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ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**SECURITY PROBLEMS OF THE SOUTH CAUCASUS:
GEOPOLITICAL INTERESTS OF GLOBAL
AND REGIONAL ACTORS**

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INTRODUCTION

The actuality and the usage rate of the research work. Deep geopolitical changes and transformations taking place in the modern system of international relations contribute to the emergence of new challenges, threats and problems for the countries in ensuring national and regional security. The geopolitical and geoeconomic significance of the South Caucasus, the presence of cultural, historical, demographic, ethnolinguistic factors and differences, as well as territorial claims determine and characterize the security environment of the region, an intersection hub of interests and contradictions of many forces and actors. Based on this, it should be noted that the problems of the South Caucasus primarily affect the interests of the states of the region themselves. For the national security of Azerbaijan, the main threat was the 30-year Armenian occupation in the internationally recognized Azerbaijani territories, which was resolved by Azerbaijan itself, as a result of the 44-day Patriotic War. For Georgia the main threats to security are the Abkhaz and South Ossetian conflicts, as well as the militarization of the region, terrorism, drug trafficking, etc. In modern conditions of geopolitical realities as a result of the Great Victory of Azerbaijan over Armenian fascism, the security factor in the region is, first of all, Armenian revanchism and the positions of some leading geopolitical pro-Armenian actors supporting it.

A special role in establishing security and stability in the region belonged to the National Leader of the Azerbaijan Republic Heydar Aliyev, who was the founder of the idea and concept of "peace in the Caucasus", "Common Caucasian House". At the heart of Heydar Aliyev's idea of peace in the Caucasus was the conceptual model "peace in the homeland", "peace in the region", "peace in the whole world!" The same position is supported by President Ilham Aliyev, calling on the countries of the South Caucasus for regional cooperation and peaceful coexistence.

Thus, the relevance of this research can be expressed in the following positions:

Firstly, it is of interest to study the structure of the South Caucasus as an integral, geopolitical geostrata, to study the geopolitical characteristics of this region within the framework of geopolitical theories and concepts;

Secondly, it is important to study the security architecture of the South Caucasus, which is determined by a complex, multilevel structure of internal, external and transnational factors. On the other hand, the urgency raises the danger of the emergence and spread of new forms of threats, the solution of which will require the use of modern types of wars;

Thirdly, the main external factor determining the relevance of the study is that in the South Caucasus collide the interests of a number of states, actors of international relations, first of all, such regional actors as Iran, Turkey, Israel, as well as regional organizations and associations - NATO, OSCE, and among the global actors, the USA, Russia, China, the EU, which undoubtedly emphasizes the importance of the region. On the other hand, the presence of many different interests and goals turns the region into a field of rivalry and confrontation, thereby making it difficult to resolve security issues. However, despite this, the states of the region, with the exception of Armenia, which, as we have already noted, continues to demonstrate revanchist aspirations, are making efforts to ensure security at the level of bilateral and multilateral relations and international organizations are actively participating in the development of various options for ensuring peace and regional security;

Fourthly, the study of the place and role of Azerbaijan as a leader-country in the geopolitical structure of the region is of particular importance and relevance. Especially it is relevant for Azerbaijani statehood and political science to study the changed geopolitical configuration of the South Caucasus after the 44-day Patriotic War, as a result of which the thirty-year Armenian occupation and injustice ended with the victory of Azerbaijan under the leadership of the President, Supreme Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev.

Thus, the above factors and provisions determine the sufficient relevance of the selected research topic and the importance of a deep systematic scientific analysis of the security problems of the South Caucasus in the context of the geopolitical interests of global and regional actors.

The security problems of the South Caucasus in various directions have been studied by many foreign and domestic researchers of modern political science. Analyzing the level of research of the topic, we can distinguish three mutually complementary groups of works dedicated to its various aspects. The first group includes works of authors who study the most important aspects of the geopolitical characteristics and factors that determine the significance of the South Caucasus, analysis of geopolitical categories and basic elements in the context of both classical and modern geopolitical theories.

