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Karabakh in the geopolitics of the leading countries

DOI: 10.52340/isj.2022.26.07

The "separation" of the seemingly "allies" of Russia and Armenia is a matter of actual decision. This is most eloquently demonstrated by the way in which Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinian has been behaving during the current traditional summit of the CIS heads of state in St Petersburg. It is obvious that the expected meeting of Vladimir Putin, Ilham Aliyev and Nikol Pashinyan in a tripartite format within the framework of this summit did not take place precisely because of Pashinyan's position. Pashinyan has finally bet on the West to mediate with Azerbaijan. Prior to this Nikol Pashinyan accused the Russian troops stationed in Karabakh as peacekeepers of "inaction".

It is true that Russian peacekeepers are inactive - they do not carry out their functions and do not allow Azerbaijani environmentalists to inspect the development of mineral deposits on their territory. However, the Armenian side would like these peacekeepers to act as an occupation army on Azerbaijani territory in the Armenian interest (similar to the way they "peacemaked" in Abkhazia and Samachablo in their time), which in the position Russia finds itself in today, having thrown all its forces "on the Ukrainian front", is no longer feasible.

Also, Nikol Pashinyan has already raised the issue of Armenia's withdrawal from the CSTO, which would simply ruin the organisation. This will hit not only Russia, but also Belarus, which is closely integrated with Russia in the military sphere.

However, despite all the attempts of the Kremlin, Belarus does not let itself be dragged into the aggression against Ukraine, confining itself to granting its territories to the "ally". And it is precisely the Armenian lobby in the Kremlin that insists on Belarus' participation in the aggression against Ukraine. This could provide an opportunity to "free up Russian forces to protect Armenian interests in the South Caucasus.

As a matter of fact, the collapse of the CSTO initiated by Armenia will inevitably raise the question of Belarus' responsibility for the war in Ukraine, even in the format of granting its territories to the aggressor, and referring to the "formal alliance" within the CSTO will not work. Apparently, this is why it is very important for Minsk to finally decide whether it is with Russia and the CSTO (with the prospect of joining the notorious "Union State" with Russia together with Belarus to share as much responsibility for the Kremlin's geopolitical adventures with Russia and Belarus as possible) or Armenia "on its own". And then the authorities in Minsk will in fact already denounce their relations with Russia within the framework of the "Union State", and "save themselves".

Not coincidentally, on the eve of the summit of the CIS heads of state in St. Petersburg, Belarusian Ambassador to Yerevan Aliaksandr Konyuk made a statement: "The Union State lacks a third country. I was watching and watching how our brothers Armenians reacted, and they supported me," Konyuk said. Clearly referring to the "Armenian brothers" among the revanchists who are still betting on Russia. Further elaborating on this thought, he said that the existence of the "Union State" is a determining factor of military security for the participants of such a "state".

"Since Putin's arrival, S-400 and Iskander air defence systems have been put on alert. Moreover, Russia is assisting in the training of combat aircraft crews that carry special weapons. Here it is - the concreteness of the integration process within the Union State. Military bases are being established along our border, therefore we have no other choice with Russia," added the Ambassador of Belarus to Armenia.

Therefore, we have no other choice," added the Armenian ambassador to Armenia. The reaction of the Armenian media and social networks to the Belarusian proposal against the background of wild Russophobia in the country was predictably negative. In the social networks, the Belarusian proposal was referred to with obscene words and was "sent to hell" not only by Minsk, but also by Moscow. The Armenian nationalists have not been talking about any "gratitude to Russia" for a long time. Most likely, Belarus' offer of Armenia's membership in the "union state" will only accelerate the final and irrevocable U-turn of the already pro-Western authorities in Yerevan from Russia to the U.S. and France, and respectively marginalize the pro-Russian revanchists of the Karabakh clan headed by Robert Kocharyan even more.

Let us recall that one of the main formal reasons for the current Russian aggression against Ukraine was Ukraine's intention to join NATO and "the prospect of NATO troops appearing near Russia's borders". Moreover, Russian "patriots" of Armenian nationality, starting from the head of the Russian Foreign Ministry Sergey Lavrov-Kalantarov and ending with propagandists like Margarita Simonyan, Tigran Keosayan, Semen Bagdasarov, Sarkis Tsaturyan and a dozen others, were most indignant about this prospect.

However, how would the Russian people react if they learned that those who were so indignant at the prospect of American bases and NATO troops in Ukraine and fomented war would themselves propose to introduce American and NATO troops in another post-Soviet republic? Namely, to Azerbaijan, to the territory of Karabakh in Azerbaijan, where Russian servicemen are currently on a peacekeeping mission. Their "great Russian patriots" propose to replace them with French and American troops. What is this but betrayal and the work of double agents for the very same USA and France, which are known to be key NATO countries?

