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THE SECOND KARABAKH WAR IN THE KAZAKHSTANI MEDIA OUTLETS

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Abstract. The second Karabakh war has become one of the conflicts attracting the attention of the world media from the geographical, geopolitical, energy and human rights aspects. This conflict has been watched with interest by the global community for its important impact on regional stability and international relations, and has been analyzed in different forms in various media and communicated to audiences. In this process, the Kazakh media also played an active role and transmitted information to the society on the topic from the first day of the war. In this research, the aim is to determine how Kazakh media reacts to the issues related to the Second Karabakh war, what information it conveys and what perspective it presents. For this purpose, the historical and diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan were first reviewed. Then attention was paid to Kazakhstan's media structure and development prospects. Finally, the approach of the Kazakh media to the Second Karabakh War was examined based on examples.

Key words: The Second Karabakh War, Kazakhstani media, Azerbaijan-Kazakhstan, Media.

Introduction. On September 27, 2020, in response to the next military provocation by the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia against our country, the Armed Forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan started decisive counter-offensive operations, and the Second Karabakh War ended 44 days later on November 10. Azerbaijan returned a large part of its occupied lands in the war, which ended with the signing of a cease-fire declaration between Azerbaijan and Armenia, mediated by Russia. This war was remembered as the second stage of the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia for the control of Nagorno-Karabakh. With the beginning of the war, violent clashes took place, and the Armenian Armed Forces shelled the peaceful settlements of Azerbaijan, causing the deaths and injuries of civilians.

The second Karabakh war attracted a lot of attention in the regional and international arena, and had a significant impact on the stability and security of the region. As one of the countries with an important position in the world due to its geographical location, energy resources, geopolitical importance and economic potential, Kazakhstan has not remained indifferent to these events and has made efforts to resolve the issue peacefully. In general, Kazakhstan's South Caucasus policy was aimed at promoting stability in the region, increasing economic cooperation and ensuring regional security.

The Second Karabakh War was also in the center of attention of the Kazakh media and was closely followed. Thus, the war was comprehensively covered and analyzed in regional and international aspects in the Kazakhstani media. At the same time, the steps to be taken to end the war and establish peace were carefully followed by the media and Kazakhstan's mediation efforts in this process were supported.

Development perspectives of bilateral relations between the republics of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. The relations between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan have always been friendly and cooperative, formed by historical and cultural ties. After the collapse of the USSR, both countries gained

independence without wasting time and established diplomatic relations, and these relations were further expanded with the opening of embassies. In the new foreign policy concept formed by the national leader of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev, relations with Kazakhstan have gained great strategic importance. The close cooperation and friendly relations between the two countries have become a decisive factor for the stability of the South Caucasus and Central Asia. The first meeting between the presidents Heydar Aliyev and Nursultan Nazarbayev in 1994 demonstrated the determination of the two leaders to strengthen the relations between the Turkish states. In 1996, President N.Nazarbayev's official visit to Azerbaijan resulted in the signing of a number of agreements that strengthened strategic cooperation between the two countries. In 1997, President Heydar Aliyev made an official visit to Kazakhstan. The documents and agreements signed during this visit reflected concrete steps taken in the direction of further deepening and expansion of relations between the two countries. Among the signed agreements, those related to cooperation in the field of energy are have importance specially. These agreements have facilitated the regulation of the use of energy resources such as oil and natural gas and their transportation to international markets. At the same time, the abolition of the visa regime between the countries strengthened the relations between the people by creating conditions for people to cross the borders more easily.

