

WE HAVE TO HIRE MERCENARIES

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Prof. Z. S. Andrew Demirdjian, Los Angeles, 6 April 2021

The September war reportedly resulted in 5,000 Armenian military and over 100 civilian deaths and the destruction of multiple armored vehicles. Armenia lost between \$1.2 billion to \$3 billion worth of weapons, ammunition, and equipment. Seven buffer zones and 190 Armenian settlements came under Azerbaijani control, and 30 percent of Artsakh's territory was lost to Azerbaijan.

When the invasion began, Armenia had declared martial law and had begun mobilizing its reservists. President Arayik Harutyunyan had just informed the public there had been 4,000 Syrian soldiers (mercenaries) in Azerbaijan's army. Should these types of attacks happen in the future, and they will, Armenians have to be ready to sustain a protracted war with an Azerbaijan which has been emboldened by its newly acquired arms and by its genocidal ally, Turkey. The sharks have tasted blood.

With its small population and hence small army, Armenia should strengthen its fighting force by hiring mercenaries. In preparation for the unavoidable next Azerbaijan attack, Armenia should know where to shop and have the money to hire contractors and mercenaries. Where to shop for mercenaries is easy. Raising the money is the crux of the problem.

During the 1992-1994 Artsakh War, Azerbaijan obtained money, arms and mercenaries from UK, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Russia, Ukraine, Chechnya, Uzbekistan, and heaps of money from Saudi Arabia --including from the U.S. government and oil companies.

Azerbaijan was disorganized then. That is why it reached out to get help from all sorts of governments, political organizations, and religious associations. Azerbaijan even used extremists such as Afghanistan's Mujahidin fighters and ISIS militants from Syria. United Kingdom's Lord Erskine of Rerrick served as lead consultant to the Azeris to procure soldiers and arms for an annual fee of as much as 150 million pounds to be paid in oil.

The use of mercenaries has exploded in recent years. Mercenaries were not revived by weak states wanting security against brutal enemies. In fact, it was the United States which invested billions into the private military industry. In 2010 the Pentagon appropriated \$366 billion for contractors to be spent on mercenaries. That amount was five times the UK's defense budget. As a result, today's private military industry has become a multi-billion dollar market.

Armenia may have aversion to hiring mercenaries based on moral grounds, but we have to face the realities of the situation. The small size of our army makes it necessary to seek additional fighters.

What made the mercenary "industry" a success? Why did the U.S., with the world's most powerful military, need mercenaries? Because its "All Volunteer Force" could not recruit enough Americans to continue two long wars in Iraq and in Afghanistan. In Iraq, 50 percent of the U.S. force was contracted while in Afghanistan it was 70 percent. In World War II, it was 10 percent.

The preponderance of the contractors who fight for the United States is foreign. It has been estimated that more contractors were killed than regular troops in recent U.S. wars. Based on research findings, more contractors were killed in Iraq and Afghanistan than regular soldiers.

Hiring private military companies is no longer confined to the U.S. Recently, mercenaries have appeared in many combat zones. For example, the United Arab Emirates hired mercenaries to fight in Yemen and President Putin hired multiethnic mercenaries to fight in eastern Ukraine and in northern Syria.

The United States' heavy reliance on military contractors increased their numbers and, in the process, has legitimized their use.

That mercenaries are capable to change the course of a war is a truism. They offer the means of war to anyone who can afford it. If a nation has money to pay contractors and mercenaries, it would enjoy peaceful nights. Those who put up a well-planned strategic defense, usually win the war.

Let us see what strategy Armenia can follow to gain an advantage over Azerbaijan and Turkey when a new war erupts. Based on extensive research, I present the following strategy for Armenia, Artsakh, and the Diaspora to consider:

Strategic Planning for the Employment of Contractors/Mercenaries

I. **Military Contractor Selection.** Select a military contractor from U.S.A., UK, or the Middle East. It is important to bear in mind that although U.S. contractors are better organized, better trained, and have a lot of experience, their cost would be prohibitive. Because of proximity, selecting a military company located in the Middle East or UK may prove to be more cost-efficient.