This is after Russia, following the lead of such ideologues and propagandists, unleashed a fratricidal war with the closest people, Ukrainians, formally to prevent such bases and troops at its south-western borders. And here, the same "Russian patriots" propose such troops and bases near the southern borders. The same editor-in-chief of the Realist news agency, Sarkis Tsaturyan, told how to "end the blockade of 'Artsakh' by calling on the US and French military and opening the way to international recognition of the 'Armenian republic'".

Obviously, Sarkis Tsaturyan is no "patriot of Russia", although he earns quite a bit of money there; he is just an ordinary Armenian nationalist.

In principle, pro-Western Armenian nationalists (who simultaneously hate and curse Russia with the last words) demand introduction of French and American "peacekeepers" to Karabakh. But Sarkis Tsaturyan, judging by the materials of his "Realist" news agency, is not only a "patriot of Russia" but also an enemy of the West and "American imperialism".

And now this "patriot", like the last "Westerners" in Yerevan, also demands to introduce American troops in place of Russian ones. And, judging by his logic, not only to Karabakh, but, in the future, to Gyumri too. And all this to protect the interests of Armenians, or rather Armenian nationalists and "Artsakh" separatists, as Russia is not able to cope with such protection.

I would like to ask Sarkis Tsaturyan whether representatives of "the most ancient and long-suffering people" live not only in the Republic of Armenia and Azerbaijani Karabakh. They live in Moscow too. And the probability of being attacked by skinheads or robbers in the Moscow

suburbs and "bedroom" districts is much higher for them than the same risk in Karabakh. So, after that, should American and French troops be sent to Moscow? It turns out that "protection of Armenians" and their exorbitant nationalist ambitions is the "highest value" for which Russia as a power must sacrifice all its geopolitical interests?

Rivalry between France and Russia

Russian political analyst Sergei Markov forecasts escalation in Karabakh in the near future and directly suggests that there may be a "French trail" in this escalation: "Karabakh. Ruben Vardanyan is preparing to strike.

1. he gathers a mass action in Karabakh on 19 December.
2. It is highly probable that slogans to go by force to unblock the road and attack Azerbaijani environmentalists, whom the Armenian side denies the right to be called environmentalists.
3. After the mass clashes Ruben Vardanian will appeal to the EU and his main hope, France, to send their observers to the Karabakh region.
4. This is the plan to replace Russian observers in Karabakh with French ones.
5. France is now trying to "take Armenia away from Russia" in retaliation for Russia "taking away the Central African Republic and Mali and Burkina Faso" from France.
6. With Ruben Vardanian's arrival in Karabakh, the situation in Karabakh has escalated and is likely to further escalate. He will replace Russia with France. He has already replaced his Russian passport. I think he has already received a French passport," says the Russian political analyst.

Sergey Markov's mentioning of the conflict between Russia and France around the former French colonies in Africa is very interesting here. And this conflict has recently escalated "into a "hot terrorist phase", with the undermining of Russia's "overseer" in Central Africa, Dmitry Sytoy. In particular, another Russian political analyst, Stanislav Belkovsky, released the following information: "In CAR (Central African Republic), the head of the Russian House has been hospitalised (<https://t.me/infojetNEWS/10335>) in a serious condition after an assassination attempt. Dmitry Sity, the head of the Russian House cultural centre, was seriously wounded in the city of Bangui in the capital of the Central African Republic (CAR). He had received an anonymous parcel containing explosives. It was reported on the social media of the Commonwealth of Officers for International Security. The information was confirmed by the press attaché of the Russian Embassy in the CAR, Vladislav Ilyin. According to the commonwealth, Dmitry Syty received a parcel with an explosive substance; it exploded in his hands. The incident occurred on the morning of December 16. The head of the CAR police called the whole affair a terrorist attack.

E. V. Prigozhin released a statement (https://t.me/Prigozhin_hat/2228) which, among other things, called for France to be declared a sponsor of terrorism: "In the Central African Republic, which has been oppressed for hundreds of years by the French, who have been destroying the population and plundering the wealth of the CAR, the "Russian House" was opened on 1 February 2022. It was headed by Dmitry Sytny, a patriot of Russia and the CAR. On November 11, Dmitry Sity received a parcel from Togo with a photo of his son living in France. It contained a note saying that next time he would receive his son's head if "the Russians don't get off the African continent and open the doors to the French." Today a parcel arrived for him again. Despite all the safety instructions, Dmitry Sity, in a state of rage and thinking that his son's head was in the parcel, opened it. There was an explosion.

