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HOW NAGORNO KARABAKH'S FALL COULD HELP ARMENIA - NEWSWEEK - 03.10.2023

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Blog No: 58
04.10.2023

Newsweek (3 October 2023)

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Azerbaijan's military conquest in late September of the tiny, self-proclaimed Armenian separatist republic of Nagorno Karabakh has provoked displays of grief and rage in Armenia's capital of Yerevan. Poignant images of thousands of ethnic Armenians fleeing the mountainous enclave with possessions tied to their car roofs have captured global sympathy.

Yet in realpolitik terms, the dissolution of the Karabakh separatist government is a win for Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. In recent years, the three-decade-old breakaway government, representing an estimated 120,000 ethnic Armenians, had become a political burden and a barrier to regional peace and integration.

In this sense, it has been a blessing for the besieged Armenian leader that Russian President Vladimir Putin's attention has been elsewhere. Ever since the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union, Russia has ostensibly been Armenia's close ally and the separatists' protector, sending peacekeepers to the enclave in 2020 and guaranteeing transit on the single road connecting it to Armenia. But Russia has also used the separatist enclave to pressure both Armenia and Azerbaijan. This is a tried-and-true Russian technique used with breakaway territories throughout the former Soviet Union, including in Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova. In the Azerbaijan conflict, whenever Yerevan or Baku strayed too far from the Russian policy line, Moscow would threaten to step up or cut military support

for the region. This dynamic made both countries dependent on Moscow.

To read the rest of the article, please click: https://www.newsweek.com/how-nagorno-karabakhs-fall-could-help-armenia-opinion-1831816

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To cite this article: Joseph EPSTEIN. 2026. "HOW NAGORNO KARABAKH'S FALL COULD HELP ARMENIA - NEWSWEEK - 03.10.2023." Center For Eurasian Studies (AVİM), Blog No.2023 / 58. October 04. Accessed January 18, 2026. https://avimbulten.org/Blog/HOW-NAGORNO-KARABAKH-S-FALL-COULD-HELP-ARMENIA-NEWSWEEK-03-10-2023

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