II. **Being Introduced to Decision Makers.** Get to know the decision makers at the company. Get to have their contact information for emergency calls for help. When you make prior acquaintances with the members of the company management, you would get more help on a timely manner.

III. **Privacy Matters.** Make sure information given to the company is not shared with anyone else. This should be in writing.

2020. *Background Information on Conflict.* Provide the decisions makers of the company with brief background information about the expected conflict with your adversaries. Include a written account of the conflict and some URLs for further reading on the current conflict that show how unreasonable your adversary has been, especially during the Artsakh War of 2020.

2021. *Armenia's Wish List.* Explain what Armenia would like to have in case of war such as the approximate number of mercenaries, with what kind of expertise in handling certain type of weapons, soldiers or pilots, drone remote pilots, etc.

2022. *Accommodation.* Give a general information on where the advisors and mercenaries would be staying (without any actual addresses) when they arrive in Armenia. Remember, contractors

want to make sure that the hired men are taken good care of with good food and comfortable accommodations before and after being launched into combat.

VII. **Payment Arrangements.** This phase is the pre-qualifying of the client. Source of financing would entail how to pay for the company's fees, mercenary wages, cost of weapons (if any), plus any rewards when the war is won, and any victory march and celebration. Be ready to provide a guarantee, security for payment, if required.

VIII. **Preliminary contract.** A copy of the preliminary contract (or a memorandum of understanding) should be read and made sure to include stipulations that in the event Armenia is not satisfied with the service, it can revoke the agreement without any penalty.

As we can see, in dire circumstances, the Azerbaijani government required foreign assistance in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the 1990s and again in the 2020s. Several countries rushed to the rescue, including Russia, Turkey, Afghanistan, the United States, UK, Pakistan, and Iran to mention the most important ones.

The galaxy of the military characters consisted of Turkish military advisors, international oil companies, freelance military advisors, stranded Russian soldiers for hire, Afghan warlords, Ukrainian mercenaries, Mujahedin, and Saudi financiers to cite the most active ones. In the 2020 war, again, Azerbaijan used mercenaries from Syria and Libya recruited by Turkey.



Blackwater is a U.S. private military company, located on a 6,000-acre training facility in North Carolina. It is considered to be the world's most powerful mercenary army provider.

In the face of adversity, Armenia most likely will find itself in need of assistance when Azerbaijan decides to attack. Mercenaries are a professional fighting force with experience in warfare as career soldiers. When Armenia faces insufficient recruits, mercenaries can often help alleviate the urgent need for trained manpower in a rather protracted warfare. That is why it behooves to plan on finding reliable sources of mercenaries and arms long in advance.

In 2016, again in 2020, we trusted our generals, but ended up swallowing the bitter results of the devastating 44-day carnage. National security for Armenia's survival is every Armenian's responsibility. It is too vital to be trusted only to a few individuals for national security is the requirement to safeguard the survival of the state through the maintenance of economic robustness, astute diplomacy, rapid power projection, political acumen, and most importantly, resourceful military power predicated on advance preparedness.

Even in the Information Age, if push comes to shove, military resources matter. Napoleon Bonaparte

is credited to have said: "God is on the side of the big battalions," and Mao Zedong seriously argued that power comes from the barrel of a gun.

Unforgettably, the news of Nikol Pashinyan's signing of capitulation on November 9, 2020 was seismic in its effects: it sent shock waves through the Armenian nation. Next to the Armenian Genocide, it was one of our saddest times. We want to avoid another earthquake-like consequence by being prudent, prepared, and patriotic when faced with armed conflict with Azerbaijan.

As we all know, Armenia and Azerbaijan are on a collision course because the former insists on the self-determination of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh. Our main source of help would be Russia, but President Putin seems to be playing Russian roulette with Armenia's future as he sells weapons to Armenia's sworn enemies. Thus, we should abide by the following pearl of wisdom that the ultimate national security is self-protection for survival against the overwhelming odds --the only other alternative opportunity for Armenians to have is to call genie.

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