In general, the close relations established by Heydar Aliyev with Kazakhstan during the leadership of the Republic of Azerbaijan have become one of the cornerstones of Azerbaijan's foreign policy. Mutual official visits and meetings between Heydar Aliyev and Nursultan Nazarbayev were of great importance in establishing a strong strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. Especially, the "Agreement on the sharing of the Caspian Sea" signed in Moscow in 2001 has been described by experts as one of the most important examples of the success of diplomacy between the two countries. This agreement aimed to determine the legal status of the Caspian Sea and regulate the use of energy resources. After that, cooperation relations between the two countries intensified not only in the political, but also in the economic sphere. Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan have also come together on regional platforms such as the Turkic Council and strengthened solidarity among Turkic-speaking countries. President Ilham Aliyev also paid special attention to cooperation relations with Kazakhstan in the country's foreign policy. During mutual official visits, great importance was given to cooperation in the field of energy, especially cooperation in the field of transportation of the rich carbon-hydrogen resources of the Caspian Sea to the world markets was of great importance. Kazakhstan's contribution to major energy projects such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline has been highly appreciated. In addition, plans to transport Kazakhstan's natural gas to Europe through Azerbaijan in the future have been evaluated as part of this cooperation.

Kasim-Jomart Tokayev's official visit to Azerbaijan after being elected as the President of Kazakhstan played an important role in strengthening the diplomatic relations between the two countries. During the visit, attention was drawn to the regional and international importance of projects such as the Common Corridor, and successful results of joint activities in foreign policy were emphasized. The signing of the "Declaration on the strengthening of strategic relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kazakhstan and the deepening of alliance mutual activity" has marked the beginning of a new stage in the relations between the two countries. In addition, during the visit of Kasim-Jomart Tokayev to Azerbaijan, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev was awarded with the highest order of Kazakhstan "Golden Eagle", which embodied the value of friendship and cooperation between the two leaders (Taghiyev, 2022).

In general, this visit made a great contribution to the strengthening of diplomatic relations between the two countries, and to the increase and expansion of cooperation in regional and international projects. This visit shed a positive light on the future cooperation between Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan and created conditions for the development of closer relations.

Characteristic features of the media structure of Kazakhstan. The establishment of the press in Kazakhstan began with the publication of the newspaper "Turkestanskiye vedomosti" in 1870 after the occupation of Central Asia as part of the colonial policy of Tsarist Russia. This state-controlled newspaper was seen as one of the main tools of propaganda in Tsarist Russia. However, over time, the local people have had the opportunity to be aware of the political processes taking place in the region through the newspaper, which has created conditions for their political awareness to increase (Gozogboev and Khudoygulov, 2018: 10).

After the tsarist Russia, during the USSR period, the Kazakh media operated under the absolute control of the Communist Party. In the USSR, the media was a powerful tool used to promote the ideology and policies of the Communist Party and to influence society. One of the main goals of the Soviet media was to strengthen the Soviet identity by bringing together the various ethnic groups, classes and regions that made up the Soviet society. Therefore, instead of emphasizing ethnic and cultural differences, the Soviet media used a language and style that promoted Soviet unity and solidarity (Temer and Yaldız, 2019: 175).

The first radio (1923) and television (1958) broadcasts in Kazakhstan also started to operate during the USSR. But until the period of reconstruction, there was strict ideological control and censorship in the field of media as well as in all social fields. Along with the reconstruction, journalistic freedoms expanded and independent media began to emerge slowly. This process was further accelerated by the declaration of independence of the country after the collapse of the USSR. In particular, the law "On Press and other Mass Media" adopted in 1991 was an important step in the development of the media and great importance in terms of the protection of the press and freedom of expression (Berdukul Han, 2019: 46).

Researcher Roza Nurtazina divided the evolution of media and information policy in Kazakhstan after independence into four stages. Therefore, in the first stage, the state controlled a large part of the media, and during this period there was almost no independent media. In the second stage, the independent media started to form and develop. During this period, the state's absolute control over the media decreased and independent media developed rapidly. In the third stage, qualitative and quantitative changes were experienced in the field of media. During this period, state-owned media and broadcasting companies were massively privatized, state funds and subsidies allocated for the state's information policy were transferred to state-supported organizations. At the last, fourth stage, Kazakhstan entered the period of stable growth of the information market. During this period, the state provided economic support to the media sector, measures were taken to increase the competitiveness of the local media market (Nurtazina, 2011: 141–142). During this period, at the same time, since 2008, the process of merging media companies has started. According to some experts, this process has led to the emergence of strong and competitive media institutions. But according to some, such mergers have created serious problems related to media diversity and independence. According to them, the size and power of media companies limited the diversity of the media industry and led to monopoly.

