

THE 2020 KARABAKH WAR AND 2023 ETHNIC CLEANSING OF ARMENIANS AS A PROXY OPERATION

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Numerous explanations have been proposed regarding the events preceding the election of previously jailed [dissident journalist](#) Nikol Pashinyan as Prime Minister of Armenia in 2018, as well as his subsequent actions.

However, most explanations lack a coherent interpretation of Pashinyan's dismantling of Armenia's security and military apparatus, the appointment of pro-government judges to Armenia's Constitutional Court, the deliberate restriction of Armenian armed forces from engaging beyond Nagorno-Karabakh borders in the [2020 Karabakh War](#), and the forced ethnic cleansing of Armenians in fall 2023. International events of this nature often lack clarity of intention and transparency, with deliberate deletion of facts. It is plausible to *hypothesize that these actions were part of a Western proxy operation against Russian interests in the Southern Caucasus*. Furthermore, Russia may have experienced an immediate loss in regional influence while seemingly supporting its [strategic partner](#), Azerbaijan, in its conquest of Nagorno-Karabakh. However, in the long term, Moscow may still wield significant regional influence.

In hindsight, one can examine any event lacking a clear explanation, and identify actions that serve as evidence associated with a series of hypotheses, each offering a supposition or proposed explanation of the event. While a complete [Analysis of Competing Hypotheses](#) (ACH) is beyond the scope of this short article, the available evidence largely supports our hypothesis.

The Frog Parable

Political events can sometimes erupt suddenly, while other times they simmer or fail to reach critical mass. The frog parable can illustrate these slower dynamics. If a frog is suddenly placed into boiling water, it will jump out; however, if it remains in water that gradually heats to a boil, it may not perceive the danger and will be cooked. The latter scenario can be applied to what has occurred in Armenia since 2018, leading to the devastating loss of ancestral land and the forced depopulation of Nagorno-Karabakh.

No ruling structure in Armenia could have survived a spontaneous, unilateral depopulation of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians. Civil war and chaos would have erupted across Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenian society could not have endured an immediate break in military and economic ties with Russia. Yet, the former has become a *fait accompli*, and the latter is occurring gradually.

Armenian society might rationalize the loss of Armenian sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh if they had at least fought for it. Some refer to the war during the fall of 2020 as an engineered defeat. Subsequently, Armenian society was given time to digest this loss, perhaps facilitated by Azerbaijan.

Then, beginning in early December 2022, Azerbaijan initiated the consolidation of its conquest of Nagorno-Karabakh by blockading access roads between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. This

resulted in a loss of food and energy resources, with Azerbaijani military sniping at Armenian farmers and civilian structures.

By mid-2023, conditions of near [famine](#) were present in Nagorno-Karabakh. In September 2023, the Azerbaijani military increased their attacks on Nagorno-Karabakh. In early October 2023, we witnessed the forced exodus of 120,000 Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. Such ethnic cleansing could never have occurred in 2018. Like in the frog parable, the frog would have jumped out of boiling water. In contrast, this process took three years as the water in the pot slowly reached a boil, as in the frog parable analogy.

Color Revolution

Our hypothesis regarding the complete loss of Nagorno-Karabakh draws strong parallels with many other color revolutions, including those of the Arab Spring. Armenia found itself in a revolution akin to a color revolution, which was bloodless and received less international attention than those in Georgia or Ukraine. Major Western powers have historically initiated color revolutions.

Armenia's 2018 change in government, dubbed the "Velvet Revolution," primarily targeted previous Armenian administrations as the popular mantra rather than directly confronting Russia. Post-1997 Armenian governments, run by pro-Russia interests from Nagorno-Karabakh, would have vehemently opposed any plan to lose and depopulate Nagorno-Karabakh of Armenians. These previous governments, pejoratively referred to as the [Karabakh Clan](#), had to be discredited and replaced in order to affect any change in status of Nagorno-Karabakh. Our hypothesis suggests that conditions were gradually established to diminish Russian influence in Armenia. Azerbaijan played a facilitating role in this process under the guise of its eventual conquest of Nagorno-Karabakh. 'Facilitated' does not imply direct collusion between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in clandestine meetings.

The 120,000 Armenians residing in Nagorno-Karabakh constituted one of the most pro-Russian ethnic subgroups in the Southern Caucasus, and Russia utilized this as leverage over both Armenia and Azerbaijan. Russia comprehended Pashinyan's stance, particularly his anti-Russian rhetoric, before the 2020 Karabakh War. The intricacies of what may have transpired behind the scenes may never be publicly revealed.

