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ACTUAL PROBLEMS OF CAUCASUS STUDIES

Annotation

The article is devoted to the study of the factors that make it necessary to study the problems of the Caucasus region. As it is known, the Caucasus, one of the most geopolitically and geoeconomically important regions of the world and has always been in the interest of great powers. After the collapse of the USSR and the emergence of newly independent states, interest to the Caucasus region has increased in both neighboring and distant countries, and relevant research centers have been established. The study of regional problems is one of the tasks facing the science of international relations and regional studies in the modern Republic of Azerbaijan. For this purpose, the Institute of the Caucasus Studies established at ANAS has successfully worked in the study of regional problems in a short period of time.

Keywords: *the Caucasus, Problems of the Caucasus, relations between states in the Caucasus, terror in the Caucasus, territorial claims, aggression, the Caucasus studying centers, Caucasus studies, institute of the Caucasus Studies.*

Аннотация

Статья посвящена исследованию важных факторов, обуславливающих изучение проблем на Кавказском регионе. Кавказ как один из ключевых геополитических и геоэкономических регионов мира, всегда привлекал интересы больших государств. Этот интерес возрос ещё больше после распада СССР, в результате которого образовались новые независимые государства и были созданы соответствующие научно-исследовательские центры. Исследование проблем региона является одним из важнейших задач азербайджанской науки по международным отношениям и регионоведению. Созданный в НАНА Институт Кавказоведения за короткий срок проделал успешные работы в исследовании региональных проблем.

Ключевые слова: *Кавказ, проблемы Кавказа, межгосударственные отношения на Кавказе, террор на Кавказе, территориальные притязания, агрессия, центры изучающие Кавказ, кавказоведение, Институт Кавказоведения*

As it is known, Caucasus studies in a broad sense is a set of scientific knowledge that studies the countries and peoples of the Caucasus. In foreign countries, Caucasus studies are accepted as a part of the world or European history as well as Oriental studies.

General information about the Caucasus region

Its area is 440.4 thousand km² with 30.2 million population. The Caucasus region is bordered by the Kuma–Manych Depression and the Greater Caucasus Mountains in the north, the Lesser Caucasus Mountains in the south, the Caspian

Sea in the east, the Black Sea in the west, and is one of the important points in geopolitical and geostrategic position between East and West, Europe and Asia.

The region is divided into two areas, the South and the North Caucasus. The South Caucasus, with a total area of 186,043,000 km² and a population of 15.9 million, is a geopolitical region covering Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia and located between Russia, Turkey, and Iran.

The largest state in the South Caucasus, the Republic of Azerbaijan which has an area of 86.6 thousand km² and a population of more than 10 million people, is bordered by Russia (Dagestan) in the north, Georgia in the northwest, Armenia in the west, Turkey in the southwest and Iran in the south. The Republic of Georgia, with an area of 69.7 thousand km² and a population of 3.73 million, is bordered by Russia to the north, Azerbaijan to the east, Armenia to the south, Turkey to the southwest and the Black Sea to the west.

The mono-ethnic Republic of Armenia, founded by Armenians brought to the region as a result of the tsarist resettlement policy in the 19th century and established on Turkish lands, has an area of 29,743,000 km² and a population of 2.998 million and is bordered by Georgia to the north, Azerbaijan to the east and southwest, Iran to the south, and Turkey to the west.

There are 7 republics (Republic of Adygea, Karachay-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia-Alania, Ingushetia, Chechnya, Dagestan), 2 krai (Krasnodar and Stavropol), and 1 oblast (Rostov) in the North Caucasus region, which is located in the south of the Russian Federation and has a larger territory but smaller population than the South Caucasus. The total area of the region is 258.3 thousand km² with 14.8 million population.

As the Caucasus region attracts attention in terms of its geopolitical position, ethnic composition, conflicts, and acts of aggression, as well as the interests of major powers, it is important to conduct in-depth research. The national leader of the Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev spoke about the international significance of the Caucasus region: *"Therefore, the Caucasus is main focus of the world's interest, attracting the attention of major countries..."* [2, s.62]

It is no coincidence that in several countries around the world, the Caucasus region is studied in a complex way, both in universities and research centers. Attention to only a few of them confirms that the Caucasus is in the interest of both the countries of the region and major countries.