According to the statistics of 2022, a total of 3,676 periodicals, 191 TV channels, 84 radio stations, 959 news agencies and online media organizations are registered in Kazakhstan. Most of these media organizations use Kazakh and Russian languages. 1,852 media organizations use both languages. There are 853 media organizations that use only the Russian language and 693 that use only the Kazakh language. In addition, there are 1,512 media organizations broadcasting in three or more languages (including other languages) (Kazpravda.kz, 2022).

There are also more than 15 non-governmental organizations that support media development and press freedom in Kazakhstan. These organizations, in addition to providing legal support to journalists, serve to improve their qualifications. In addition, instead of the union of professional journalists, which defends the labor rights of journalists, organizations such as "Kazakhstan Union of Journalists",

which are professional unions of journalists, and "National Union of Publishers", representing electronic media organizations, operate in Kazakhstan (Abramov, 2010: 66).

In general, it is possible to note that the media sector in Kazakhstan has undergone significant changes and development in recent years, and has become a more diverse and dynamic structure. For example, on January 20, 2022, Kazakhstan hosted the First Central Asian Media Forum. The Central Asian Media Forum, held in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, has become an important platform for the strengthening of media cooperation in the region and the future of the media sector. At the forum, events and problems in the media field of Central Asian countries were touched upon and new media trends such as artificial intelligence technologies were discussed. The forum provided important opportunities for the future of the media and communication industry of the region (TRTAkaz, 2022).

Reflection of the second Karabakh war in the Kazakh media. During the first Karabakh war, Kazakhstan, as a newly independent country, tried to take a more neutral position, since it did not have much experience in international relations. Therefore, Kazakhstan tried to develop friendly relations with both Azerbaijan and Armenia, the parties to the war, in the context of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The government of Kazakhstan was in favor of a peaceful solution to the conflict between the two countries and called the parties to dialogue. Even in this direction concrete steps have been taken by the Kazakh government. Thus, during Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010, a dialogue platform for peace negotiations between Azerbaijan and Armenia was proposed, and a meeting between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan and Armenia was held in Astana on July 17 in this direction (Hamzaoghlu, 2021: 67). During the second Karabakh war, Kazakhstan supported regional stability and peace and acted within the framework of international law principles, and the media of this country constantly kept the issue of war on the agenda. In the materials published in the Kazakh media at that time, the negotiations conducted in the direction of the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the activities of international organizations were analyzed, the consequences of the conflict and the political line of the forces interested in its continuation were evaluated from various aspects. In general, during the 44-day Second Karabakh war, the Kazakh media, with some exceptions, tried to be neutral based on the principle of objectivity.

The Kazakh Telegraph Agency-KazTAG has been one of the main resources that keep the war on the agenda. The news published by the agency on September 27, 2020, titled "The conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia has started in Nagorno-Karabakh", provided information about the start of hostilities between Azerbaijan and Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh, and attention is also paid to the position of both sides. In the news of the Kazakh Telegraph Agency-KazTAG was published the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia. In parallel with this, was published the statement of Azerbaijani Defense Ministry, in which reported that "armed forces of the country are launching a counter-attack along the entire contact line in the region, the decision was taken in order to stop the combat activities of the Armenian armed forces and ensure the safety of the civilian population". In the news, referring to the official Baku, it was emphasized that there are dead and wounded civilians on the Azerbaijani side (Kaztag.kz (a), 2020).

Through the Liter.kz website took a neutral position and contained various materials related to the war, mainly official statements of both sides. On September 29, 2020 the news titled "Armenian army demonstrated hitting Azerbaijani military equipment" published a statement of the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan announcing a large-scale counter-offensive operation in Nagorno-Karabakh (Mamirkhanova, 2020).