Among the classical authors of geopolitics, considering the place and role of the South Caucasus in world civilization on the basis of the first law of geopolitics - the struggle between tellurocracy and thalassocracy, the works of K. Haushofer, H. Mackinder, N. Spykman, V.P. Semyonov-Tien-Shanskiy and others can be mentioned. ¹ The most valuable in the study of geopolitical processes occurring in the region are modern geopolitical theories, which are reflected in the works of such scientists as Зб. Brzezinski, S. Cohen, A. Cohen, S. Huntington, F. Fukuyama, R. Kaplan, J. Galtung, ² as well as Russian

¹ Spykman, N.J. *The Geography of Peace*/N.J. Spykman. - New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., - 1944. - 66 p.; Маккиндер, Х. *Географическая ось истории // Элементы. Евразийское обозрение.* - Москва, - 1996. № 7; Хаусхофер, К. *Границы в их географическом и политическом значении.* В кн.: *О геополитике. Работы разных лет/ К. Хаусхофер.* - Москва: Мысль, - 2001. -127 с.; Семёнов-Тянь-Шанский, В.П. *О могущественном территориальном владении применительно к России / В.П. Семёнов-Тянь-Шанский.* - Петроград, - 1915. - Т. 51. -492 с.

² Бжезинский, Зб. *Великая шахматная доска. Господство Америки и ее геостратегические императивы/Зб. Бжезинский.* - Москва, -2009. -280 с.; Cohen, S.B. *Geopolitics of World System/S.B. Cohen.* - New York: Rowman & Little field publishers, - 2002. - 803 p.; Huntington, S. *The clash of civilizations and the remarking of world order/ S.P. Huntington.* - New York, First Touchstone

and Azerbaijani researchers such as L. Gumilev, A. G. Dugin, K.S. Gadzhiev, S.S. Zhiltsov, I.S. Sonn, A.M. Ushkov, V.A. Huseynov, G. Aliev, B. Rumer, P.G. Darabadi, who considered the geoeconomic, geocultural, ideological aspects of the geopolitics of the South Caucasus.³

The variety of security problems in the South Caucasus, which make up the second group of analysis of the level of scientific development of the topic, is reflected in the works of A.A. Prokhozheva, A.I. Ovchinnikova, A. Mamychева, A.G. Kravchenko, D.V. Zerkalov, where one can trace the main conceptual studies of the theory of national security.⁴ The basics of the theory of regional security (securitization) were developed in detail by the representatives of the Copenhagen School of International Relations B. Buzan, Ole Veveer, Jaap de Wilde, who considered the importance

Edition, -1997. -367 p.; Фукуяма, Ф. Конец истории и последний человек / Ф. Фукуяма, пер. с англ. М. Б. Левина. — Москва: АСТ, - 2007. — 588 с.; Каплан, Р. Месть географии /Р. Каплан, пер. с англ. М. Котова. – Москва: Ко-Либри, - 2015. - 290 с.

³ Гумилев, Л. Теория этногенеза: великое открытие или мистификация?: [сборник статей к 100-летию со дня рождения ученого] /сост. М. Зильберт, отв. ред. Ф. Бастиан. - Москва: АСТ, -2013. - 702 с.; Дугин, А.Г. Геополитика: Учебное пособие для вузов/ А.Г. Дугин. — Москва: Академический Проект; Гаудеамус, - 2011.—583с. и др.; Гаджиев, К.С. Геополитика: учебник для акад. Бакалавриата /К.С. Гаджиев. 5-е изд., пер. и доп. - Москва: Юрайт, -2014.- 466 с. и др.; Зонн, И. С. Каспийская трубопроводная геополитика. Состояние и реализация/ И. С. Зонн, С. С. Жильцов. - Москва: Восток-Запад, -2011. - 317 с. и др.; Дарабади, П. Г. Кавказ и Каспий в мировой истории и геополитике XXI века/ П.Г. Дарабади. - Москва: Изд-во Весь Мир,- 2010. - 216с. и др.

⁴ Зеркалов, Д.В. Политическая безопасность. Монография / Д.В. Зеркалов. - Киев: Основа, -2012.- 1067 с. и др.; Овчинников, А.И. Основы теории национальной безопасности/ А.И. Овчинников, А.Ю. Мамычев, А.Г. Кравченко. - Москва: РИОР, -2011.- 252 с.; Общая теория национальной безопасности/ Под ред. А. Прохожева. Изд. 2. - Москва: Изд-во РАГС,- 2005. - 344 с.

of distinguishing different security sectors for a better understanding of the complex of regional security systems.⁵

S. Cornel, Thomas De Waal, A. Cohen have contributed to the study of the conflicts in the South Caucasus, especially the Armenian-Azerbaijani, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Among the Azerbaijani authors, are the works of E. Mirbashirogly, R.A. Gusein-zade, E. I. Akhmedov, A. B. Mirzazade, where the issues of the national security policy of Azerbaijan are being examined and historical documents and ethnopolitical collisions in the Caucasus are studied, as well as the works of such scientists as J. Eyvazov, E. Ismailov , V. Papava and others, in which security issues, as well as the problems of the formation and development of independent states of the South Caucasus in the post-Soviet space are considered.