A brief overview of the activities of the Caucasus research centers

States with interests in the Caucasus open multidisciplinary specialties of Caucasus studies in universities, train specialists, and establish research centers in order to properly develop their policies in the region. First of all, let's take a brief look at the study of the Caucasus in the region. In Georgia, there is a bachelor's program in Caucasus Studies at the Faculty of Humanities of Tbilisi State University named after I. Javakhashvili, which is taught in Russian and Georgian, aims to train highly qualified Caucasian scholars in the field of linguistics and

history, to study the geopolitical and geoeconomic significance of the Caucasus, the main features of Caucasian civilization, the settlement of aboriginal and other peoples in the region in different historical periods, the causes of migration of nations, the prospects of the Caucasus in contemporary globalization. Here are studied Azerbaijani language, history of Azerbaijani literature, history and culture of Azerbaijan, history of Azerbaijani literary language, Azerbaijani folklore, contemporary Azerbaijani subjects and etc. The purpose of the master's program in a faculty is to study the history of the Caucasus and geopolitical, economic, socio-political, legal, migration, and diaspora processes occurring in the region, where also are taught subjects like Azerbaijani language, structural issue of the language and script of Caucasian Albania [3]. The Faculty of Humanities of the International Black Sea University has a master's degree program on Caucasus Studies in English [4].

Azerbaijani language, Azerbaijani literature, Azerbaijani culture, and Azerbaijani history are taught at the Department of Turkology in the Faculty of Oriental Studies of Yerevan State University in Armenia. At the bachelor's degree of the Department of Caucasus Studies, which has been operating at the Faculty of History of the University since 2011, are taught subjects such as ethnic politics in the Caucasus, Ethnography of the Caucasian peoples, Azerbaijani language, Georgian language, history of Abkhazia and Ossetia, religion in the Caucasus, ethnic relations in the Caucasus, at the master's degree are studied Azerbaijani language, Georgian language, Turkey's Caucasus policy, political processes in Azerbaijan and etc. The subjects as civilizations in Asia and the Caucasus, history of Azerbaijan and Georgia are taught at the bachelor's degree in History at the Faculty of History [5]. The Institute of Oriental Studies of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences has a Department of Caucasus Studies and Byzantium.

Specialists on the Caucasus are trained at universities in Turkey. Mugla Sitki Kochman University [6], Caucasus University [7], Nevsehir Haji Bektash Veli University [8], Pamukkale University teach Azerbaijani history and culture and train personnel who can be used in the activities of official and private enterprises that play an important role in the developing trade, economic and scientific relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan [9].

The main purpose of the Center for Middle East, Central Asia and Caucasus Studies at Ataturk University in Erzurum, which has been operating since 2009, is to study the life, culture, economy and politics of the peoples of the Middle East, Central Asia and the Caucasus [10].

The Center for Caucasus and Environmental Research and Application, which has been operating at Artvin Choruh University since 2012, aims to conduct scientific research on the Caucasus and surrounding regions, where the Republic of Turkey has close ties [11].

There is an Application of Caucasus Studies and Research Center at Sakarya University. The University's Faculty of International Relations teaches political

progress in the Caucasus, problems and politics in Central Asia and the Transcaucasia at the bachelor's degree [12].

Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University's Faculty of History teaches the history of the Caucasian peoples at the bachelor's level, the Turkic peoples in Central Asia and the Caucasus at the master's level, and the history of the Caucasus and Caucasian communities at the doctoral level [13].

Several scientific journals are published in Turkey, which publishes scientific articles on the Caucasus region [14].

Several educational and scientific centers in Russia teach and study the Caucasus region. The Department of Central Asia and the Caucasus at the Institute of Asia and Africa of the Moscow State University named after M. V. Lomonosov trains specialists in history, political science, economics, and philology of Central Asia and the Caucasus. The University teaches Azerbaijani history, Azerbaijani ethnography, Azerbaijani language, economic geography of Azerbaijan and other subjects [15]. The University also has a department called "History of the Greater Caucasus" [16].

The main purpose of Central Asia and the Caucasus Department at the Faculty of Oriental Studies of St. Petersburg State University is to train highly qualified specialists in Central Asia and the Caucasus. The faculty specializes in Caucasian history (Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia). Azerbaijani, Georgian and Armenian languages are also taught as a special course [17].

The purpose of the Center for Pontic-Caucasian Studies at Kuban State University is to study the social and cultural anthropology of the cultures of the peoples inhabiting the Black Sea and the Caucasus region [18].

The Department of Russian History and Caucasus Studies operates at the North Ossetian State University [19].

The Caucasus region is studied in depth primarily at the Southern Science Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences has a department of Caucasian languages [20], and the Institute of Oriental Studies has a Research Center for Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Ural-Volga region. It researches in the field of contemporary socio-political trends in Central Eurasia, the interests of Russia, and other countries [21].

