

Artsakh (Nagorny / Haut Karabagh) : la Syriefication de la guerre

correspondance d'Alice Kanterian :

TURKISH GAMBIT: THE SYRIFICATION OF THE WAR

The main purpose of the scenario-builders and the director of the ongoing war is to oust the Russian Federation from the South Caucasus, and, eventually, from the entire Caucasus. One of the options is to syrify the Karabakh issue. Turkey's yearning to enter the negotiation process as a heavyweight and influential actor, compelling to give up the OSCE Minsk Group format. The prime target in President Erdoğan's almost all speeches is the OSCE Minsk Group, and his vision - adapting the Astana process of the Syrian conflict resolution in the South Caucasus. The hint is clear: spheres of influence for the talk process-engaged states Turkey, Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation. Thus, in case of Turkey it is not the efficient activity of the aforementioned forces, but rather their presence, which unwittingly does imply the idea of syrifying the current factors and processes if not in the frameworks of the war, then at least in those of the conflict. If such a scenario is played, then Turkey, irrespective of the war results for Azerbaijan, will be a winning party. Engagement of Syria- and Libya-operating terrorist groups in the Karabakh warfield carries the message of syrifying the developments, i.e., assumes both military

and political significance.

In essence, the war that broke out on 27 September, 2020, ended in Azerbaijan's defeat. As a result, Azerbaijan placed the command of its armed forces under Turkey's control.

The ongoing war is between Armenia and Turkey. Turkey and Azerbaijan wish to feature this war as being Armenian-Turkic in nature, thus guaranteeing the Turkic

states' and nations' support. In the given context we can consider the fact that in line

with mercenaries from "Sultan Murad", "Hamza", and "Nour al-Din al-Zenki" terrorist

groups of mixed ethnic composition (including Turkmen-staffed), also militants from the

Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (i.e., Uyghurs), who had shaped their experience

in Syrian actions, have been transported to the war zone on Turkey's initiative; simultaneously the circulation of news that anti-Armenian demonstrations are being

staged by Turkic-speaking Azaris in the Islamic Republic of Iran (in Ardabil, Tabriz,

Urmia), targeted at closing the RA-IRI border.

However, the current war is also Russian-Turkish in its nature.

Turkey, by reinforcing its position in the South Caucasus, enlarges its own field of bargain within the frameworks of the Greater Middle East. Moreover, the present logic

of the war tends to weaken the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), since it

consistently pushes the efficiency of the Turkey-Azerbaijan alliance to the fore (within

the frameworks of "Two nations, one state" and "One nation, one army" slogans), and

the CSTO-engaged allies' consolidation - to the background.

The war does have also psychological and demonstrative significance. Though the Turkish army controls numerous military strongholds and takes cross-border actions

in Northern Iraq, Northern Syria and Libya, any kind of military engagement of Turkey in

the South Caucasus was unthinkable, owing to the Russian factor, before the war broke

out in September, 2020.

By crossing the red lines Turkey overcame the psychological barrier against the Russian factor, as well. Moreover, with a view on the Greek-Turkish tensions in the

East of the Mediterranean, and the aggravation between France and Turkey, the direct

military involvement of Turkey in the South Caucasus (in fact, the war between Armenia

and Turkey) is a specific message to Greece and other EU states on the decisiveness

of Turkey.

The involvement of new actors and factors in the region will be combined with an unpredictable shift in the power balance in the region, which will eventually result in not

only reviewing the negotiation format of the Karabakh issue, but also drawing Russia to

zugzwang throughout the post-Soviet ethnic, religious and territorial perimeter.

If Armenia is to carry out the function of the separating fortress between Turkey and the Turkic world, then Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) is the main anchor for Russia in

the South Caucasus.

Vahram S. Petrosyan, Doctor of History, Associate Professor

David M. Manasyan, Doctor of History