At the moment, Dmitry Syty's life is in great doubt. Russian doctors are doing all they can at Bangui hospital to save him. Before he lost consciousness, Dmitry Sytoy managed to say: "I saw a note: 'This is for you from all the French, the Russians will get out of Africa'.

I have already appealed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation to initiate the procedure of declaring France a state sponsor of terrorism as well as conducting a thorough investigation into the terrorist methods of France and its western allies - the US and others.

If Dmitry Syty survives, he will continue his fight and see with his own eyes how those who attempted to kill him will burn in the flames of history. If he dies, he will forever remain a symbol of this struggle. No Russian will ever retreat from the African continent until all the colonisers have withdrawn beyond the borders of their countries."

Meanwhile, Evgeny Prigozhin, head of Russia's largest and most successful (even judging by the fighting in Ukraine) private military campaign. In any case, despite the absolutely savage losses (the PMC does not spare the people, today, Prigozhin's Wagner PMC is advancing an average of 100-200 meters per day in Bakhmut and its surroundings), it has not suffered a crushing defeat so far.

According to many indications, it is the Wagner PMC that will play a key role in preparations for the winter "re-offensive" of the Russian troops from Belarus to Kiev (there is already information about the transfer of Russian mercenaries from the Wagner PMC to Belarus).

This also raises questions about the strange recent death of Belarusian Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makei, which some experts directly blame on the Russian security services. Meanwhile, Uladzimir Makei was known for his contacts with the Vatican and for the fact that he sought to remove Belarus as far as possible from the Russian influence. The Vatican, as we know, is geopolitically closely connected with France.

And so, against this background, Prigozhin, a "viceroy" close to Putin, is first blackmailed in Central Africa, demanding that "the Russians get out of Africa", and then demonstratively blasted by the French secret services. "Inconsistencies of action" and sometimes direct clashes of interests between the Kremlin and France are evident in many parts of the globe. At any rate, Vladimir Putin's "cook" and close confidant, Yevgeny Prigozhin, is the first politician close to the Kremlin to openly accuse France of "terrorist methods". Although such accusations had previously been unthinkable. To a certain extent, Russia and France have acted in concert with each other in various parts of the world, both in Africa and in the South Caucasus, up to a certain point. They also coordinated their actions on Iran. Today, against the background of the protests in Iran (which may well result in a transformation of power) and the temporary suspension of Iranian arms deliveries to Russia in November or early December 2022 (these deliveries began again some time ago), the disagreements between Moscow and Paris in Africa also do not look accidental. But the "landmark" region where Russian and French interests may diverge is certainly the South Caucasus. Here, the fact that Armenian nationalists are already betting more on Paris than on Moscow is visible to the naked eye. And the provocations in Karabakh, as well as the different reactions of Russia and France to them, may become a "watershed" which is fraught with a serious conflict between Moscow and Paris, previously allied in the "Armenian question". The current Armenian pro-Western government, led by Nikol Pashinyan, began blackmailing Russia with the collapse and loss of effectiveness of the CSTO bloc long before the 44-day war. In 2018, after Nikol Pashinian came to power in Armenia, CSTO secretary general Yuri Khachaturov was arrested. It was only after the intervention of the Russian foreign minister that Yuri Khachaturov was released on bail, but in fact the key figure in the CSTO was then held "hostage" by Pashinyan,

especially as Khachaturov could not leave Armenia, even on his own CSTO-related business. The CSTO only managed to unblock its work from early 2020, when Stanislav Zas from Belarus replaced Yuri Khachaturov as its secretary.

Pashinyan demanded that the CSTO should fight for Armenia against Azerbaijan in the same 44-day war and, along with this, fulfil the "orders" of its Western geopolitical "masters". Otherwise, how else to explain the fact that it was Pashinyan who initiated the deployment of CSTO contingent in Kazakhstan and insisted that there were Armenians there, and the Armenian lobby was clearly displeased with the rapid drawdown of the foreign military presence on the territory of Kazakhstan. What caused Pashinyan's interest in Kazakhstan at the time, it is difficult to say unequivocally. But it is doubtless that his French "friends" have such an interest. France is one of the leading operators of nuclear energy and nuclear fuel trade in the world, and it is interested in uranium deposits of Kazakhstan.