NATO Against Armenian Interests; A Proxy Battle Against Russia

During the height of the 2020 Karabakh War, with NATO F-16s from Turkey in Azerbaijan and Israel transporting weaponry via Georgia into Azerbaijan, NATO's Secretary General Stoltenberg, while on a visit to Turkey, [praised](#) Turkey's role in NATO, without acknowledging its involvement in the war. Russia, claiming that Nagorno-Karabakh was within Azerbaijan's internationally recognized borders, did not provide identifiable support to Armenians. Putin was balancing assets and liabilities. By the fall of 2023, with the dissolution of Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh, Russia lost this balancing act, though only in the short term.

In the end, a political bloc of Russian influence was dissolved from the Southern Caucasus, albeit at the cost of displacing 120,000 Armenians from their ancestral lands, now scattered across Armenia and the region. Turkey, a NATO member, [primarily oversaw](#) the 2020 Karabakh War. Turkish officers were embedded within the Azerbaijani General Staff, effectively replacing Baku's post-Soviet military doctrine with NATO's operational framework. Azerbaijan's successful conquest of Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding regions led to the extension of the Azerbaijani-Iranian border by 132 km. These border areas now pose an increased security threat to Iran due to an [Israeli](#) presence. This entire process proved disadvantageous to Armenia.

Our hypothesis suggests that Pashinyan's Prime Ministership facilitated a gradual proxy battle aimed at diminishing Russian influence in the Southern Caucasus, where NATO's interests conflicted with Armenian interests, resulting in the loss of a pro-Russian Nagorno-Karabakh. The nature of any quid pro quo offered to the Armenian ruling party and oligarchic structures, and by whom, remains unknown.

The rhetoric supported by Armenia's ruling party depicted the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh as somehow inferior to local Armenians, abetting the notion that Armenia's 'progress' was hindered by the existence of Nagorno-Karabakh as an Armenian entity. This rhetoric can be traced back to Armenia's first president, Levon Ter-Petrosyan. It's possible that short-sighted Armenian oligarchs were positioned to exploit the scenario strongly suggested in our hypothesized position. They may have aimed to seize market infrastructure as Russia's influence waned, a process parallel to the one observed during the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Evidence

To eliminate our hypothesis from consideration, the following items would need to contradict it. This list is not exhaustive; these items may also lend support to or contradict alternative hypotheses, such as Armenian systematic governmental incompetence. Nevertheless, the following evidence reinforces our proposed hypothesis.

- The exact number of current Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) registered in Armenia remains elusive. While Armenia's [official](#) count as of 2019 stood at 4,222 NGOs and 1,120 foundations, a claim made by Russian [sources](#) in the fall of 2023 estimated the number of NGOs in Armenia to be around 9,000. This number of NGOs is considered [excessive](#) in a country of about three million people. The role of Western-sponsored NGOs in color revolutions is widely recognized.
- In 2017, Nikol Pashinyan's party proposed Armenia's exit from the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) to the Armenian Parliament, signaling a shift away from closer integration with Russia.
- Since assuming power in 2018, Pashinyan has had [five](#) Directors of the National Security Service, and six state officials have died under circumstances deemed suspicious. Additionally, [four](#) different Ministers of Defense have served under Pashinyan since 2018. Such frequent changes in key ministries hinder coherent policy implementation.

– In July 2018, shortly after his election, Pashinyan [charged](#) Yuri Khachaturov, who served as the head of the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), with “subverting public order” in 2008.

– In the months leading up to the 2020 war, Pashinyan [appointed](#) individuals known for their loyalty to his administration to key positions within the Armenian Constitutional Court. These appointments were seen as a move to consolidate power and influence within the judiciary, particularly given Pashinyan's assumption of extraordinary powers during and immediately after the 2020 Karabakh War.

– Approximately [10,000](#) diasporan Armenians volunteered as soldiers in the 2020 Karabakh War, despite many being informed that their assistance on the battlefield was not required.

– Following a series of phone conversations between Pashinyan and Russian President Putin, and between Azerbaijani President Aliyev and Putin, in [mid-October 2020](#) a proposal was made to end the fighting. The proposal involved Armenians maintaining control over much of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region from the Soviet era, along with bordering regions, and included the deployment of Russian peacekeepers to Nagorno-Karabakh. However, Pashinyan [refused](#) the proposal, arguing that it would amount to surrender. One of the points of contention was Aliyev's demand for the return of Azerbaijani refugees to Nagorno-Karabakh.

– On February 25, 2021, Armenia's general staff [demanded](#) Pashinyan's resignation, citing reasons such as indecisiveness during and after the 2020 Karabakh War. In retaliation, Pashinyan dismissed the Chief of the General Staff and his first deputy. Additionally, he has dismissed or [arrested](#) several combat generals from both [Armenia](#) and Karabakh.

