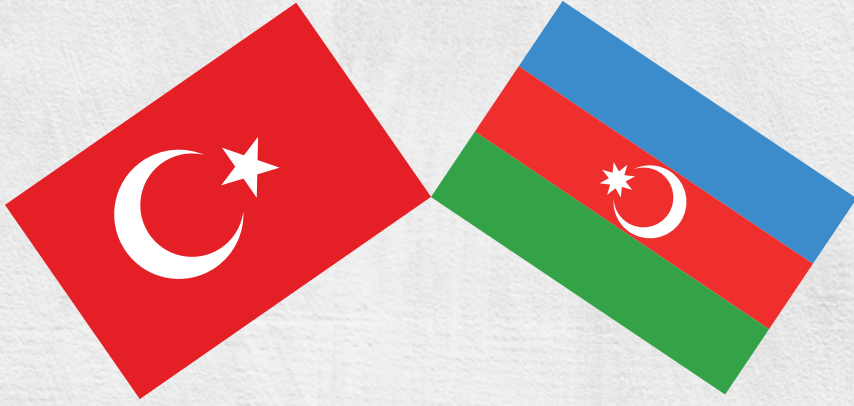


# AZERBAIJAN and TÜRKİYE in WORLD POLITICS

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**TÜRKİYE BİLİMLER AKADEMİSİ**  
TURKISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES



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# Azerbaijan and Türkiye in World Politics

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Prof. Dr. Ali BALCI

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## FOREWORD

The Turkish Academy of Sciences (TÜBA), as an autonomous organization dedicated to advancing scientific research and fostering intellectual collaboration, continues to contribute to global scholarship through its publications and international engagements. By bringing together diverse scientific disciplines and perspectives, TÜBA supports initiatives that address urgent regional and global challenges through rigorous academic inquiry. This book, *Azerbaijan and Türkiye in World Politics*, reflects this mission by offering a multidisciplinary examination of one of the most exemplary partnerships in contemporary international relations.

The relationship between TÜBA and the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences is deeply rooted in a shared history, culture and intellectual heritage. These ties reflect a unique level of alignment that goes beyond mere cooperation, embodying a shared vision of scientific advancement and regional stability. In this context, the enduring principle of 'one nation, two states' is not just considered a depiction, but a concept requiring theoretical depth and academic discussion. The TÜBA International Relations Working Group has made significant efforts to conceptualize and analyse this notion within a broader scholarly and geopolitical framework.

This book is the result of extensive collaboration between leading scholars from Türkiye and Azerbaijan. Bringing together contributions from 30 academics, it comprises a comprehensive set of chapters examining the historical, cultural, political and strategic dimensions of relations between the two countries. Reflecting this, the book comprises 25 chapters authored by leading experts, offering a rich and multifaceted analysis of this evolving partnership.

In an era of global uncertainty and shifting geopolitical balances, the importance of cooperation between scientific institutions has never been clearer. As the term president of the Union of National Academies of Sciences of the Turkic World (UNASTW), TÜBA is committed to fostering stronger relationships among its member academies. Through joint research projects, academic exchanges and collaborative initiatives and summer schools, we aim to foster scientific excellence and promote peace, stability and prosperity in our region and beyond.

The publication of this book coincides with a significant milestone: the 100th anniversary of the 'Baku Turkology Congress'. As a field of study, Turkology has long transcended linguistic and historical enquiry to encompass broader areas such as international relations, cultural diplomacy and regional cooperation. Today, Turkology not only contributes to the preservation of our shared heritage, but also strengthens intellectual and political ties across the Turkic world.

This book offers both a scholarly analysis and a vision for the future. It demonstrates how cooperation based on shared values, mutual respect and scientific rigour could serve as a model for other regions. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the contributors, editors and members of the TÜBA International Relations Working Group, whose dedication and intellectual efforts made this book possible. My gratitude also goes to the governing body of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences and its members.

We hope that this work will meaningfully contribute to academic literature, deepen understanding of Azerbaijan-Türkiye relations and inspire further collaboration in the pursuit of a more peaceful and cooperative world.