After Russia's aggression against Ukraine, where it was "stuck" in the war, Pashinyan first tried to force Russia to fulfil its "CSTO alliance obligations" again through military provocations (essentially organising a "second front" for Russia). When this failed, he decided to do the best he could to "serve" his Western masters, including the accelerated dismantling of the CSTO bloc from within. This unambiguously hits not only Russia, but also the peace process in the South Caucasus, where the involvement of new "players" only delays the signing of a peace treaty and the unblocking of communications. In Yerevan, as "host" of the CSTO summit, Nikol Pashinyan refused to sign a draft declaration of the CSTO Collective Security Council (CSTO) and a draft on joint assistance measures for Armenia. Regarding the latter, Pashinyan said that the submitted documents "do not contain a clear political assessment of Azerbaijan's actions," which, in his opinion, is "aggression against Armenia. Nikol Pashinyan believes that the absence of such an assessment creates opportunities for new offensive actions of the Azerbaijani side. According to Nikol Pashinyan, Yerevan "expects the CSTO to conduct political and diplomatic work with Azerbaijan for the withdrawal of troops from the sovereign territory of Armenia. That is, Pashinyan wants the CSTO to urge Azerbaijan to hand over to Armenia its border territories, which the Armenian nationalists consider "Armenian". Thus, Nikol Pashinian has once again posed the essentially ultimatum question "either the CSTO fights for Armenia against Azerbaijan, or it starts the break-up of the organisation from within". It is no coincidence that the "SVR General" telegram channel published interesting insider information after the CSTO summit in Yerevan, from which it follows that Russian President Vladimir Putin, who participated in the Yerevan meeting of heads of CSTO member states, set a task to keep this military bloc in a formal form at least until November 2023. That was the request the Russian president made to Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. Vladimir Putin asked the Kazakh and Armenian leaders not to suspend their membership in the CSTO until November next year. Tokayev promised to "consider" and "take into account" Putin's requests, while Pashinyan left the Russian president's requests unanswered.

Meanwhile, the CSTO summit in Yerevan was one of the most difficult political events for Putin in 2022. The Kremlin is well aware of the desire of the leaders of Kazakhstan and Armenia to leave the CSTO - the sooner the better. All the more so since Russia's "allies" in the CSTO are beginning to understand the inevitability of Russia's defeat in the war in Ukraine, which automatically puts an end to any prospects for the organisation's existence. All the more so since the CSTO summit coincided with the European Parliament resolution recognizing Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism, and few want to be in the same organization as a state with such a dubious status. At least, apart from Armenia, other countries are not forcing the collapse of the CSTO from

within and are not rigidly raising the issue of satisfying their claims to their neighbours by threatening to withdraw from the organisation. This issue is being raised more and more loudly in Armenia, where thousands of anti-Russian demonstrations demanding Armenia's withdrawal from the CSTO are clearly being organised at Pashinyan's instigation. It is clear that Pashinyan's government is not trying to accelerate "reconciliation" with its neighbours by kicking Russia and the CSTO out of the South Caucasus. On the contrary, Armenia wants to draw "new external forces" into the conflict. In fact, Pashinyan is working to replace the Russian military presence in the region with France, which is extremely dangerous for regional stability, since France is already creating artificial "zones of tension" in the Near and Middle East, and would not benefit from a quick peace deal and unblocking of communications in the region. More and more, there are signs that Yerevan realises that this is a unique opportunity for its state to make peace with Azerbaijan, recognise its internationally recognised borders and ensure peaceful coexistence with its neighbours. Although the revanchists are opposed to such a peace, history may not provide a second such chance. On 16 November 2022, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced that Armenia had proposed signing a framework peace agreement with Azerbaijan. It is likely that the "groundwork for the agreement" to be concluded on Georgian territory is being prepared by a delegation led by the speaker of the Armenian parliament, Alain Simonyan, currently on a three-day visit to Tbilisi. Preparation of the agreement with Azerbaijan and Georgia as mediator is one of the main topics of the visit.

MPs from the ruling parliamentary faction Civic Agreement openly speak of the possibility of signing a peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan on the territory of Georgia. MP from the ruling faction Gevorg Papoyan said that the place of signing of the peace treaty is a technical issue. "Whether the treaty will be signed in Tbilisi, Moscow, Washington, Brussels, Tehran is of secondary importance. What is important is whether a treaty will be signed in principle, and that depends first and foremost on Azerbaijan," he said. Faction Secretary Artur Hovhannisyanyan noted at a parliamentary briefing that different scenarios are possible. According to him, the process will show on what platform, in what format, within what timeframe and with what content the peace agreement will be signed. "By and large, there are no exceptions for us. Experience shows that we have rather warm relations with our Western colleagues, strategic partner Russia, Iran and Georgia. Hence, with the assistance of all our colleagues, we should move forward, and time will tell the rest," said Artur Hovhannisyanyan.

Interestingly, it is mainly outside forces that are trying to prevent the conclusion of the peace treaty that Armenia so desperately needs. First and foremost, France, where the Senate has raised the issue of "Artsakh" in its absolutely non-binding resolutions. A move to throw the Armenian society off the only path that can save their nation - the conclusion of a peace treaty.