In the electronic journal "Caucasusology", published by Kabardino-Balkaria State University named after X.M.Berbekov, includes sections on the history, ethnology, and archeology of the Caucasus, modern society and economy of the region, political organizations and processes, educational problems, historical and cultural monuments, etc. [22] Other journals also publish scientific articles on the Caucasus.

Specialties of Central Asia and Caucasus Studies of the University of Tehran in the Islamic Republic of Iran teaches security issues, conflicts and relations in Central Asia and the Caucasus, and other subjects. The university's journal "Central Eurasian Studies" publishes scientific articles on the region. [23]

The Institute for Iranian-Eurasian Studies (IIES), an independent, non-profit, non-governmental, and analytical think tank established in Tehran in 2004, has the main task of analyzing developments in Eurasia and the South Caucasus. [24] The Institute of Political and International Studies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran publishes articles on the region in the journal "Central Asia and the Caucasus". [25]

Despite its geographical remoteness from the region, there are centers in the United States that study the Caucasus. The American Research Institute for the South Caucasus (ARISC) has branches in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia. [26]

To strengthen scientific research and socio-political analysis in the South Caucasus, the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC) established to research, resource, and training centers in Azerbaijan (CRRC Azerbaijan), Georgia (CRRC Georgia), and Armenia (CRRC Armenia) in 2003 with financial support from the New York Carnegie Corporation by the Eurasian Cooperation Foundation (EPF). [27]

The Central Asia-Caucasus Institute (CACI) was established in 1997 as part of the American Foreign Policy Council to meet information, research and analysis needs covering the former Soviet republics and Afghanistan, stretching from Turkey to Western China. [28]

The program on Central Asia and the Caucasus at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard University examines ethnicity and conflicts in Central Eurasia and the Caucasus, the development of nationalism, the role of religion and nations in politics, and state-building in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia. [29]

Formerly operating as a Russian Institute at Columbia University, renamed the Harriman Institute in 1982 in honor of the W. Averell Harriman family, the Center for Central Asian Studies includes the ancient and modern history of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and the Caucasus, national, regional and global economic trends in the region, as well as problems of political modernization. [30]

The Central Eurasian Studies Department of the Inner Asia and Ural National Resource Center at Indiana University teaches Azerbaijani language to master's degree students in accordance with their specialization. [31]

The Caucasus region is also being studied in Great Britain. The main purpose of the Nizami Ganjavi Center, established in 2013 at the Faculty of Oriental Studies of Oxford University, is to teach the Azerbaijani language and culture. [32]

The main purpose of the Institute for the Middle East, Central Asia and Caucasus Studies [33] at the University of Saint Andrews and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London is to study, coordinate and disseminate information on Central Asia and the Caucasus and to act as a resource for governmental and non-governmental circles interested in the region. [34]

France is also interested in studying the Caucasus region. The department of the Institute of Cultural Civilizations of the French College (Collège de France) studies the languages of the Middle East, the Caucasus, archeology, culture, geography, socio-political, military, diplomatic relations and Azerbaijani

archeology. [35] The Center for Russian, Caucasus and European Studies at the Higher Research Center for Social Sciences in Paris conducts research on Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. [36]

As can be seen, although there are centers for studying the Caucasus region in different countries around the world, in the Republic of Azerbaijan, despite located in the Caucasus, the study of socio-political processes within the neighboring countries, the policy of neighboring and major states in the region, the foreign policy of the countries of the region and other problems are not systematic.

In his speech at the general meeting dedicated to the 70th anniversary of ANAS, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev said that one of the main tasks of the social sciences is to study the problems of the Caucasus in depth: *"We must also follow the processes going on in the world and in the region and try to minimize the risks for our country as much as possible ..."* [1]

Factors necessitating in-depth study of the Caucasus region in the Republic of Azerbaijan

First, it is known that the socio-political, economic, military, etc. processes occurring in the Caucasus, in one of the most complex regions of the world in terms of ethnicity of the population, affect other countries, including the Republic of Azerbaijan.

In particular, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the occupation of Azerbaijani territories created as a result of the Armenian military aggression, genocides committed in the occupied areas, stand as an international problem. Also, the conflicts in Georgia have created new conditions in the region.