**Prof. Dr. Muzaffer ŞEKER**  
**Turkish Academy of Sciences, President**  
**Union of National Academies of Sciences of the Turkic World, Term President**

## FOREWORD

Throughout history, Azerbaijan and Türkiye have always been united not merely by good-neighbourly ties, but by a fraternal relationship rooted in genuinely shared historical origins. Even during the Cold War period of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijani-Turkish relations continued to flourish in the fields of literature and the arts. In the period of independence, relations between our countries were elevated to a new stage at the level of inter-state relations. It should be particularly noted that during the period when Heydar Aliyev (1923-2003), the National Leader of the Azerbaijani people, led independent Azerbaijan, our country's relations with Türkiye developed along an upward trajectory. Significant steps in relations with Türkiye were taken by the eminent statesman Heydar Aliyev while he was still serving as Chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. The ties he had forged with Suleyman Demirel (1924-2015), the distinguished statesman of the Republic of Türkiye, dating back to the Soviet period, were elevated to the level of a symbol of steadfast friendship. During the period of state independence, the "Hope Bridge" built over the Araz River between Azerbaijan and Türkiye stands as a real testament to the firm mutual relations and reliable friendship of these outstanding statesmen.

In the subsequent period, when Heydar Aliyev led the independent Azerbaijani state, new and enduring foundations for relations with the fraternal country were established. The expression "One nation, two states," proclaimed by Heydar Aliyev in his historic address to the Grand National Assembly of the Republic of Türkiye, defined the strategy of relations between our countries. The fact that the Republic of Türkiye also placed its trust and confidence in the "One nation, two states" strategy gave rise, in the new historical period, to a new type of inter-state relations with no international alternative. Thus, the "One nation, two states" strategy came to encompass all directions of public life in our country. Azerbaijani-Turkish relations advanced to the level where both independent states speak from a unified position in international relations as well.

Azerbaijani-Turkish relations have occupied an important place in the policy of Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The mutual and trusted relations between the head of state of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, and the President of the Republic of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, make a great contribution to the expansion of the solid cooperative ties between the fraternal countries. The Turkish side, too, consistently demonstrates confidence and active engagement in its relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan. This underpins the unified position of Azerbaijan and Türkiye at the regional and international levels. The fact that Azerbaijan and Türkiye adopt the same stance on issues brought up for discussion in the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the European Union, and other international organizations ensures a balanced attitude from the world's centres of power. This, in turn, brings real benefits both to Türkiye and Azerbaijan and to the wider Turkic world.

The elevation of relations between Azerbaijan and Türkiye from strategic partnership to the level of alliance is a significant development both for our countries and from the perspective of international relations. In this regard, the famous Shusha Declaration signed on 15 June 2021 by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Republic of Türkiye Recep Tayyip Erdogan formally enshrined the mutual full support of our countries for each other in all areas of inter-state cooperation, including international relations and even military cooperation. For this reason, the Shusha Declaration is considered a treaty of alliance between Azerbaijan and Türkiye.

The special role of Azerbaijan and Türkiye in the establishment and development of the Organization of Turkic States deserves separate mention. The Organization of Turkic States was in fact founded and developed on the basis of the stable and sustained cooperation between Azerbaijan and Türkiye. The adoption of important decisions for the Turkic world at the Summit meetings of the Organization of Turkic States and their implementation play a significant role in strengthening the international standing of this body. The unanimous decision by the heads of states of the Turkic republics within the framework of the Organization of Turkic States to adopt a unified Latin alphabet for the Turkic world, and the resolution to prepare common history and literature textbooks, demonstrate that this organization is taking significant steps towards the unity and solidarity of the Turkic world.