However, the Armenian people realise that the divisive Parisians are far away. For France, Armenia is no more important than its former African colonies, which it continues to exploit with nothing but instability in return. Tbilisi, where peace may be concluded, is not far away, not to mention the fact that Armenia has lived all these years not thanks to France but thanks to Georgia and its "window on the outside world".

Conflict of Interest

At the beginning of October world events unfolded in a kaleidoscope, behind which it is difficult to trace a single logic at a glance. On October 6, 2022 in Prague, the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia not only met, mediated by European leaders, but also made historic statements about the conclusion in the near future of a peace treaty on the basis of recognition of the inviolability of borders and territorial integrity of each other. This means that the Zangezur corridor, which is of paramount geopolitical importance, will become operational in the near future.

In contrast to the Prague meeting, the visit of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev to Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in St. Petersburg on October 7, 2022, who was celebrating his 70th birthday on that day, was almost without special attention. Although here again the Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders found themselves sitting at the same table with the Russian president and the leaders of most other CIS countries, no special announcements were made. It became clear that Russia was finally ceding the role of 'chief moderator' of a settlement in the South Caucasus to the European Union and Turkey. But the most interesting events began on October 8, 2022, with the explosion on the Crimean bridge, which was symbolically important to the Kremlin and from the morning of October 10, 2022 another missile attack by Russia against Ukraine began. Certain forces clearly began to re-spin the flywheel of war, using as an excuse the sabotage of the Crimean bridge, as a site of local but important logistical infrastructure for Russia, especially to ensure aggression in Ukraine. The result is somewhat symbolic - Russia's geopolitical opponents are rolling back the Zangezur corridor, while Russia cannot ensure the security of even the only bridge to the occupied Crimea, which until recently was a source of pride for the Kremlin and the construction site of the century. There is a very skilful direction behind all these events.

One of the "interested parties" manifested itself both in the issue of trans-Eurasian corridors and in the issue of the war in Ukraine in a very unexpected way. But for some reason no one paid much attention to this manifestation. After the explosion on the Crimean bridge, former Interior Minister of Ukraine Arsen Avakov, who has long been forgotten, appeared in his telegram channel and reminded that he "predicted" this explosion in his recent interview posted on October 6, 2022 and even indicated its approximate timing (within three days). It can hardly be explained by mere 'bluster' of the former politician of 'first importance' in Ukraine who headed the Ministry of Internal Affairs for over 7 years.

But we must remember that Arsen Avakov is a direct protégé of the Vatican in Ukraine. And it was he who at one time introduced the current President of Ukraine Zelensky to the Pope. The most interesting thing is that on October 8-9, it was Avakov's compatriots, who unexpectedly "forgot" about "Artsakh", the Zangezur corridor and "genocide" in Russia, who called for "retaliatory strikes" for the Crimean bridge the most. Also on the eve of Russian missile strikes on Ukraine on October 10, 2022. "tipped" to the future by propagandists near Kremlin (including those working for the Armenian lobby). They, without any official investigative data, began "churning out on the networks" on the evening of 9 October the alleged "details of the organization of the bombing of the Crimean bridge.

According to this information, two heavy goods vehicles were allegedly involved in the Crimean bridge operation. The delivery scheme was as follows: the cargo in which explosives were allegedly placed arrived by sea at the Georgian port of Poti from Bulgaria. From Poti, the truck travelled to Armenia, where the cargo was cleared according to customs union rules - and it was emphasised that this was a typical, non-suspicious route of those travelling to Russia. The vehicle then re-entered Georgia and from there entered the Russian Federation via the Upper Lars border

crossing to Armavir, where the pallets were reloaded onto another truck, which headed towards Crimea.

That is, some representatives of the "most ancient nation" appeared to know in advance when the undermining of the Crimean bridge would be organized (and not some, but those closer to the Vatican than the President of Ukraine), while others were also quick to "investigate" it. They also hinted directly at the same "military corridor" through Georgia to Armenia, which they said the Russian Federation had to build for its own security.

Clearly, it is unlikely that the Vatican security services themselves organised the bombing of the Crimean bridge. But Avakov's words are a clear hint that the Pope not only knew what was going to happen, but also shared the information with his protégé in Ukraine, who had been prudently "benched" on the eve of the war.

The Vatican has a clear interest in the Zangezur corridor. This can be seen with the naked eye, taking into account the recent visit of Pope Francis to Kazakhstan, one of the key countries on the trans-Asian transit routes, which also has a vested interest in the functioning of that corridor.

