MOTIVATION FOR BETRAYING THE MOTHERLAND

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Category: Opinions

By Prof. Z. S. Andrew Demirdjian, Los Angeles, 28 December 2022

"I know not what treason is, if sapping and betraying the liberties of a people be not treason...?"
--Cato the Younger (of the Old World)
"Treason is the highest crime of a civil nature of which a man can be guilty."
--Noah Webster (of the Modern World)

After centuries of Greater Armenia's occupation by Seljuk and Ottoman conquerors and others, the liberation of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) provided great consolation and pride for many Armenians. It meant Armenians are not only surviving, but that they are thriving in many ways after their history's nadir of the 1915-1923 national catastrophe.

In 2020, the sons of Artsakh fought valiantly against the odds to keep their tiny motherland's sovereignty, but unfortunately a disturbing number of the Armenian and Artsakh military men reportedly betrayed her with a Judas Kiss, most likely compromising national security.

To add to an already staggering number of cases of treason during the 44-Day War, in early December of 2022 Armenia newspapers reported that the Armenian National Security Service had arrested an Armenian "major officer" of the Defense Ministry for espionage. The officer was charged with treason, and according to the decision of the court, he was detained for allegedly selling secret military information to the enemy for $19,400.

To stem the prevalence of treason, we need to understand the motivation behind betraying one's country. We need to specify the causes for committing treason.

To many Armenians, Artsakh symbolized Armenian people's resilience and patience to regain their occupied ancestral lands when the opportunity presented itself. However, its defeat to Azerbaijan and Turkey devastated the patriotic Armenian spirit around the world.

To add insult to injury, we had too many allegations, arrests, and indictments of Armenian military personnel who had supposedly collaborated with the enemy for personal gain and maybe for other psychological reasons.

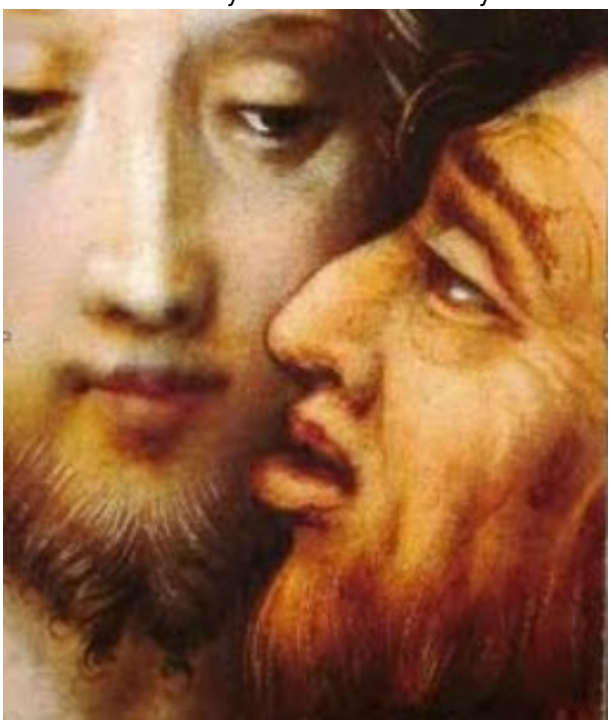
Treason is one of the most detestable crimes. Treason is the crime of betraying your country, for example, by helping its enemies or by trying to remove its government through violence. Over the years, most traitors found guilty of treason have been lynched or faced the firing squad.

When the accused are found guilty we would add treason as one of the reasons behind the shattering defeat to Azerbaijan.

I will attempt to answer the question as to why some Armenian soldiers and their military leaders allegedly betrayed their motherland.

An alarming number of treason cases in Armenia were mentioned in the High Treason Against the Homeland article (published in Keghart on August 5, 2022). Since then, the arrests of alleged traitors have continued. In October of 2022, Armenia's National Security Service (NSS) arrested a military officer and a platoon commander on suspicion of spying. Why does someone betray his country in the midst of a devastating war against a genocidal enemy?