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet's statement was published in the news in the Zona.kz internet newspaper. In his statement, the Commissioner expressed concern about the resumption of military operations along the contact line in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone and called on the parties to end military operations. At the same time, it was noted that for all this, the official Baku and Yerevan put the responsibility on each other (Zonakz.net (a), 2020).

Kazakh media resources such as "Ustinka Live", "Zonakz.net", "Kazakhstanskaya Pravda" systematically reported on the course of military operations during the 44-day war and published materials about the rockets fired at Ganja, Barda, Tartar, the firing of peaceful residential areas of Azerbaijan, and the targeting of the civilian population. On October 5, 2020, a large article titled "What threatens Kazakhstan in the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan" was published in the Internet newspaper Zonakz.net. In the article, the opinions of analyst, international expert Anuar Bakhitkhanov, professor of Caucasian-German University Rustam Burnashev, doctor of political sciences Andrei Chebotarev, political scientist Dosym Satpayev on the issue were studied. Their thoughts about the position of Russia and Turkey regarding the war, the active cooperation of Kazakhstan with Azerbaijan, and the role of Kazakhstan in the post-Soviet space were shared with the readers. The article also used Marat Asipov's "30-year war" material about the First Karabakh war, and quoted quotes about the killing of peaceful and innocent people (Yergaliyev, 2020). In addition, in the newspaper on October 29, in the news entitled "UN Condemns the Bombing of Barda and Stepanakert in the Nagorno-Karabakh Region of Azerbaijan", the statement of UN Secretary General Stephane Dujarric strongly condemning the shelling of Barda and Khankandi, resulting in the killing of civilians, was included. (Zonakz.net (b), 2020). Although the word Stepanakert is used in the title of the news, Khankendi is also written in the text.

On October 5, 2020, on the Forbes.kz website, the news titled "Aliyev announced the possibility of a military solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" summarized the interview of Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev to one of the foreign TV channels. "I often hear that there is no solution to the conflict by military means...I do not agree with that" and "If the international community cannot ensure the implementation of international decisions, Azerbaijan will do it itself," the news highlighted in the news. It was also mentioned in the news that the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev accused the Prime Minister of Armenia N. Pashinyan of disrupting the peace talks and that the Armenian leadership and some countries that want to maintain the status quo are responsible for the worsening of the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh (Forbes.kz, 2020).

In the large-scale article titled "War in Karabakh: Mercenaries from Kazakhstan – a myth?" published by the Kazakh bureau of "Azadlig" Radio on October 7, 2020, it was emphasized that Kazakhstan strictly adheres to the principle of neutrality in military conflicts and that the participation of Kazakh citizens in foreign military conflicts is illegal. In addition, the article noted that Kazakhstan continues its efforts to maintain neutrality in connection with the military conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, and no attempt to join the ranks of mercenaries has yet been detected. It was also pointed out that the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities living in Kazakhstan live together peacefully and this conflict should not have a negative impact on the relations between the communities. The article also contains several interviews. In the interview of the representative of the Armenian community living in Kazakhstan, Artush Karapetyan, the impact of the recent conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh on the relations between the Armenian, Azerbaijani and Turkish communities in Kazakhstan was discussed, and his views on the solution of the Karabakh conflict were brought to the attention of the readers. On the side of Azerbaijan, the views of Abulfas Hamidov, president of the Association of Azerbaijanis of Kazakhstan, were summarized. In his interview, Hamidov stated that Kazakhstan, as a secular state, provides equality to people of different faiths and ethnic backgrounds, and emphasized the importance of following international legal norms for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Hamidov also noted that negotiations regarding the status of Nagorno-Karabakh have been ongoing since 1994, and there has been almost no progress except for the ceasefire (Azattyq-ruhy.kz, 2020).