At the same time, it should be noted that in recent years, a lot of fundamental works have appeared revealing the concept of actors, global and regional players in the South Caucasus region, identifying geopolitical interests, also exploring various aspects of the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which can be attributed to the third part of the degree of scientific development of the topic. The fundamental work of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan I.H. Aliyev "Caspian oil of Azerbaijan", as well as the works of H. Babaogly, R. Mehtiyev, A.M. Hasanov, A.N. Abbasbeyli, N.S. Mamedzade, H.M. Pashayev, which reflect the main priorities of the Azerbaijani foreign policy, security, the dynamics of Azerbaijan's relations with specific countries, international and regional organizations.

Thus, as the analysis of scientific literature shows, although some aspects of the problem under consideration are reflected in a number of works by both domestic and foreign authors, however, in general, to date, there are no works specifically devoted to the study of the

⁵ Buzan, B. Security: A New Framework for Analysis: [Electronic resource] /B. Buzan, O. Weaver, Jaap de Wilde. - London: Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, - 1998. – p. 239. [URL:https://ru.scribd.com/doc/243026486/Buzan-Barry-Security-a-New-Framework-for-Analysis](https://ru.scribd.com/doc/243026486/Buzan-Barry-Security-a-New-Framework-for-Analysis)

complex of safety problems. The South Caucasus in the context of the geo-political interests of global and regional actors. In this regard, the relevance of the study, systematization and generalization of the selected topic, its insufficient development in modern scientific literature determined the choice and target setting of this study.

The object and the subject of the research. The object of the research is the security problems of the South Caucasus in the geopolitical dimensions and in this context the geopolitical interests of global and regional actors. The subject of the research is the policy of the South Caucasian states, as well as global and regional actors on ensuring peace in the region, the main characteristics of the geopolitical interests of global and regional actors in the context of the security of the South Caucasus and determining the development of relations between the countries of the region and external forces in bilateral and multilateral formats.

The aim and the objectives of the research. The purpose of the study is to reveal the geopolitical significance of the South Caucasus, to identify the nature of traditional and new threats and security challenges of the states of the region, to analyze the initiatives of individual countries and organizations in search of security models in the South Caucasus, assessing their practical significance, taking into account the dynamically changing regional and international situation.

In accordance with the set goal, the following research tasks were solved:

- to study the geopolitical situation in the South Caucasus in the context of classical and modern theories and concepts, to identify the main factors that characterize the geopolitical significance of the region;
- to analyze internal, external and transnational factors and security problems of the South Caucasus, identify the main challenges and threats to the national security of the South Caucasus states in the regional security system;
- to reveal the interests, geopolitical activities and activity of global and regional actors of the South Caucasus;

- to study the features of the geopolitical activity and interest of the USA, China, Russia and the EU in the South Caucasus, the dynamics and prospects for the development of mutual relations of global actors with the states of the region;
- to outline the strategic role and interests of regional actors (Turkey, Iran, Israel, NATO, OSCE) in the South Caucasus;
- to study the policy of global and regional actors in solving the security problems of the South Caucasus, consider various models of cooperation, highlight both overlapping positions and differences in approaches to ensuring security between global and regional states and with the states of the South Caucasus;
- to analyze the foreign policy activities of the Republic of Azerbaijan with the leading actors of the region and the world in ensuring stability and security in the South Caucasus at the present stage.

The methods of research. The methodological toolkit is based on the use of methods of comparative, political science analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, document analysis and content analysis. Also, the corresponding research methods were used within the framework of the structural-functional, systemic, institutional, historical approaches.

Structural and functional analysis based on a systematic approach makes it possible to study the interaction of various regional and international structures in the South Caucasus, their goals, interests, functions and the degree of influence on the geopolitical situation.

The historical-comparative method allowed the author to study the retrospective dynamics of the development of the situation in the South Caucasus. If at the initial historical stage of the formation of the new independent states of the South Caucasus traditional actors dominated, then with a change in the geopolitical situation and an increase in the importance of the region, new extra-regional forces and associations appear that have different geopolitical interests and are actively playing an important role in ensuring regional security and in the search for solutions to regional problems.