When speaking of the relations between Azerbaijan and Türkiye in international affairs, the role and activities of our countries' Academies of Sciences in this process must also be noted. The mutual trust between Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences and the Turkish Academy of Sciences, expressed through their unified position in international academic organizations, provides grounds for demonstrating to representatives of other academic bodies around the world the unity and equality of our countries in the field of science. In the International Science Council (ISC), the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP), and the Association of Academies and Societies of Sciences in Asia (AASSA), the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences and the Turkish Academy of Sciences (TÜBA) stand as twin pillars, displaying an unwavering scientific stance and setting a true example to academies worldwide. The AASSA responsibly and honourably fulfils its bridging function between the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences and the TÜBA.

For all these reasons, the organization of an international scientific conference dedicated to international relations and other fields, co-organised by the Turkish Academy of Sciences and the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, and hosted in Türkiye and Azerbaijan, stands as a concrete example of the trust established between our academies. This event also reflects the strength of mutual cooperation developed between our institutions.

This book is also a collaborative scientific endeavour by the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences and the Turkish Academy of Sciences, exploring pressing issues in international relations. I would like to express my sincere gratitude, especially to the President of the Turkish Academy of Sciences, Prof. Dr. Muzaffer Şeker, as well as to the editors and all contributing scholars. I am confident that this collaborative publication will further strengthen our long-standing relationship.

**Academician Isa HABİBBAYLI**  
**Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, President**

## PREFACE

The relationship between Azerbaijan and Türkiye go far beyond the ordinary bilateral relations between two states and nations. The very emergence of Azerbaijan and Türkiye as modern nation-states at the world stage following World War I was deeply intertwined. Turkish nationalism as an ideology and many of the same nationalist cadres facilitated the birth of the republics of Azerbaijan and Türkiye in the early 20th century. Pioneering leaders travelled between and struggled across both countries in those fateful years. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijani-Turkish relationship once again jump started with Türkiye becoming the first country to officially recognize the independence of Azerbaijan on November 9, 1991. 1990s and 2000s witnessed the pioneering efforts of Turkish and Azerbaijani actors in laying the groundwork for both bilateral and multilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan, Türkiye, and other Turkic states and their neighbors. Turkish-Azerbaijani relations reached an exceptionally high standard of multidimensional alliance during and after the liberation of Karabakh with the Second Karabakh War in 2020.

The geopolitical landscape of the twenty-first century is undergoing a profound transformation, characterized by the decline of unipolar hegemony and the emergence of a multipolar, multilayered international order. Within this shifting paradigm, the bilateral relationship between Türkiye and Azerbaijan has evolved from a sentimental bond of ethnic kinship into a robust, institutionalized strategic alliance that acts as a primary stabilizer in the South Caucasus and a driving force for the broader Turkic world. This volume offers a comprehensive examination of this unique partnership, exploring its historical roots, cultural depths, and geopolitical ramifications.

The guiding philosophy of “One Nation, Two States,” famously articulated by Heydar Aliyev, has transitioned from a rhetorical slogan into a concrete political and military reality, which culminated in the 2021 Shusha Declaration. As the international system grapples with the erosion of liberal multilateralism and the retreat of great powers, Türkiye and Azerbaijan are seizing the “systemic permissiveness” to construct their own regional orders. This book is essential because it provides a multi-disciplinary lens-ranging from neoclassical realism and constructivism to psychosemantics and digital diplomacy-to understand how two nations have managed to synthesize their shared history with modern state-building to reshape the Eurasian map.

This collection is particularly timely and significant for several reasons. First, it challenges the conventional view that the Türkiye-Azerbaijan relationship is driven solely by emotional nationalism. Instead, the contributors demonstrate that this axis represents a model of “bottom-up regionalism,” where non-hegemonic powers design new rules, corridors, and identities to suit their strategic priorities independent of global superpowers. Second, the book addresses the critical intersection of identity and functionality. It explains how cultural heritage and linguistic affinity form a “symbolic capital” that is converted into “hard” geopolitical assets, such as energy security and military cooperation.

