

France's "Neocolonial Practices" in South Caucasus. Threatens Russia's Security Interests?

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Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev [condemned](#) France for its neocolonial practices in his speech at the Non-Aligned Movement's (NAM) Summit that was held in his country's capital of Baku earlier this week. He said that

"France is trying to impose the same ill practice (of neocolonialism in Africa) in the region of South Caucasus by supporting Armenian separatism in Karabakh region of Azerbaijan and by means of geopolitical rivalry, foreign military presence and colonial policy of 'Orientalism'."

Those who aren't all that familiar with the [Karabakh Conflict](#) probably don't know that one of the world's most powerful and hyper-nationalist Armenian diasporas resides in France, where it's captured control of that Western European Great Power's policy towards the South Caucasus. This influence network exploits Paris as their state-level proxy for pressuring Prime Minister Pashinyan against agreeing to a peace treaty with Azerbaijan while encouraging him to retain Yerevan's informal claims to Karabakh.

On the one hand, he's made to fear that this hyper-nationalist diaspora will provoke a [Color Revolution](#) against him on the pretext that he "sold out" should he finally resolve this three-decade-long issue, while he's also being made to think that he has the French state's support for holding out indefinitely. It's within this context and [amidst rumors](#) that France is considering arming Armenia or has already secretly done so that President Aliyev publicly condemned Paris during this year's NAM Summit.

There was no way that he could remain silent in the face of this Western European Great Power's challenge to his rising Global South state's sovereignty, especially since France is part of the OSCE Minsk Group that's supposed to formally remain neutral in this conflict like Russia impressively has thus far. About that, Moscow refused to intervene in Yerevan's support during the 2020 Continuation War over this territory, which later prompted Pashinyan to say that Armenia [might consider leaving the CSTO](#).

The Kremlin's stance was based on its obligation to remain neutral in this conflict per its role in the OSCE Minsk Group, respect for international law since Karabakh is universally recognized as Azerbaijani territory, and the pragmatism of not making an enemy out of friendly Azerbaijan. By contrast, the Elysee's stance has been hijacked by the hyper-nationalist Armenian diaspora to be one of informal support for Yerevan, associated disrespect for international law, and thus partisanship over pragmatism.

Russia and France are already fiercely competing for influence in Africa, where the former's "[Democratic Security](#)" policies help its partners fully complete their decolonization processes while the latter's neocolonialism seeks to keep them subjugated as vassals. Their rivalry is now rapidly expanding to the South Caucasus as Paris takes a stronger position in support of indefinitely freezing the Karabakh Conflict while Moscow has increased its efforts to encourage a political solution as soon as possible.

This geostrategic region risks being destabilized by France's attempt to replicate its neocolonial divide-and-rule policy there. The worst-case scenario is that its carrot-and-stick campaign against Pashinyan leads to the outbreak of another hot war, while the comparatively better but still negative scenario is that Paris "poaches" Armenia from Moscow's "sphere of influence". The first can occur by miscalculation while the second could be spun as "compensation for selling out Karabakh under Kremlin pressure".

Both scenarios threaten Russia's security interests since another hot war could lead to a multitude of unpredictable consequences that distract from its [special operation](#) in Eastern Europe while losing Armenia to NATO (whether officially or otherwise) could bring the [New Cold War](#) to the South Caucasus. The best-case scenario of convincing Pashinyan to agree to a peace treaty remains difficult to pull off so long as he's placed under such intense pressure from the radical diaspora-captured French state.

There's no simple solution either since that influence network's sway over the Armenian government and society, whether directly expressed or indirectly pushed via their French proxy, isn't going away. President Aliyev wouldn't have used the attention given to him across the Global South during this week's NAM Summit in Baku to condemn French neocolonialism in the South Caucasus if he thought that this problem will soon disappear on its own.

Azerbaijan is able to speak more candidly about this subject than Russia can due to the diplomatic sensitivities of the latter's allied relationship with Armenia, which makes the Kremlin reluctant to present itself as competing with Paris there out of concern that its words might be manipulated by its rivals. Openly acknowledging this geopolitical reality could lead to hysterical claims of Russia losing influence there and/or harboring its own neocolonial intentions, both of which are against its soft power interests.

Nevertheless, President Aliyev's words still align with Russian interests since they serve to rally the developing world against France by showing the scope of its neocolonialism, which is now threatening the former Soviet space just like it's threatened the West-Central African one for decades already. Foreign pressure won't get the hyper-nationalist diaspora that's captured control of the French state to abandon their geopolitical project, but it can show truly neutral policymakers the costs of continuing it.

France shouldn't allow its interests abroad to be dictated by any influence group since they

should solely be decided after sober expert assessments from every angle. Kindling a foreign conflict just to please a particular lobbying group is irresponsible and discredits French policy, which had hitherto attempted to reset its engagement with the Global South after President Emmanuel Macron recently signaled his interest in attending this year's BRICS Summit.

As was analyzed [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#), that was always nothing but a ploy to pull the wool over developing countries' eyes since France's ongoing proxy wars against Russia in Africa and Eastern Europe proved that nothing has truly changed with respect to its neocolonial policy. That said, a lot of the Mainstream Media and even the [Alt-Media Community](#) hadn't covered this perspective and instead speculated about [the positive outcomes](#) that could emerge from him potentially attending that event.

This [wishful thinking](#) was dispelled upon President Aliyev using the worldwide podium afforded to him by Azerbaijan hosting this year's NAM Summit to raise maximum awareness of the threat that French neocolonialism poses to developing countries. Russia's relations with Armenia are complicated so it can't be expected to publicly endorse his assessment of France's pernicious role in the South Caucasus, but it's certainly sending a wink of approval in his direction since he candidly said what its diplomats couldn't.

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