The Vatican's interest in Kazakhstan earlier this year in the article "What is the Armenian contingent doing in Kazakhstan? In September 2022, Pope Francis not only spoke at the congress of representatives of world religions in the Kazakh capital, Nur-Sultan, but as the "future host" he began to recommend Kazakhs how to live their lives, although the share of the Pope's own subjects, Catholics, in Kazakhstan is minuscule. Pope Francis in his speech almost demanded to "democratize" Kazakhstan, to strengthen the role of Parliament with local authorities there. If to translate it on a human language, this ideologist of globalism demanded quickly to break Kazakhstan on appanage principalities, each of which would be governed from the outside, over Astana.

Undoubtedly, weakening of Russia's influence in Central Asia today is beneficial for the Vatican, and so far it "situationally supports" aspirations of Kazakhstan to cooperate with Turkic countries, with Turkey and Azerbaijan, and in fact it supports opening of Zangezur corridor (not accidentally so promoted the current peace process between Baku and Yerevan by Macron and Charles Michel, politicians close to the Vatican). But it is obvious that the Pope and his Jesuit order have "far-reaching plans" with respect to Kazakhstan, which are hardly in the interests of the Kazakh people. As well as Russian Federation has "far-reaching plans" regarding South Caucasus, where a variant of new Russian aggression against Georgia and break through "military corridor" in aid to Armenian revenge-seekers is also being worked out.

Interestingly, the further away, the more often the head of the Vatican makes statements that are considered "pro-Russian" even in Ukraine. On the eve of the current aggravation, Pope Francis commented on the situation in Ukraine at a meeting with his fellow Jesuits in the capital of Kazakhstan and said it was about "world war". Later, Pope Francis, while formally condemning Russia's new annexation of Ukrainian territories, sent an appeal to the Ukrainian president "to be open to serious peace proposals". In other words, to agree in fact to the annexation of part of the Ukrainian territories, knowing full well that Ukraine will not go along with it.

Since the Armenian project has long been "tame" for the Vatican, the militant hysteria stirred up by the Armenian lobby in Russia against the background of the Pope's "peace-loving" statements raises more questions than answers.

Recently it became known that Taco LLC, based in Armenia, has been included in a new list of organisations that are under US sanctions against Russia. The list of sanctioned companies has been published on the website of the US Treasury Department.

As reported, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the US Department of the Treasury has expanded the list of individuals and companies subject to anti-Russian sanctions in connection with the so-called "referenda" on joining the Russian Federation in Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions and the subsequent attempt to annex these Ukrainian regions. The sanctions list also includes Taco LLC, an Armenian partner of Russia's Radioavtomatika LLC (a supplier of electronic component base used in Russian weapons systems). According to the US Ministry of Finance, Taco LLC was involved in importing electronic components for Radioavtomatika LLC and organizing the procurement process in Armenia.

The sanctions against Armenian companies indicate that the US intends, despite all the influence of the US Armenian lobby, to "shut down" all the channels for Russia to circumvent Western sanctions, which were introduced after Russia's aggression against Ukraine. These channels appeared to have worked successfully until recently precisely through Armenia, as Russia's "ally" in the CSTO. Armenia has been particularly important in obtaining high-tech military and dual-use products from Russia to circumvent sanctions.

Some Armenian media outlets have recently written rapturously that following Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the imposition of sanctions against Russia and the mass relocation of a large number of IT specialists (sometimes together with their firms) to Armenia, Yerevan is becoming a "silicone valley". Many Russian IT companies working for the Western market have moved here from the Russian Federation. But they are not the only ones interested in Armenia.

Seizing advantage of the Armenian jurisdiction's unproblematic access to Western markets, Russia's security services very quickly established a channel through Armenia to "bypass" sanctions and deliver high-tech dual-use developments to Russia. This has become critical for the Russian army and Russian military-industrial complex, as sanctions have transformed many types of weapons produced in Russia into "iron and bolts" of little use in modern warfare. Almost all of Russia's electronics, guidance and navigation systems were manufactured using imported components or foreign designs. As a result, Russia is now forced to waste "old" stocks of missiles in the war against Ukraine, being unable to produce new ones.

However, the Armenian lobby was and still is helping the Kremlin to circumvent sanctions. This is not always done in an open manner, but sometimes it is simply done under the guise of "Armenian patriotism". The same Ruben Vardanyan, who recently formally renounced Russian citizenship and moved via Yerevan to Azerbaijani territory in the zone of responsibility of Russian peacekeepers in Karabakh, is known as one of the main organisers of the Skolkovo project. The Skolkovo Innovation Centre (often described as "Russia's Silicon Valley" at the time of its launch in 2010-2011) positions itself as a modern scientific and technological innovation complex for the development and commercialisation of new technologies.

