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# Blockaded Armenia Should Become The Only Country To Have An Opportunity To Develop Security With The CSTO And Economy With The EU

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ArmInfo's interview with Karabakh War Hero, Major General Arkady Ter-Tadevosyan (Commandos)

Armenia's accession to the Customs Union has evoked polemics among those who support the idea and those who oppose it. Russophiles claim that there is no alternative to Russia as a guarantor of Armenia's national security. How much will the accession to the Customs Union strengthen our security?

Defense capacity of Armenia and NKR depends on the level of interaction with the CSTO, which we are increasing constantly. All our arms are made in Russia. We continue to receive arms from Russia. And Azerbaijan does the same, unfortunately. The 102nd Russian military base in Gyumri is another element of Armenia's security. To assess the real level of threats to security of Nagorno Karabakh, one should, at least, be there. In 1993 Baku developed an ideal plan of occupying Karabakh - Shimshit (blitzkrieg) - with help of the Turkish General Staff. That plan of attacks from five directions did not work then and the enemy was defeated. Azerbaijan has some alternative plans, but the best one is "Shimshit." It has been tested many times during military exercises. Baku has no better plan than "Shimshit," given that the north of Karabakh is protected with mountain chains, while Martakert region, the eastern part of NKR's defense, remains open. The North of Karabakh is strongly protected with mountains and Azerbaijan's 'Shimshit' will face strong resistance. Azerbaijan will suffer big losses. The only difference is that many civilians will fall victim to that aggression on the Armenian party, while Azerbaijan will lose mainly militaries. Anyway, it is evident that a new war will end in another, final defeat of Azerbaijan. In Turkey they also realize that probability. Therefore, Turks and Azeris have developed the project 'one nation-one army.' They try to improve their Armed Forces on the basis of the NATO standards. They take joint strategic steps, create military unions, and fulfill the same missions. It is a very serious project that cannot but inspire us with real concerns.

There is no alternative to the close alliance with Russia. Maybe, cooperation and union with Europe would be more effective for Armenia's economic development, but never for security. Withdrawal of the Russian military base from Armenia will not contribute to the country's security.

Well, but there are also other security systems, NATO, for instance...

Blockaded by its two neighbors denying the international law Armenia has occurred in a specific situation. Neither the EU nor Russia can now influence Turkey and Azerbaijan on the matter. In such situation, I think, Armenia should become an exception in geopolitics and get an opportunity to develop security with the CSTO and economy with the EU.

This concept will make it possible for Armenia to minimize security risks and improve its economic situation. Therefore, it is necessary to separate economy from politics.

The Association Agreement aims to reduce Russia's influence on the Eastern Partnership countries, including Armenia...

Sure, this policy has come to replace the 'cold war' and today the unipolar world managed by the USA is gradually becoming bipolar and even tripolar. And this process is impossible without projects like the EU-initiated Association Agreement. Therefore, integration trends are inevitable, but the US fights those trends not to lose its hegemony in the world. That is why, there have been disagreements and contradictions over Armenia's integration vector at the top level. As far as I know, there were disagreements even at the session of the National Security Council and the Parliament of Armenia. So, we need a special approach by superpowers.

However, there is no such approach...the last time, we were hinted at that fact in Novo-ogarevo on 3 September.

Moscow will not oppose successful development of the trade and economic ties of Armenia and the EU, of course, if in Brussels they go on such step. I don't think that the meeting of the Armenian and Russian presidents in Novo-Ogarevo went smoothly. Nevertheless, the presidents managed to agree on the perspectives of the existing economic cooperation of Armenia and the EU and the military-political cooperation with Russia. The EU and USA also exert certain pressure on Armenia.

Politics and the truth are often incompatible, which can be seen in our relations with Russia, USA and Europe. Therefore, we should act on the basis of what we have now: Russian frontier guards on the Armenian-Turkish border, security provision by the CSTO. In such situation, it is Armenia that must provide security to Nagorno Karabakh.

Armenia's possible accession to the Customs Union implies Yerevan's refusal from political cooperation with the EU and USA i.e. from counterbalance. Russia is not the Soviet Union. We must remember that fact. Are there any guarantees that Moscow will not "present" Baku with a couple of regions of NKR for its own interests?

The USSR and Turkey used to divide Armenian territories once, and we see the result of the division. In this context, a new contract between Russia and Turkey, which has been recently made by Dmitriy Medvedev, causes anxiety, as it was signed at the day of the shameful Moscow Treaty made in 1921. Fortunately, today the world is a little bit different. We have the UN, and a viewpoint of small countries means something in international organizations. This is a straw we hold onto, we have got no other one. For this reason, Armenia needs strict national programs for protection of its national interests. We need a course, which the Armenians of the world will drive forward by joint efforts. Our problem is that Armenia does not have such programs.

What was the goal of selling weapons for \$4 billion to Azerbaijan? Who besides us will those Russian 'smerches' be used against?

They say that there is no other sense than a financial one in the sale of weapons for \$4 billion by Russia to Azerbaijan. However, I cannot understand the logic of such a step by Moscow against friendly Armenia.

Do you think that AR1A systems will recompense acquisition of the Russian "Smerch" systems by Azerbaijan?

We have already acquired and keep acquiring Chinese AR1A multiple launch rocket systems. It is not announced officially, but following the recent

delivery of arms to Azerbaijan, Moscow began supplying arms also to Armenia.

I don't think that acquisition of AR1A systems was Yerevan's response to delivery of Russian arms to Azerbaijan. Negotiations were held yet before that deal. We have never kept that in secret. Military balance isn't the point, though AR1A is a very effective system hitting both the manpower and infrastructures. It is much more important for Azerbaijan to have trucks for its tanks, if they decide to 'make a stay' in Karabakh. There are very few such trucks and even if Aliyev acquires several thousands more tanks, they will stick in a "tank traffic jam" in Karabakh. Suffice it to look at the map of Nagorno Karabakh to make sure that there are very limited opportunities for application of military hardware in Karabakh.

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