The basic provisions giving to the defence.

- The modern configuration of the South Caucasus is determined by geopolitical, geoeconomic, geostrategic and geocultural factors;
- There are certain difficulties in creating a collective security system associated with different approaches regarding the prospects of the development of the South Caucasus, the choice of strategic partners in ensuring national security, differences in approaches to resolving conflicts in the region and in the perception of sources of threats to national security;
- The South Caucasus is of particular importance from the point of view of geopolitical and strategic interests of such global and regional actors as Russia, USA, China, Iran, Turkey, Israel, NATO, OSCE, EU;
- Azerbaijan's foreign policy is distinguished by the predictability and consistency of the political course of Heydar Aliyev, which President Ilham Aliyev is successfully developing today, based on economic and political pragmatism, which can be characterized as “smart diplomacy” and “flexible policy”. Foreign policy and diplomacy of President Ilham Aliyev is aimed in ensuring security and national interests, creating and deepening strong military-political, economic and legal alliances with the leading actors in the region, thanks to which Azerbaijan acts as a geostrategic center and a regional leader playing an important role in regional security system.

The scientific novelty of the research. The novelty of the research is most specifically determined by the following provisions:

- in an attempt to identify and study the South Caucasus as an integral system, geopolitical geostrata within the framework of modern geopolitical theories of neo-Atlanticism, neo-mondialism, neo-Eurasianism and Islamic integrism;
- in consideration of the whole complex of local, regional and global problems that reveal various aspects of the security of the South Caucasus in the national security policy of the states of the region within the framework of official doctrines and concepts, as well as highlighting the levels of security threats by the degree of tension,

thereby creating an architecture of a tiered system of challenges and threats to the security of the South Caucasus;

- in identifying the main actors in the South Caucasus and considering their geopolitical interests, as well as in an attempt to analyze both coincidences and differences in approaches to solving the problem of ensuring regional security. Also, the author tried, using the geometric circles of Euler, to consider the most contradictory, opposite models of cooperation that exist in the region;

- an attempt was made to graphically show the dynamics of the development of relations between Azerbaijan and regional and global actors of the Caucasus-Caspian region.

The theoretical and practical importance of the research. The main provisions and conclusions of the thesis can be useful and used in the development and implementation of the foreign policy of regional and global states in the Caucasian direction, in the process of building relationships with the South Caucasian states in assessing regional and national security issues. In addition, the results of this study can be used in the training of specialists in this region, in the development of methodological manuals on the security problems of the South Caucasus in the course of teaching the course of geopolitics, political science, conflict studies, regional studies, the theory of international relations and world politics in higher education. educational institutions both in conducting lectures and seminars, as well as for further scientific research in this area, in the preparation of special courses and scientific conferences on this topic.

The approbation of dissertation. The main theoretical, practical provisions and conclusions of the dissertation research were tested and reflected in the course of the author's participation in scientific discussions and conferences, as well as in her publications in periodicals in Azerbaijan and abroad, recommended by the Higher Attestation Commission.

The name of the organization where the dissertation work is performed. The Institute on Law and Human Rights of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences.

The structure of the dissertation. The dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, including two paragraphs each, a conclusion, a list of used literature and an application. Introduction - 16884 characters, first chapter - 54119 characters, second chapter - 133,031 characters, third chapter - 62739 characters, conclusion - 13270, list of used literature - 67405 characters. The total volume of the thesis is 196 pages, 347448 characters. The application contains 1 table, 7 graphs and 5 figures.

THE BASIC CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

In the **Introduction** of the dissertation the actuality and the usage rate of the research work are substantiated, the object and subject of research are indicated, the goal, objectives and methods of research are formulated, the scientific novelty is determined, the theoretical and practical significance of the work, its approbation and research structure are presented.

The first chapter of the dissertation research "**Security in the South Caucasus: theoretical aspects and tendencies of post-Soviet development**" examines the geopolitical factors that determine the significance, place and role of the South Caucasus, investigates the main problems and threats to regional security of the South Caucasus states in the era of post-Soviet development.