– Aired on December 19, 2023, on [Armenian TV 1](#), Pashinyan claimed that the resources meant to strengthen Armenia were always diverted to support the Nagorno-Karabakh republic. He also stated that he was elected prime minister of Armenia, not Nagorno-Karabakh. The interview implied that the burden of an Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh was lifted, bringing economic benefits to Armenia. A quick review can be read [here](#).

On February 1, 2024, Armenia's [ratification](#) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court came into effect. This ratification means that Armenia has agreed to abide by the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court, potentially allowing for the prosecution of individuals accused of committing international crimes, including heads of state. Under the Rome Statute, the ICC claims jurisdiction over genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression. As a result, there is the possibility that Russian President Putin could face arrest if he enters Armenia and is accused of committing such crimes.

By the end of February 2024, Armenia had [frozen](#) its membership in the CSTO, signaling a significant shift in its foreign policy or security strategy. This decision raised questions about Armenia's relationship with other CSTO member states and its broader geopolitical stance.

In a March 8, 2024 [interview](#), Armenian Foreign Minister Mirzoyan stated that Armenia is actively discussing the possibility of joining the EU.

A stronger, pan-Turkic bond has been forged between Turkey and Azerbaijan, potentially serving as a subversive beachhead against Russian interests in Turkic Central Asia.

The 1915 Turkish genocide of the Armenians should have unequivocally taught Armenians to take control of their destiny. Given its geopolitical context, Armenia cannot afford to make foreign policy mistakes, yet it has made many. It is a false dichotomy to assume that Armenia must choose between acting as a Western proxy or remaining in the Russian sphere. This dilemma arises from Armenia's lack of a comprehensive national strategy. While the Pashinyan government may have a plan, it is still beholden to external influences – only the master changes. When changing horses midstream, unforeseen [consequences](#) are inevitable, especially when outcomes are left to chance or entrusted to others. Russia retains options for responding to shifts in political dynamics in Armenia or Azerbaijan. Much of this will become evident once military activities in Ukraine have concluded.

The Seemingly Impossible

The conclusion of Azerbaijan's conquest of Nagorno-Karabakh occurred without significant civil upheaval in Armenia or Nagorno-Karabakh. Both entities were under the illusion that they were fighting for their land and lost the battle. Furthermore, both societies assumed that Russian peacekeepers would safeguard Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians from Azerbaijani military pressure, particularly after Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians were largely disarmed by the end of the war in November 2020. However, such expectations were not met. Russia's inaction was displayed again when the Russia-led CSTO remained passive in late September 2022, as Azerbaijani forces invaded and [occupied](#) over 200 sq km of Armenia's internationally recognized territory. Since 2018, the seemingly impossible has been achieved.

– Armenia was able to replace a pro-Russia government based on the perception of widespread corruption. This change was viewed as a victory for the West. However, it is important to recognize the potential pitfalls of assuming that a change in government, regardless of its association with the past, will inherently lead to improvement. This belief can be attributed to a popular logical fallacy known as the 'fallacy of change,' where people assume that any change from the current situation must be beneficial without considering the specific context or consequence.

– Azerbaijan's conquest of Nagorno-Karabakh was significantly influenced by the involvement of NATO member Turkey, which played a crucial role in shaping the current outcome and altering the balance of power in the region. This closer alignment with Turkey has implications for regional dynamics and is advantageous for Western interests. Azerbaijan received an additional prize with the ethnic cleansing of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh.

– Anti-Russia sentiment in Armenia, while not radical, has gained traction. The West is actively fostering this change in sentiment.

– Armenia may withdraw from the CSTO, considered a clear victory for the West.

– The mainstream narrative heard in Armenia is that Indian missiles, [French](#) arms, or support from the EU will bring peace to the region.

– Pashinyan did not resign following Armenia's defeat in the 2020 Karabakh War, which occurred under his leadership. Subsequently, he mainly resorted to plausible deniability.

Conclusion and Warning

Our hypothesis strongly suggests that Armenia sacrificed over 4,000 young men, with 120,000 Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh losing their land, property, labor, and thousands of years of culture in the interests of others. The progression towards this outcome wasn't governed by fate but rather by the absence of strategic planning, consistently overshadowed by individual interests.

The narrative rationalizing such a monumental sacrifice is based on the assumption that Armenians were never able, to any critical degree, to extract much benefit from their sovereign control of Nagorno-Karabakh. So, why fight over its sovereignty? Psychologists refer to this state as [learned helplessness](#), suggesting that when individuals believe their actions will not lead to desirable outcomes, they become complacent. They may stop trying altogether, even when opportunities for success are present. Worse, Armenia's enemies exploit this vulnerability.



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There are no comments yet.