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### **The United States and the Russia-Armenian defense agreement**

On September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016, U. S. Secretary of State made some remarks on the ongoing engagements of U. S. Diplomacy at the event of Atlantic and Aspen Institute in Washington, DC; while the content of his statement was mostly focused on Syria and Iran, he vaguely mentioned, only once, the protracted armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan which has disrupted and harmed the lives of over one million Azerbaijani civilians who have become IDPs and psychologically terrorized due to the occupation of Azerbaijani sovereign territory by the Fascist Armenian Armed Forces. On this occasion Secretary Kerry stated:

“There are some frozen conflicts in the world today --Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan-Armenia, where you can't quite see that right now because the leaders aren't ready, because the tensions aren't there.” [1]

While Secretary Kerry, on the same speech, takes pride in mobilizing a global effort in the fight against Ebola virus outbreak that erupted in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone (Western Africa), he should not have made such a biased statement on Nagorno-Karabakh, a conflict that has never been on the radar screen of his priorities, an armed conflict that has always been ignored due to his double standard attitude

that during his tenure in many occasions has favored the Armenian Government. Mr. Kerry has made a wrong assessment in his statement above, he has never visited Baku and does not take into account that: the Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has made every bilateral and multilateral effort, has shown a great level of leadership towards solving the Nagorno–Karabakh conflict by peaceful means (while pursuing a similar peaceful practice that was adopted by Italy and Austria for the solution of the status of South Tyrol, that is today the most prosperous province of Italy despite the fact that 89 percent of its inhabitants are German language speakers); as Secretary Kerry was giving his speech at the Harman Center of Arts in Washington D. C., Armenian Armed Forces have violated thirteen times the ceasefire in the line of contact between Armenian and Azerbaijani troops (Azerbaijani soldiers were attacked by heavy fire from the positions of Armenian Armed Forces located: nearby the village of Javahirli in the Azerbaijani district of Aghdam; in Kuropatkino village in the district of Khojavand; Ashagi Seyidahmadli village of the Fuzuli district, and from the heights of the districts of Goranboy, Khojavand and Fuzuli). [2] For Secretary Kerry to state that “tensions aren’t there” is inaccurate and shows that the U. S. Diplomatic Chief, in addition to favoring Armenia throughout most of his public statements and service, is ill informed. Perhaps the current mindset of Washington is the reason why Secretary Kerry, in 2013-2016, has led twelve official visits to Israel and nineteen visits to Switzerland; meanwhile, until today, he has never been able to visit Baku. Additionally Secretary Kerry, after mentioning only once the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, jumped into elaborating on the Israel - Palestine conflict, adding this way more confusion and fanfare to his statement.

To summarize, the Armenian Government has always received a blank check from the U. S. Government, Yerevan has never been criticized for purchasing cutting edge missile technology from Russia. As a consequence of the vacuum created by the current U. S. Government, the Russian Defense Industry maintains close ties with Armenian Armed Forces and recently has shipped to Yerevan a number of Iskander short range ballistic missile systems.

On the other hand the U. S. Department of Defense in July 2016 reached an agreement with the government of the Republic of Korea to deploy a Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile battery to the U.S. Forces base in South Korea in order to ensure South Korea's security and to protect it from the threat of North Korea's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles. [3]

The latest Russia – Armenia missile deal of short range ballistic missiles is taking place only a few months after the missile defense agreement reached between the U.S. and South Korea to bring the THAAD ballistic missile defense system in the Korean Peninsula. [4]

Moreover there is a bilateral defense agreement that has been signed by Moscow and Yerevan in 2010, enabling Russia to supply Armenia with cutting edge and modern weapons systems and special infantry technology. [5]

In early 2016, the Russian government made a public statement announcing that it would be providing a US\$200 million credit line to Armenia so that Serzh Sargsyan's fascist regime would continue to blackmail the Azerbaijani nation, by increasing Armenia's military stockpiles and ammunitions. With these funds Yerevan is expected to buy multiple-launch rocket systems, anti-tank missiles, and anti-aircraft missiles and refurbish its arsenal of land forces.

The Russian military technology is the bread and butter of Armenia's projected modernization plan of its armed forces. Today Yerevan is equipped with: Scud-B (reaching targets within a range of 300 km) and Tochka-U (with a target range of 150km and manufactured in early 1990s; in August 2008, Russian Forces deployed 15 Tochka missiles in the front lines of South Ossetia War).

The Iskander-M missile is one of the most advanced systems that military technology has ever known; they are also unreachable by any current missile defense systems. [6]

There is no doubt that the Russian weapons being sold to Armenia, will further incinerate the conflict in the region and make the Southern Caucasus become more vulnerable and bellicose. Although Russian Prime minister Medvedev stated in early April 2016 that: "weapons may and should be bought not only to

be used one day, but to be a deterrent factor;” I believe that the continuing growth of Armenian military arsenal, with the help of Russia, is a recipe for disaster in the Caspian Region. The armed provocations instigated by Armenian Armed Forces against Azerbaijani troops in the line of contact are certainly going to be intensified and Armenian military training in the occupied lands of Azerbaijan will further take place for as long as there is not a strong condemnation articulated by the major international organizations and principal global powers who, instead of being the guardians of international laws and treaties, almost always maintain silence and are not interested to help Azerbaijan secure a complete territorial sovereignty through peaceful means. For the meantime Baku must maintain a higher level of vigilance and defend its military positions in the line of contact, at a time when Moscow is supplying missiles to Armenia and its proactive diplomacy has overshadowed the U. S. presence in the Caucasus.

### Sources:

- [1] <https://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2016/09/262581.htm>
- [2] <http://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/karabakh/2666696.html>
- [3] <https://www.army.mil/article/171316>
- [4] <http://tass.com/world/889043>
- [5] <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-nagorno-karabakh-russia-arms-idUSKCN0X60DS>
- [6] [http://www.azernews.az/news.php?news\\_id=103389&cat=karabakh](http://www.azernews.az/news.php?news_id=103389&cat=karabakh)