The Kazakh media paid a lot of attention to the end of the war, especially to the signing of a tripartite statement by the leaders of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia. For example, the KazTAQ information agency published on November 10, 2020, in the article entitled "Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia signed a statement to end the Nagorno-Karabakh war", the views of the leaders of Azerbaijan,

Armenia and Russia who signed the statement were included. The article also emphasized that the occupied lands of Azerbaijan were taken back and the conflict was ended, and this was characterized as an important victory of the Azerbaijani leader. In addition, the article stated that Russia will play an important role in assisting the implementation of this agreement, and Turkey will also participate in this process with its peacekeeping mission. At the same time, Prime Minister of Armenia N. Pashinyan informed the readers that this decision is a painful and historical event, addressing his citizens (Zonakz.net (b), 2020).

The "Tengrinews" site, in turn, was particularly sensitive to the November 10 Declaration signed between Azerbaijan and Armenia with the mediation of Russia, and published the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of this country regarding the trilateral agreement (Tengrinews.kz, 2020). In general, the media of Kazakhstan highly appreciated the achieved peace and commented that the agreements were in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions (Kaztag.kz (b), 2020). The leadership of the Turkish Council has also expressed its open and direct support to Azerbaijan in this matter. The General Secretary of the Council, Bagdad Amreyev, congratulated President Ilham Aliyev and the people of Azerbaijan on the historic achievement, the liberation of the occupied territories and the restoration of sovereignty over them (Kaztag.kz (c), 2020).

On the occasion of the end of the war and the victory, Yermentay Sultanmurat, the president of the "World Assembly of Turkic Peoples" International Organization, also addressed a congratulatory letter to President Ilham Aliyev. In his letter, Yermentay Sultanmurat emphasized that this victory is an important stage for the strengthening of the Azerbaijani nation and the Turkish spirit. At the same time, he assessed the strengthening of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan as an important event in the general Turkish history (President.az, 2020). Kazakhstan's influential media outlets have also widely covered the Victory Parade dedicated to the victory in Baku (Azerbaijan-news.az, 2020).

Shortly after the end of the war, a film called "Nagorno-Karabakh-New Deal" was made by Kazakhstan Television. The film contains information about the occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh by Armenia, the migrations caused by this occupation, the lives of refugees, atrocities committed by Armenians in the occupied regions, the Patriotic War of September 27 – November 10 and its consequences, new geopolitical realities in the South Caucasus region, and regional development perspectives of the post-war period. . The film contains various interviews and opinions about the victory of Azerbaijan in the Patriotic War and the events that took place in the subsequent period (Modern.az, 2020).

Conclusions. The Second Karabakh War, which began on September 27, 2020 and lasted for 44 days, resulted in Azerbaijan's decisive victory over Armenia. Kazakhstan was one of the countries that revealed its position in the international arena during the war and commented on the course of events. The government of Kazakhstan emphasized the importance of stopping the military clashes during the 44-day Patriotic War, resolving the conflict on the basis of the principle of territorial integrity and self-determination of peoples, thereby demonstrating support for Azerbaijan. Also, after the war, the President of Kazakhstan K.J. Tokayev expressed his intention to provide comprehensive assistance to the revival and development of Karabakh as part of his first official visit to Azerbaijan. In this direction, the initiative to establish the Kurmangazy Children's Creativity Development Center in Fuzuli was a manifestation of the brotherly relationship between the peoples of the two countries and an example of humanitarian cooperation.

The events that took place during the Second Karabakh War were also closely followed in the Kazakh media. The attention and interest shown by the Kazakh media confirmed the regional and international importance of this conflict once again. The course of the conflict was closely followed and detailed analyzes were carried out in the Kazakh media. In addition, the intervention of regional powers and the role of the international community in this conflict have been critically evaluated in the media of Kazakhstan. In general, the principles of impartiality and balance of journalism have

been tried to be preserved in the media of Kazakhstan. This can be evaluated as an important factor in the understanding and interpretation of the conflict.

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