Third, the volume situates the South Caucasus within the broader context of global multipolarity. It analyzes how the Türkiye-Azerbaijan alliance navigates the complex triangle of Russia, Iran, and the West, while simultaneously spearheading the institutionalization of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS). By linking energy security, the Middle Corridor, and digital diplomacy, the book offers a holistic view of how these two nations are not merely surviving in a chaotic world order but actively defining it.

The volume begins by establishing the comparative historical and theoretical foundations of the relations between Azerbaijan and Türkiye. Abdullah Gündoğdu provides a necessary reassessment of the Safavid-Ottoman legacy of conflict, arguing that while sectarian differences posed challenges historically, the shared enlightenment and modernization of the 19th century

created the intellectual accumulation that underpins today's cooperation. Şener Aktürk addresses the "Muslim secular" and Turkish nationalist identity projects in both countries, arguing that their constitutive conflicts against common adversaries (Russia and Iran) have bridged the Sunni-Shiite divide, fostering a cohesive national consciousness. Mehmet Rıza Heyet traces the periodization of Azerbaijani-Turkish relations from diplomatic recognition in the early 1990s to the full-fledged alliance post-2020, emphasizing the principle of "reciprocity" whereby Azerbaijan supports Türkiye economically just as Türkiye supports Azerbaijan militarily. Ruhiyya Mammadova delves into the formation of national identity, contrasting Türkiye's state-centered modernization with Azerbaijan's post-colonial trajectory, yet finding a convergence in their hybrid identities that balance modernization with ethno-cultural continuity.

Moving from identity to leadership and institutions, Yaşar Sarı analyzes the legacy of Heydar Aliyev, framing him as the "architect" who transformed emotional solidarity into a pragmatic, institutionalized partnership capable of withstanding regional upheavals. Ali Balcı utilizes a data-driven approach to analyze high-level leader visits, revealing that Azerbaijan has emerged as the most diplomatically active and strategically balanced state in the South Caucasus, creating a dense web of interactions with Türkiye that outpaces other regional actors. Mammadali Babashli expands this scope to the global stage, discussing how the two nations contribute to a new and increasingly multipolar world order through humanitarian initiatives and the defense of international law, advocating for UN reforms.

A significant portion of the book is dedicated to the geopolitical and security dimensions of the alliance. Muhammet Koçak employs Type III Neoclassical Realism to argue that the alliance is a result of leadership agency acting within an international structural context characterized by U.S. retrenchment, Russian overextension, and high systemic permissiveness. Kenan Aslanlı and Metin Çelik focus on the post-Shusha Declaration era (2021-2025), detailing how the alliance has deepened military integration and is reshaping the region through projects like the Zangezur Corridor. Emre Erşen examines Türkiye's role in the "3+3 Regional Cooperation Platform," highlighting Ankara's strategy of "regional ownership" to mitigate competition between the West, Russia, and Iran while supporting Azerbaijan. Focusing on another key actor of the geostrategic competition in the Caucasus, Serhan Afacan explicates the Iranian perspective, explaining how Tehran views the Türkiye-Azerbaijan axis as a security threat and a geopolitical encirclement, but views the Organization of Turkic States as less threatening in part because Iran thinks integration between Türkiye and Central Asia to be much less feasible. In Afacan's words, "Iran views the Central Asian members of the OTS as pursuing national priorities and external alignments distinct from those of Türkiye and Azerbaijan, whose agendas Tehran regards as more overtly competitive."

The economic and energy underpinnings of the relationship are explored in depth. Belgin San Akca and Şuhnaz Yılmaz argue that energy security is both a driver and an outcome of the relationship, with infrastructure like TANAP and the Southern Gas Corridor serving as buffers against global uncertainty and tools for regional balancing. Namig Mammadov reinforces this by detailing Azerbaijan's pivotal role in ensuring Türkiye's energy security, reducing Ankara's dependence on less reliable markets. Efe Can Gürcan, Mecnun Tarık Yılmaz, and Ayşegül Komsuoğlu analyze the partnership through the lens of "post-hegemonic multipolarity," illustrating how their connectivity projects, such as the Middle Corridor, facilitate South-South cooperation and generate new regional poles of influence.

