
Armenia Between CSTO And NATO

By Susanna Petrosyan

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Experts' attitude to the recent visit to Armenia by the special envoy of NATO Secretary General in the South Caucasus and Central Asia, James Appathurai was ambiguous. Some of them have pessimistic views on the further cooperation between Armenia and NATO, since President Serge Sargsyan stated on Armenia's intention to join the Customs Union. According to them, the EU and NATO try to put Armenia aside and actually reject it. The other group of experts is sure that the struggle for the region between the leading political centers of the world is still acute, and Armenia is not isolated. And Appathurai's visit confirms this.

Appathurai expressed gratitude to the authorities in Armenia for their contribution to the peacemaking processes in Kosovo and Afghanistan, saying that Armenia was a member of the international community. He confirmed NATO's desire to encourage cooperation between Armenia and NATO in the sphere of reforms. NATO helps Armenia with military education and meet high international standards; with struggling against corruption in the sphere of purchases for Armed Forces; with the development of a new defense strategy of Armenia. However, it is not clear how NATO can help with development of the defense strategy, if its representatives don't know all necessary details.

According to the former defense minister of Armenia Vagarshak Arutyunyan, in this case it can mean only methodological support because crucial issues of elimination of threats by the Armenian army and the CSTO have already been defined by the National Security Strategy.

Very notable was Appathurai's statement that Armenia's membership in CSTO and its desire to join the CU didn't prevent its cooperation with NATO which didn't oppose the fact that Armenia chose Russia as a guarantor of its security.

"Cooperation between Armenia and NATO doesn't prevent cooperation between Armenia and Russia, or the CSTO. The top authorities of either CSTO or NATO have always stated that they see no contradiction in this case. Armenia has never tried to play on contradictions between military and political alliances operating in the region; it has always tried to combine cooperation with them," the deputy head of the institute "The Caucasus", Sergey Minasyan says.

Cooperation between Armenia and NATO positively influences the training of Armenian soldiers. Together with NATO Armenia opened a mine clearance center where combat engineers are trained; NATO helps Armenia with modernization of military education infrastructure.

According to some information, they establish training classes for officers and tutors of Vazgen Sargsyan Military Institute and Monte Melkonyan Military School. However, the problem of security is still priority for Armenia. At the same time, NATO has no liabilities to Armenia in the sphere of security guarantees. The frameworks of IPAP (Individual Partnership Action Plan) do not require military aide, so the program cannot be an alternative to the Collective Security Treaty which requires clear liabilities toward providing Armenia's security.

Moreover, NATO representatives have many times stated that they have no

intention to provide Armenia's security.

Armenia has a three-level security system which is based on three documents. The first is the treaty between Armenia and Russia of 1997 On Friendship and Cooperation. The second is the treaty on the Russian military base situated in Armenia; it says that Russia is obliged to provide Armenia's security and provide modern military machineries to Armenia. The third document is the CSTO. So, the only guarantor of Armenia's security is Russia.

<http://vestnikkavkaza.net/analysis/politics/46990.html>

Analysis: Armenia Combines Cooperation With Former Soviet Allies And NATO To Boost Its Security

By NAIRA HAYRUMYAN

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On October 17 Tsahkadzor hosted the 35th meeting of the Council of heads of security and intelligence services of the CIS countries. The same day, perhaps not as a coincidence, Yerevan saw a gathering of heads of information and resource centers of NATO in post-Soviet countries.

President Serzh Sargsyan met with both the heads of the delegations attending the meeting of the CIS countries, and the special representative of the NATO Secretary General for the South Caucasus and Central Asia, James Appathurai. Sargsyan spoke with them about common security threats, noting that the main challenges for Armenia are the "escalation of confrontation, the rhetoric of hatred and an arms race in conditions of prolonged unresolved conflicts."

The issue of security is becoming a dominant theme in the foreign relations of Armenia. It is for security reasons that Armenia made its decision to join the Russia-led Customs Union (even though it is already a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization - CSTO).

If the main problem of Armenia's security is the arms race in the region, then Armenia's security partners should be, in theory, the countries and the alliances that contain this arms race. Meanwhile, every day brings new information on military contracts between Russia and Azerbaijan. In August, Azeri President Ilham Aliyev revealed that the sum of these contacts has reached \$4 billion.

With the beginning of the military conflict in the region in 1988 the United States adopted Section 907 to the Freedom Support Act, banning the sale of arms to Azerbaijan. For 25 years now Baku has failed to achieve the repealing of this section: its effect is only partially suspended, and the weapons sold to Azerbaijan can only be used for the protection of the Caspian Sea.

Meanwhile, Armenia continues to be in one and the same military-political bloc with Russia, while its cooperation with NATO is limited to Individual Partnership. Though, Armenian armed forces have limited participation in peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan and Kosovo and Yerevan plans to continue promoting peacekeeping in Afghanistan beyond 2014. However, Yerevan on every occasion declares that it has no long-term goal of joining NATO. Though, while receiving the NATO official in Yerevan, President

Sargsyan said that close cooperation with the Alliance significantly helps Armenia to improve its system of defense and security.

It is noteworthy that the forums related to security take place in Armenia in the period when there is a public discourse on the likelihood of CSTO peacekeepers entering Karabakh and the transition of Karabakh to the "zone of influence" of Russia. At the meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs Edward Nalbandian NATO's Appathurai confirmed the Alliance's support for efforts being made by the OSCE Minsk Group to resolve the problem.

Meanwhile, Iranian Ambassador to Armenia Mohammad Reis wished to meet with Armenia's National Security Council Secretary Artur Baghdasaryan the same day. Analysts believe that Iran is concerned about the rumored intention to change the status quo in the Nagorno-Karabakh region and the possible stationing of foreign troops there. The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic borders on Iran and Tehran will have to reckon with any foreign troops in Nagorno-Karabakh.

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