conflict could have accelerated the start of the war.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

In conclusion, the insecurities of Armenia and Azerbaijan is the root cause of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war. Ethnic differences, mutual distrust and foreign influence contributed to the insecurities and lowered the risk for Azerbaijan to go to war with Armenia. The military confidence of Azerbaijan could be seen as a trigger factor for the war since it provided the opportune moment for Azerbaijan to strike. Nevertheless, the insecurity of Armenia and Azerbaijan was the root cause of the war. These insecurities not only stagnate the peace-making and negotiation process for the resolution of the conflict, but also create a desire for both countries to seek to control as much of the territory of the other country so as to strengthen their security. However, when clashes break out, they further entrench the fear of both countries and the mindset that their position has to be fortified even more. This in turn leads to more violent clashes, and the cycle repeats itself. Therefore, it can be concluded that the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war is part of a larger trend where both countries descend further into mutual conflict and destruction, caused by the snowballing of insecurities built up by past conflicts and the state of anarchy in the region.

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