This situation makes it necessary to study the countries and peoples of the region in depth. Secondly, due to its proximity to the Middle East, it is especially important to study the policies of various states in the Caucasus region, which have been the focus of great powers throughout history and in the contemporary period, their secret or overt struggle. As it is known, in the Caucasus region for the last five hundred years there has been a struggle for influence between Russians, Turks, and Iranians. This struggle resulted in Russia's occupation of the entire North Caucasus in the second half of the 19th century. However, the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the USSR, the emergence of new independent states, and the growing interest of the United States in oil-rich countries created new conditions.

In contemporary times, many developed and developing countries with limited energy resources in the world are increasingly looking for cheaper, stable, and reliable alternative energy sources for their economies. The Persian Gulf region, one of the world's leading sources of energy controls 70% of the world's energy resources. The problematic and very complex dynamics of the region create problems of stability and reliability for investment countries.

Due to the hydrocarbon resources and geopolitical position of the Caucasus region emerged as an alternative to countries such as Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, etc. located in the Gulf region. For this reason, Russia, the United States,

and the European Union are competing fiercely to become more influential in the Caucasus.

The geopolitical importance of the Caucasus region is mainly characterized by two factors: oil reserves in the Caspian Sea, location of the region on the Silk Road.

The interest of the world's major powers and neighboring countries in the Caucasus region can be grouped as follows: The United States wants to see the South Caucasus as a region with a completely pro-Western policy; The European Union sees the countries of the South Caucasus as a major hub for energy needs and a transit route connecting Asia and Europe; Russia sees the South Caucasus as its permanent sphere of influence and is interested in maintaining its position in the region.

Thus, the Caucasus region has become a platform for international competition. This is one of the reasons for the conflicts in the region. Therefore, it is important to study the regional policy of major powers and international organizations, as well as the foreign policy of regional states.

Therefore, the specialty of Caucasian Studies was opened at the faculties of history and international relations in the universities of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which provides bachelor's and master's degrees. In 2011, the Department of History of the Caucasian Peoples was established at the Faculty of History at Baku State University. The main educational and research areas of the department are the history, culture, socio-economic development, political conditions, traditions, languages, international relations, foreign policy, etc. of the peoples and countries of the Caucasus from ancient times to contemporary times. [37]

The Department of Caucasus Studies, which has been operating since 2017 at the Faculty of International Relations of the Azerbaijan University of Languages, teaches subjects like media, religion, security, etc. in the Caucasus. [38]

Along with all this, the decision to establish the Institute of Caucasus Studies (qərar1 / 16) was made at the general meeting of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences on April 29, 2015, in order to study the Caucasus region in depth.

Caucasus policy, Georgian studies, Armenian studies, North Caucasus, Translation, publication, and information departments of the institute are involved in socio-economic, political, and other issues within the Caucasus countries, occurring processes, their impact on the Republic of Azerbaijan, the foreign policy of the Caucasus countries and its impact on the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Caucasus policy of major powers, neighboring countries, international and regional organizations, the place of the Republic of Azerbaijan, conflicts in the Caucasus, Armenia's unfounded territorial claims against Azerbaijan, occupation policy and consequences, diaspora and lobbying activities, views of world-renowned political and public figures on the Caucasus region, etc. issues are being investigated.

Despite its short history, the Institute organized the First International forum of Caucasus Studies scholars in April 2017 with the participation of more than 50 scientists and researchers from more than 10 countries, in May 2018 was held an

international conference on "Relations between states: 100 Years Ago and Contemporary Period", in May 2019 the Second International Forum of the Caucasus Studies scholars was held. At the same time, in December 2017 was held the republican scientific conferences on "The Caucasus in the context of great upheavals: historical experience, contemporary period and prospects", also in November 2018, "Deportations in the Caucasus", and in November 2019, "Terror in the Caucasus" were held.

Thus, in 2017, 1 monograph abroad (Turkey), 42 scientific articles in 11 countries (USA, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, Moldova, Poland, Austria, United Arab Emirates, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Georgia), in 2018 40 articles at 11 countries (Austria, Belarus, Czech Republic, Italy, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, Greece), 1 monograph abroad in 2019 (Turkey), 8 countries (Russia, Turkey, Georgia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, USA, Germany, India) 52 scientific articles were published. The works of the staff have been included in the library catalogs of the world's leading countries and have been cited by many foreign scholars.

The institute cooperates with scientific institutions and scientists of countries such as the United States, Great Britain, Turkey, Russia, Poland, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Belarus, and others.

In light of all these, the processes taking place in the Caucasus region, the foreign policy of the region countries, and the policy pursued by the major powers in the region and etc. researchers are very important. The short-term activity of the Institute of Caucasus Studies shows that research of the region is necessary and should be continued.

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