The volume also addresses the cultural and soft power dimensions that sustain the alliance. Sarkhan Khavari proposes a shift from rigid ideological "grand narratives" to a flexible "communicative Turkishness" suitable for the postmodern era, arguing "that Turkic unity in the 21st century cannot rest on ideological hegemony but must instead emerge through voluntary cultural cooperation, network-based relationships, and shared symbolic platforms." Faig Alakbarli traces the

intellectual history of Turkic unity, explains the origins and spread of common tenets of Turkism such as the triple formula of “Turkification, Islamization, and modernization” in the works of key intellectuals such as Ağaoğlu and Huseynzade, and asserts that the “increase in the number of independent Turkic states from one (Türkiye) to six (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) towards the end of the 20th century” set the stage for “postmodern political-philosophical Turkism” in the form of the Turkic Council and the Organization of Turkic States (OTS), which is becoming a new center of power based on shared heritage. Meliha Altunışık examines the OTS as an instrument of “identity-based regionalism,” where Türkiye leverages cultural proximity to achieve strategic autonomy through the construction of “Turkic actorness,” which is an increasingly influential and visible form of geopolitical subjectivity across Eurasia.

Finally, specific cultural and humanitarian case studies enrich the narrative. Hikmat Guliyev explores the “Wise Old Man” archetype in folklore, well-known as the “dede” figure in Turkic folklore across Eurasia (e.g., Dede Korkut), as a psychosemantic model of creation that underpins the shared cultural consciousness of both nations. Aynur Mahmud highlights the literary contributions of poet Bakhtiyar Vahabzadeh, who served as a “herald of freedom” and a bridge between the two societies, well-known for his poems such as “Azerbaycan-Türkiye”, “Mən Türkəm” and “Allah Məni Belə Ağlat.” Huseyn Huseynov discusses library cooperation as a vehicle for preserving shared memory and cultural diplomacy. Roida Rzayeva investigates the role of digital diplomacy and the “symbolic capital of culture” in countering information warfare, pointing to the formation of a common “Turkic soft power” based on shared values, culture, and political activism. Ceyhun Agayev addresses the critical issue of the repatriation of Western Azerbaijanis, who were forcibly displaced from “the territory currently known as the Republic of Armenia,” framing it as a joint strategy of the Turkish and Azerbaijani diasporas to restore historical justice and protect human rights.

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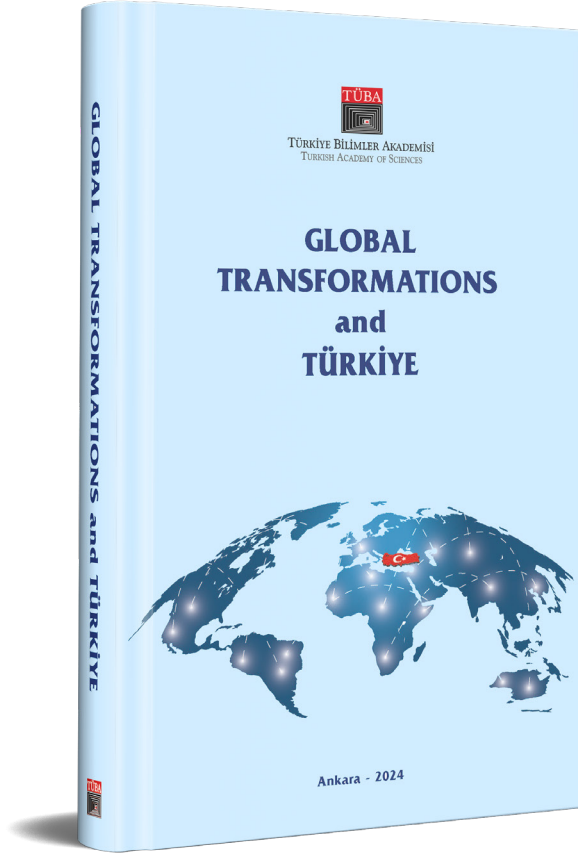
*Turkish Young Academy, President / Turkish National Defence University*