Initially, the Russian authorities in Skolkovo intended to establish a Russian equivalent of the US Silicon Valley, located in California, where numerous high-tech enterprises and software developers (including those for military purposes) are concentrated. By the way, California (particularly Los Angeles and its suburbs) has the highest concentration of Armenian population in the USA; many successful Armenian businessmen from this Diaspora are linked to the enterprises of Silicon Valley. Therefore, it is not surprising that representatives of the Armenian diaspora in Russia were also involved in Russia's Silicon Valley, trying to replicate the success of their compatriots in the US by analogy.

The predecessor of the Skolkovo Innovation Centre, on which the Russian state pinned great hopes for a 'breakthrough in cutting-edge technology', was the Skolkovo Business School, which

appeared earlier in 2006 and was co-founded and organised by Ruben Vartanyan, a Russian billionaire of Armenian origin. He was also one of the initiators of the Skolkovo Innovation Centre. The efficiency of investment in the Skolkovo project was extremely low and there has not been any particular "breakthrough research" there in recent years, according to available information. Those involved in the Skolkovo project, the same Ruben Vardanian, got rich from the state budget financing.

Some things were done within the framework of the Skolkovo project. In particular, through some of its structures technological and innovative innovations from the West were borrowed (and possibly even stolen) for their further implementation in enterprises of the Russian military-industrial complex. There is no doubt that representatives of the Armenian diaspora in Russia and in the West, including the United States, were involved in this process.

Structures associated with Ruben Vartanyan and other representatives of the Armenian diaspora in Russia legally or illegally purchased or "obtained" foreign military or "dual-use" developments and transferred them to research institutes and enterprises of the Russian military-industrial complex. And the military-industrial complex integrated these developments for their use in Russian weapons systems. It is clear that all this was done in the dark, under the guise of the Skolkovo Innovation Center and other structures. But there is no doubt that Ruben Vardanian is linked to the Russian secret services and was involved in the very process of supplying state-of-the-art foreign developments for the needs of the Russian military-industrial complex.

Vardanyan apparently continues to do the same while being in the zone of responsibility of Russian peacekeepers in Karabakh. He is still very much in the public eye for bringing high-tech specialists "to Armenia and 'Artsakh' to 'share scientific experience'".

Vardanian's current mission in Karabakh is most likely not only to support separatism and revanchists, but also to organise the very channel for circumventing sanctions through Armenia. Through these channels the Russian Federation can receive much needed high-tech military developments and imported components for weapons systems. A "cover" for these channels is also ties with the Western Armenian diaspora. Here, too, it appears that the "most ancient nation" performs its functions as "double agents" in both directions.

The Armenian "fifth column" works in Russia for the US interests. But there is also a "reverse process", with quite exotic scandals erupting here from time to time. In particular, Jamie Lee Henry, a retired transgender soldier (a former woman "converted" into a man), his wife and former military doctor and professional anesthesiologist Anna Gabrielyan were recently prosecuted in the US. They intended to transfer to Russia personal medical information of US servicemen, to which they had official access. Understandably, the case is insignificant in the scale of the geopolitical confrontation between the US and Russia, but it is very revealing. There is no doubt that other much more important information is being illegally transferred to the Russian Federation through Yerevan and the Armenian diaspora in the US.

The Armenian channel of espionage, circumvention of sanctions and smuggling components for Russian weapons to Russia has been in full swing for almost eight months since Russia's aggression against Ukraine. But it seems that the US State Department, which has recently been actively "grooming" the regime in Yerevan for the ultimate "geopolitical screw-up" of Russia, has decided to shut down this channel. And this happens just after U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi arrived in Yerevan and made her theatrical tears at the "genocide" memorial.

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Карабах в геополитике ведущих стран

Резюме

Сенат Франции 15 ноября 2022 г. принял антиазербайджанскую резолюцию, поддерживающую сепаратизм, в которой содержится призыв к правительству президента Эммануэля Макрона ввести санкции против Азербайджана. Документ также призывает Баку отвести свои войска из района Лачинского коридора (т.е. с собственной международно-признанной территории!) и с приграничных районов, где не было даже демаркации и делимитации, и которые почему-то французским сенатом считаются «территорией Армении». Хотя, для того, чтобы определиться, где «территория Армении», а где нет, вообще то нужно заключить мирное соглашение и провести демаркацию и делимитацию границы, что и как раз тормозит Ереван. Однако, самое опасное то, что Сенат Франции вновь, своей провокационной резолюцией, поднимает вопрос о создании на азербайджанской территории сепаратистского псевдогосударства и «создании гуманитарного офиса в Нагорном Карабахе». Решение Сената Франции бьет не только по Азербайджану, но и по Грузии, по факту, препятствуя восстановлению территориальной целостности страны. Ведь не секрет, что сепаратизм в Самачабло и Абхазии взаимосвязан с сепаратизмом т.н. «арцах». Самопровозглашенная т.н. «Нагорно-Карабахская Республика (НКР) признала «независимость» Абхазии и т.н. «Южной Осетии», задолго до того, как это в 2008 г. сделала Россия, оккупировавшей эти регионы Грузии. Франция, ввиду явного ослабления позиций РФ, ввязавшейся в военную авантюру с агрессией против Украины, делает заявку на то, чтобы заменить Россию в качестве «главного спонсора» сепаратизма на Южном Кавказе. И

это чрезвычайно опасно, поскольку из истории известно, что туда, куда Франция лезет с поддержкой сепаратизма, начинаются кровавые войны с миллионами жертв.