The first paragraph of this chapter "**Geopolitical factors and the significance of the South Caucasus in the context of modern geopolitical theories**" analyzes the conceptual data of the Caucasus, various versions of the etymology of the word "Caucasus", reveals the political structure of the region, in accordance with which two models are distinguished in structuring the Caucasus region: two-segment and three-segment model. An analysis of the geo-characteristics of the South Caucasus is also carried out, within the framework of which the geopolitical, geoeconomic and geostrategic aspects and factors of the region are distinguished. In accordance with this, it is also possible to single out the geocultural features of the South Caucasus, which play

an equally important role in the analysis of the geopolitical components of this region.

Along with this, in the dissertation, within the framework of classical and modern geopolitical theories and concepts, the role and place of the South Caucasus in world civilization is considered, for example, H. Mackinder, a prominent representative of the British school of classical geopolitics, considers the South Caucasus as part of the "middle land, Heartland, "pivot area", where the spatial dynamics of the geographic axis of history takes place. One of the representatives of the classical German theory of geopolitics K. Haushofer, proceeding from the theory of "living space" ("Lebensraum"), considers the Caucasus as a zone of confrontation of various interests, along with such territories as the Bosphorus, Gibraltar, the Suez Canal.

In the 21st century, within the framework of modern geopolitical theories of neo-mondialism (Zb. Brzezinski, F. Fukuyama, A. Straus, I. Galtung, J. Attali, I. Wallerstein), neo-Atlanticism (A. Mehena, N. Spykman, U. Kirk, D Meining, S. Huntington, S. Cohen, R. Kaplan), neo-Eurasianism (A. Dugin, L. G. Ivashov), Islamic integristism and Islamic mondialism, the place of the South Caucasus is considered, in which there is a hidden opposition and rivalry of these geopolitical projects and theories.

The second paragraph "**The main challenges and threats to the regional security of the South Caucasus states in the post-Soviet period**" analyzes the security architecture of the South Caucasus. Along with this, traditional and new security threats are distinguished, which are subdivided in scale into global (transnational), regional (external) and local (national or internal) threats that can destabilize the situation in the region.

In general, the architecture of the levels of security threats in the South Caucasus is schematically represented as follows: the most vulnerable and realizable threats to security are military and political threats, namely conflicts and militarization of the region, characterized by "the highest degree of danger and tension." The real threats to the

security of the South Caucasus include energy, economic, social, informational, transnational (international terrorism, extremism, separatism) and the threat to the Caucasian identity, characterized by "a serious degree of impact of the danger on the region." Potential threats calling to "be on the watch" include environmental and cultural threats to security.

In particular, in this paragraph, within the framework of regional security, a conceptual analysis of the national security of the states of the region is carried out, according to which it is possible to conclude that there are certain difficulties in creating a collective security system associated with different approaches regarding the prospects the development of the South Caucasus, the choice of strategic partners in ensuring national interests and national security, differences in approaches to resolving conflicts in the region and in the perception of sources of threats to national security. Thus, according to the national security concepts of Azerbaijan and Georgia, Turkey is noted as a strategic partner, which, according to the security strategy of the Republic of Armenia, is mentioned as a source of potential threat to the country's national security.

The second chapter, "**The South Caucasus as a Region of Intersection of the Interests of Global and Regional Actors: geopolitical aspect**", examines the geopolitical interests of large global actors active in the South Caucasus, among which, first of all, the USA, China, Russia, EU. Among the regional actors playing an important geopolitical role in the region are Iran, Turkey, Israel, as well as regional economic and military-political organizations such as NATO and the OSCE.

The first paragraph of the second chapter "**Politics and interests of leading actors in the South Caucasus in modern conditions**" studies the features of the geopolitical activity and interest of the United States in the South Caucasus, strategic interests and policy of Russia in the South Caucasus, geopolitical interests and policy of China, as well as EU cooperation with states region.

The priorities of the US foreign policy in the South Caucasus are the political containment of Russia, prevent the strengthening of Iran's influence in the region, control over the region's rich energy resources, prevention of political instability and threats to security as factors undermining the reliability of energy resources transportation.

The main interest of the Russian Federation is associated with the preservation of this space within the framework of its geopolitical field, or, at least, the prevention of the establishment of influence of other powers in this region.

The South Caucasus region, due to its geographical location, is acquiring priority importance in the foreign policy of the People's Republic of China. The implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative (Silk Road Initiative (BRI)) at the end of 2013, involves regional integration with ambitious plans to establish geopolitical influence across the continent by creating infrastructures linking China with Europe. China seeks to strengthen its presence in the region by deepening cooperation in the economic, trade, political, cultural, financial and security spheres.