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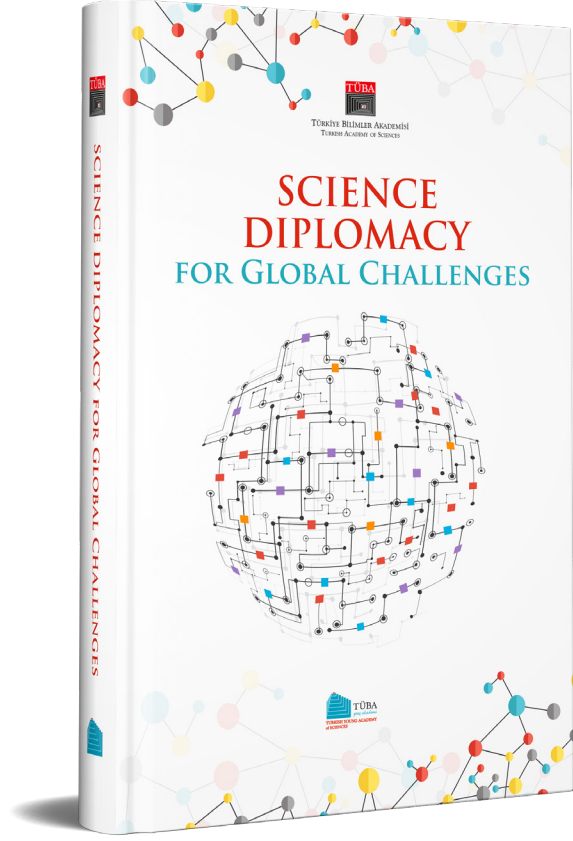
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The relationship between Azerbaijan and Türkiye go far beyond the ordinary bilateral relations between two states and nations. The very emergence of Azerbaijan and Türkiye as modern nation-states at the world stage following World War I was deeply intertwined. Azerbaijani-Turkish relations restarted following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, with Türkiye becoming the first country to officially recognize the independence of Azerbaijan. 1990s and 2000s witnessed the pioneering efforts of Turkish and Azerbaijani actors in laying the groundwork for both bilateral and multilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan, Türkiye, and other Turkic states and their neighbors. Turkish-Azerbaijani relations reached an exceptionally high standard of multidimensional alliance during and after the liberation of Karabakh with the Second Karabakh War in 2020.

The geopolitical landscape of the twenty-first century is undergoing a profound transformation, characterized by the decline of unipolar hegemony and the emergence of a multipolar, multilayered international order. Within this shifting paradigm, the bilateral relationship between Türkiye and Azerbaijan has evolved from a sentimental bond of ethnic kinship into a robust, institutionalized strategic alliance that acts as a primary stabilizer in the South Caucasus and a driving force for the broader Turkic world. This volume offers a comprehensive examination of this unique partnership, exploring its historical roots, cultural depths, and geopolitical ramifications.

This collection is particularly timely and significant for several reasons. First, it challenges the conventional view that the Türkiye-Azerbaijan relationship is driven solely by emotional nationalism. Instead, the contributors demonstrate that this axis represents a model of “bottom-up regionalism,” where non-hegemonic powers design new rules, corridors, and identities to suit their strategic priorities independent of global superpowers. Second, the book explains how cultural heritage and linguistic affinity form a “symbolic capital” that is converted into “hard” geopolitical assets, such as energy security and military cooperation. Third, the volume situates the South Caucasus within the broader context of global multipolarity. It analyzes how the Türkiye-Azerbaijan alliance navigates the complex triangle of Russia, Iran, and the West, while simultaneously spearheading the institutionalization of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS). The book offers a holistic view of how these two nations are not merely surviving in a chaotic world order but actively defining it. This book is essential in providing a multi-disciplinary lens—ranging from neoclassical realism and constructivism to psychosemantics and digital diplomacy—to understand how two nations have managed to synthesize their shared history with modern state-building to reshape the Eurasian map.



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