«Срединный коридор» - маршрут через Каспий, Азербайджан, Грузию и Турцию в Европу кратчайший маршрут, и страны, расположенные вдоль него, изначально имели колоссальные перспективы для суверенного развития. Сегодня новый транс евразийский маршрут для транзита товаров из Китая в Европу через Южный Кавказ оказался востребованным для мировой экономики и понимание перспектив и важности этого маршрута увеличивается в геометрической прогрессии. Как и сложность тотального контроля над этим маршрутом, даже со стороны сверхдержав, претендующих на мировую гегемонию. К сожалению, по пути следования «Срединного коридора» были заложены «мины» определенными силами в виде сепаратистских проектов – «арцахского», абхазского и цхивальского и т.д. Есть попытки разжечь новые сепаратные и локальные войны. В принципе, сепаратистские проекты, с перекройкой границ, пытались запустить и в конечном итоге запустили и в других частях постсоветского пространства (Приднестровье, Крым, Донбасс). Но в начале 90-х годов прошлого века наибольшая «плотность» сепаратистских проектов и их наибольшая «кровавость» были организованы именно на Южном Кавказе, на территории Азербайджана и Грузии. Армянские националисты, выполняя внешние «заказы» по дестабилизации региона при любых уступках будут претендовать на новые и новые территории соседей. Не говоря уже о разжигании ими новых сепаратистских конфликтов. Ведь ни для кого не секрет, что абхазский, приднестровский сепаратистские проекты, да и сепаратизм на украинском Донбассе активнее всего поддерживало армянское лобби в РФ.

У Ватикана есть явный интерес к Зангезурскому коридору. Это видно невооруженным глазом, учитывая недавний визит римского папы Франциска в Казахстан, в одну из ключевых стран на трансасиатских транзитных путях, которая тоже кровно заинтересована в функционировании этого коридора. В сентябре 2022 г. римский папа Франциск не только выступил на съезде представителей мировых религий в столице Казахстана в Нур-Султане, но как «будущий хозяин» стал рекомендовать казахам как жить дальше, хотя доля собственно поданных римского папы, католиков, в Казахстане мизерная. Папа Франциск в своем выступлении почти потребовал «демократизации» Казахстана, усиления там роли парламента с местными властями вкупе. Если перевести это на человеческий язык, то данный идеолог глобализма потребовал поскорее дробить Казахстан на удельные княжества, каждое из которых управлялось бы извне, поверх Астаны. Безусловно ослабление влияния РФ в Центральной Азии сегодня выгодно Ватикану, и пока что он «ситуативно поддерживает» стремление того же Казахстана к сотрудничеству с тюркскими странами, с Турцией и Азербайджаном, и по факту выступает за открытие Зангезурского коридора (не случайно так способствовали нынешнему мирному процессу между Баку и Ереваном близкие к Ватикану политики Макрон и Шарль Мишель). Но видно, что у римского папы и его ордена иезуитов в отношении Казахстана «далеко идущие планы», которые вряд ли соответствуют интересам казахского народа. Как и «далеко идущие планы» у РФ в отношении Южного Кавказа, где вариант новой российской агрессии против Грузии и пробитие «военного коридора» в помощь армянским реваншистам также прорабатывается. Интересно, что чем дальше, тем чаще глава Ватикана делает заявления, которые даже в Украине считают «пророссийскими». Накануне нынешнего обострения папа Римский Франциск в столице Казахстана на встрече с своими собратями иезуитами прокомментировал ситуацию в Украине и заявил, что речь идет о

«мировой войне». Позднее папа Римский Франциск, формально осудив новую аннексию Россией украинских территорий, направил призыв к президенту Украины «быть открытым к серьезным мирным предложениям». Т.е. по факту согласиться с аннексией части украинских территорий, прекрасно понимая, что Украина на это не пойдет. Поскольку армянский проект давно является «ручным» для Ватикана», то нагнетание армянским лобби в РФ воинственной истерии на фоне «миролюбивых» заявлений римского папы вызывает больше вопросов, чем ответов.