The importance of the region for the EU is determined mainly by the geopolitical, energy factor and its transit, communication role. In this sense, the EU is trying to turn the South Caucasus into an alternative channel that does not depend on Russia for the supply of energy resources to Europe.

In the second paragraph of the second chapter "**Politics and geopolitical aspects of the interests of regional actors in the context of modern changes in the South Caucasus region**", the interest and significance of the South Caucasus in the sphere of the geopolitical interests of Iran, Turkey, Israel are examined, and NATO's security policy in South Caucasus, the role of the OSCE in ensuring the security of the South Caucasus are being studied.

Iran's strategic interests in the South Caucasus are to ensure the security and stability of its borders in the northern region of the country by supporting stability in Central Asia and the South Caucasus and actively spreading the Islamic development model,

putting in order relations with regional states, preventing the presence of non-regional states in this region.

At present, Turkey is demonstrating an active policy not only in the geopolitical, geo-economic and military-geostrategic processes of the South Caucasus, but also in most of the fateful regional issues of Eurasia. Considering the huge number of problems, the scale of the tasks, the complexity of the regions, Turkey is forced to cooperate with the leading players in the region.

Israel is not a direct actor in the South Caucasus, however, due to the instability of the Middle East, the region is of great strategic importance in the foreign policy doctrine of the Israeli state.

Pursuing certain interests, NATO was able to turn into an important actor in the South Caucasus, building strategic relations with each of the states separately.

An analysis of the OSCE's activities to resolve conflicts in the South Caucasus, especially the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, leads to the conclusion that the OSCE was unable to solve its main task for such a long period of time, to find a formula for peace between the conflicting parties.

The third chapter "**Geopolitics of global and regional actors and the solution of security problems in the South Caucasus**" considers initiatives and programs to ensure the security of the South Caucasus, within which the regional and interregional political and military-political alliances, as well as the dynamics of relations foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan with global and regional actors in ensuring stability in the South Caucasus region at the present stage are being established.

In the first paragraph of the third chapter "**The policy of global and regional actors in solving the security problems of the South Caucasus: probable and real models of cooperation**", the programs and models of regional security of the states of the region are considered, for example, "3 + 2" ("Caucasian pact", "Platform for Stability and Cooperation in the Caucasus"), "3 + 2 + 2" (Azerbaijan), "3 + 1", "4 + 2", "3 + 3 + 2" (Russia), "3 + 2", "3 + 3

"(Iran), 3 + 3 + 2 (Security Doctrine of Armenia). In a historical retrospective, the periods of the creation of alliances in the South Caucasus are investigated. From the 90s of the twentieth century until 2008, two geopolitical lines of security have emerged in the South Caucasus:

- Vertical axis: Russia, Iran, Armenia
- Horizontal axis: Azerbaijan, Turkey, Georgia.

Since 2008, there has been a transformation of the configuration of the South Caucasus, the main reasons for which are:

- The coming to power of the Democrats in the United States headed by B. Obama, who announced the policy of "reset" in relation to Russia and D. Trump's "Americanism" doctrine, which fundamentally changed the US policy towards the South Caucasus region;
- The August war in Georgia, which became a test of the forces of foreign political actors;
- An attempt to settle the Turkish-Armenian relations;
- Lack of progress in accepting Turkey into the EU, strengthening its role in the region;
- Syrian crisis and events in Ukraine;
- 44-day Patriotic War - the Second Karabakh war between Azerbaijan and Armenia, which ended with the victory of Azerbaijan over the Armenian occupiers and changed the regional system of relations.

Based on this, an attempt was made to highlight and show the most contradictory and confrontational lines, as well as various models of cooperation in the economic, energy and military-political spheres, using the geometric schemes of the famous German-Russian mathematician Euler, called the Euler circles method with the help of which it is possible to show the relationship between subsets for a visual understanding and presentation of the modern configuration and regional security system of the South Caucasus.

The analysis of economic, political and military relations based on the method of "Euler's circles" in the South Caucasus allowed us to single out separate contradictory, contradictory and overlapping models of relations, however, there is no common security system for

all the states of the South Caucasus, uniting all states region and called upon by joint forces to solve the main problems of regional security. The change of the status quo of the region as a result of the latest geopolitical transformations, namely the solution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict during the 44-day Patriotic War of 2020, suggests the creation of a geopolitical alliance-quartet of Russia-Iran-Turkey-Azerbaijan, where Azerbaijan will play a connecting role.

