
Integration Aspirations Of Armenia And Some Issues Of The Military And Political Security Of The Republic Of Armenia And NKR

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Both Moscow and Brussels, which diplomatically and ornately state that there are no contradictions between the integration of Armenia in European and Customs Unions, nevertheless, hint that the suit of documents necessary for signing the EU Association Agreement and entering Customs Union contain some insuperable contradictions, which in fact present RA and NKR with a crucial dilemma of choice.

In fact, formally the point is not "either/or"; the pivotal problem is that Armenia has to make a choice of a main vector of its integration, meanwhile the additional vector of political and, firstly, economic cooperation will be inferior.

At the same time it looks like Moscow and Yerevan do not quite clearly understand mutual reaction to the integration aspiration of Armenia.

It seems to be caused particularly by two main key divergences.

Firstly, today the same situation as in 90s and early 2000s when Russia ensured Armenia's military security and in economic and political sphere the West played key role, is not possible. Both the situation in economy and policy of these countries, power centers and Russia (its geopolitical weight) have changed. Today Moscow regards ally relations exclusively as common military-political and economic complex.

Secondly, Armenia considers signing of the EU Association Agreement as another step in the direction of strengthening of its complementary foreign policy and Moscow considers it as another step to the moving stairway after which Yerevan will have little chances to "jump off" and Armenia will inevitably become an ally and partner of the EU, i.e.

Russia's geopolitical competitor, no matter what the diplomats and politicians say.

On this assumption Russia, seeing that pro-European moods if not among the majority in general, but at least among the majority of media-active representatives of the expert community of Armenia are prevailing, sharply activated its policy in regard to Armenia in several directions simultaneously. In particular:

It intensified negotiations on all the joint military-political and military technical projects which are on different stages of implementation; It supplied heavy offensive arms worth \$1 billion to the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan. They informed about it in the June. This, on the one hand marked the process of marketisation of its relations not only with Baku but also with its military and political ally in the region - Yerevan, and on the other hand it strengthened Armenia's dependence on military technical and moreover military and political support of Russia in Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.

Russia is not the only but one of the main suppliers of weapons to Armenia

and Azerbaijan. The fact of selling large amount of weapons by Russia - co-chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group, which is responsible for Nagorno-Karabakh settlement by peaceful means, affords ground for diplomatic rhetoric, but this will not change the situation because race of armaments began in the region long ago. And not only Russia but Turkey (by the way, it is also a member of the OSCE Minsk Group) supplied arms to Azerbaijan too.

But in this case Russia - Collective Security Treaty Organization member, supplied weapons to Armenia which is member of the CSTO too, and to Azerbaijan - which is not the CSTO member and which is in the state of war with Armenia. Though according to the Article 2 of the Collective Security Treaty "member-states will consult with each other on key issues of international security, which affect their interests, and coordinate their stances" and nothing more.

The similar example is the military sales by the NATO member countries to Turkey, which is also a NATO member country and to Cyprus, which is not a member of NATO and part of its territory is occupied by Turkey.

And Great Britain and the US used to arm Pakistan - their CEATO ally (South-East Asia Treaty Organization, 1955-1977) and its rival India in the period between escalations of the longstanding conflict and imposing an embargo during the full-fledged military operations (Second Kashmir War in 1965 and Third Indo-Pakistani War in 1971).

For Moscow it is both policy and business.

Business:

- It does not lose solvent Azerbaijan as a market for its weapons and military equipment;
- It boosts its military industrial complex not only in the aspect of production but also in the aspect of guarantee and post-guarantee maintenance, modification, after market support, supply of ammunition, etc.
- It receives additional financial dividends from training of the operators of the modern weapons systems, etc.

Policy:

- It consolidates its positions:

in military and technical cooperation with (at least) Azerbaijan; over the whole range of military-technical, military-political and military-economic cooperation with Armenia. After the \$1 billion worth military sales to Azerbaijan, re-equipment and modification of both the 102nd Russian military base in Armenia and Armenian Armed Forces are expected. In particular, it has already been stated about initiating additional armament of the RA Air Force with combat aircrafts. Besides, part of the armaments, military equipment, ammunition and components will be produced at the military industrial facilities of Armenia. It is clear that re-armament and modification will be carried out with the consideration of current needs and broad range of equipment which was supplied or is planned to be supplied to Azerbaijan;

- Russia strengthens its military and political presence in the South Caucasus region in general: Consecutive visits of the secretary of National Security Council of Russia N.Patrushev (June 23-25) and Secretary General of the CSTO N.Bordyuzha (June 26-27) to Armenia took place. During these visits a number of documents were signed and several projects, which

promote not only bilateral military-technical and military-political partnership but also regional growth of significance of Armenia, were initiated.

In particular, regional infrastructure of joint reserves will be created - "ArmRosreserv". The topicality of this project is conditioned by the increase of the productivity and level of the military-industrial cooperation between Armenia and Russia and will allow solving crucial problems of ensuring security of Armenia, first of all economic one, and it will also be of regional significance because its infrastructure is of civilian designation (food, technical equipment, etc.)

During the visit the Secretary of National Security Council of Armenia A.Baghdasaryan and CSTO Secretary General N.Bordyuzha signed a protocol, which consists of 20 points, stipulating deepening of the cooperation in some directions within the framework of the CSTO of both bilateral and multi-lateral character. It is supposed to create:

- special rescue units;
- mechanisms of cooperation between police agencies, constant dialogue between special services and law-enforcement agencies;
- new joint enterprises in the sphere of military industry.

Besides, within the framework of decision of the CSTO about the creation of the CSTO Troops, Collective Air Force - from Armenian Air Force units and air units of the 102nd Russian military base will be formed. Their goals will be:

- Implementation of troops carrier missions to the necessary regions during the operations carried out by the CSTO
- Air defence of the CSTO operations.

And in general the CSTO Air Force will support armies of the member countries during the protection of their sovereignty and territorial integrity,

During the visit the issues of strengthening and modernization of the Air Force of the RA, air units of the 102nd Russian military base in Gyumri and modernization and re-equipment of the Antiaircraft Defence of Armenia were also discussed.

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Currently the military security of the Republic of Armenia is guaranteed by:

- Armed Forces of the Rep. of Armenia and Army of Defence of NKR;
- Membership in the CSTO, and first of all military-political and military-technical cooperation with Russia, 102nd Russian military base and "Armenia" tactical group of Border Troops of FSS (Federal Security Service) of Russia;
- Availability, maintenance, readiness and constant modernization of the engineering facilities along the confrontation line in the area of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

At the same time, as the Russian emperor Alexander III stated at the end of

the 19th century: "Russia has only two allies - its army and fleet", Armenia, generally speaking, also has only two allies - Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia and Army of Defence of NKR. And these two pieces are of paramount importance at the chess board of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

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