The second paragraph of the third chapter "**The main vectors of Azerbaijan's foreign policy in ensuring stability and security in the South Caucasus at the current stage**" graphically studies the dynamics of the foreign policy activity of the Republic of Azerbaijan with the leading states of the world and the region, namely the United States, Russia, Turkey, Iran, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan. In general, there is reason to believe that thanks to the implementation of the principles of "smart diplomacy" and "flexible policy", which is based on a well-thought-out pragmatic, soft and balanced foreign policy, involving a set of diplomatic, political, military, economic, cultural instruments, the Republic of Azerbaijan managed to create equal, bilateral, partnership relations with all regional and global actors of the Caucasus-Caspian region, as well as participate in the activities of leading regional and international organizations, maintaining the balance and thereby achieving a leading position in the region and ensuring the stable and safe development of Azerbaijan.

"Smart diplomacy" of President Ilham Aliyev was about creating mutually complementary, beneficial friendly relations and ties, which was reflected in the implementation of major energy, transport, communication, cultural projects, in the creation of a positive, tolerant image countries. "Flexible policy" of President Ilham Aliyev, relying on the national interests of the country, really taking into account the geopolitical situation in the region, was to resolve the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, having won, ensuring the

inviolability of the borders, showing "iron fist", using all the levers and methods of pressure and force.

In the **Conclusion**, the results are summed up, on the basis of generalizing provisions, proposals and recommendations of both theoretical and practical nature are formulated. At the same time, the author comes to the conclusion that:

Firstly, the problem of the security of the South Caucasus today is connected with the absence in the region of a common security complex for all its independent republics, designed by joint efforts to solve the main problems of the region;

Secondly, the geopolitical significance of the South Caucasus region, as one of the important geostrategic and geo-economic nodes, will steadily increase and here the interests of various actors will constantly collide, which in turn will be an obstacle to regional consolidation and cooperation of all countries in the region. The long-term trend of de-stabilization of the Greater Middle East, as well as events in the post-Soviet space, the global coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and, at the same time, a new geostrategic battle for geo-resources and global leadership also have an impact on the configuration of the security system in the South Caucasus and the entire Caucasus-Caspian region. However, an objective assessment of the situation in the region after the victory of Azerbaijan over Armenian fascism, which is the leader-state in the region, and understanding of countries of the need for mutual cooperation can only positively influence the solution of security problems in the region.

The main content of the research work has been reflected in the following printed thesis and articles:

1. Конфликты на Южном Кавказе в контексте геополитических интересов региональных государств// Dirçəliş-XXI əsr (elmi məqalələr toplusu), Bakı, 171-172/2012, Səh.181-195
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3. Геополитические факторы и значимость Южного Кавказа в контексте современных геополитических теорий//Sivilizasiya (elmi-nəzəri jurnal), Bakı, 2015, № 6, Səh.148-156
4. Основные угрозы национальной безопасности государств Южного Кавказа в системе региональной безопасности: концептуальный подход//Law and Politology (international scientific journal) № 31, Сентябрь 2015, Chisinau (Молдова), Səh.51-54
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6. Стратегические интересы и политика России на Южном Кавказе// Beynəlxalq hüquq və integrasiya problemləri (elmi-analitik və praktiki jurnal), Bakı, 2015, № 3(43), Səh.142-147
7. Южный Кавказ в сфере геополитических интересов Ирана// Кавказ и мир (международный научный журнал), Тбилиси-2016, № 21, Səh.94-97
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10. Региональная политика НАТО на Южном Кавказе// АХС-ının 100 illik yubileyi və Azərbaycan xalqının Ümummilli lideri H.Əliyevin anadan olmasının 95-ci ildönümünə həsr olunmuş “Qloballaşma və AR-da Hüquq elminin əsas inkişaf istiqamətləri” mövzusunda Beynəlxalq elmi-praktiki konfrans. BDU, Bakı, 29-30 may, 2018, səh.80-84
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 13. Динамика двусторонних отношений Азербайджанской Республики и Российской Федерации в области безопасности на Южном Кавказе// Pedaqoji Universitetin Xəbərləri. Humanitar, ictimai və pedaqoji-psixoloji elmlər seriyası, Bakı, 2020, № 3(68), Səh.114-121

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