Unfortunately, the literature on treason is devoid of a comprehensive theory on how and why treason takes place. I hope this article fills that gap.What, where, when, and how would be easy to answer, but when it comes to why, psychology finds it hard to come up with definite answers --only educated guesses are proposed for the human psyche is shrouded in the mist of human consciousness.



The U.S. Constitution defines treason as "making war against the United States or giving aid and comfort to our enemies." It is the only law written in the Constitution and it actually has a procedural element that treason has to be proven by the statements of two witnesses to an overt act or a confession.

When it comes to treason, there are too many descriptive articles to review, but very few studies on fragmented aspects of the treasonous behavior. However, after an extensive search and drawing upon studies of human nature, I came up with a framework (i.e., a theory or model) to explain as to why those Armenian servicemen reportedly betrayed their motherland. Such knowledge is crucial for the curtailment or discouragement of the temptation to sell the Armenian homeland to the enemy.

Distilled from studies of human nature, we can safely assume that there are three kinds or categories of motives to assume a person would betray his or her country: 1. Material: money, desired objects 2. Psychological: ideology, revenge, self-esteem, to compromise national security, sympathy for the underdog, the need for thrills, and "lack of patriotism". Ostensibly, one crucial

variable is missing in the literature in the calculus of motives or reasons to commit treason and that is lack of a strong sense of patriotism. 3. Material and Psychological Motives Combined.

Treason is a function of the monetary and psychological motives, namely Treason=f (MD+IRS+CUTP); the "f" stands for function of or caused by. We can also use MD-IRS-CUTP as a long acronym for the motives.

Let us briefly elaborate on each kind of motivational factor contributing to the temptation to engage in treason:

Material Motives. Money is an incentive and reward for someone to sell out his or her country.

Related to money is the ability or affordability to buy desired objects. Contrary to people who consider monetary gain a strong incentives for betrayal, psychologists rate it less important than the non-monetary incentives. However, the question of money is always included in the negotiation process for hiring someone to collaborate with a secret agent of the enemy.

Psychological Motives. In this category of motives, we have ideology, revenge, self-esteem, compromise of national security, sympathy with or for the underdog, the need for thrills, and lack of patriotism.

According to psychologists, the motives of most of the international traitors were ostensibly Ideological. To a lesser extent, traitors may also have a sneaking admiration for a rival, such as for a powerful national adversary like Azerbaijan nowadays presents).

In the treason notorious case of Marcus Klinberg (an Israeli scientist who spied for Russia), Klingberg claimed that he never received any money in return to disclosing top secret information, and that he only wanted to reward the Russians for having saved the world from Nazism. Klingberg insisted on his ideological premise, and that he never received anything material in return --only wanted to save the world.

Ideology is considered a superior motivational force for someone to go counter his or her country. However, I strongly subscribe to the belief (this is a hypothesis) that most Armenian traitors were victims of the power of money.



For the sake of brevity, I shall abstain from giving examples of actual cases of treason motivators in presenting the rest of the psychological self-explanatory motives.

The motive of Revenge is also a factor inducing the person to betray his or her country. A military officer, who has not been promoted as wished, would hold a grudge or ill feelings toward the armed forces. To get even, he would be amenable to selling his country to the enemy and thus feel the satisfaction of getting even with his tormenters.

A person who has, let's say, a powerful need for feeling Self-Esteem, because he didn't get that as a child, would definitely be liable to turn to betrayal later in his life in order to attain it.

For Compromising the National Security, the satisfaction derived from compromising (i.e., endangering) one's national security. Therefore, crimes of treason include those that compromise a nation, its government, or its sovereign. Acts of war against the nation, acts of support of the nation's

enemies, or direct collaboration with enemies give a sense of importance, a feeling of satisfaction to see one's country struggling to survive in the face of dire difficulties.

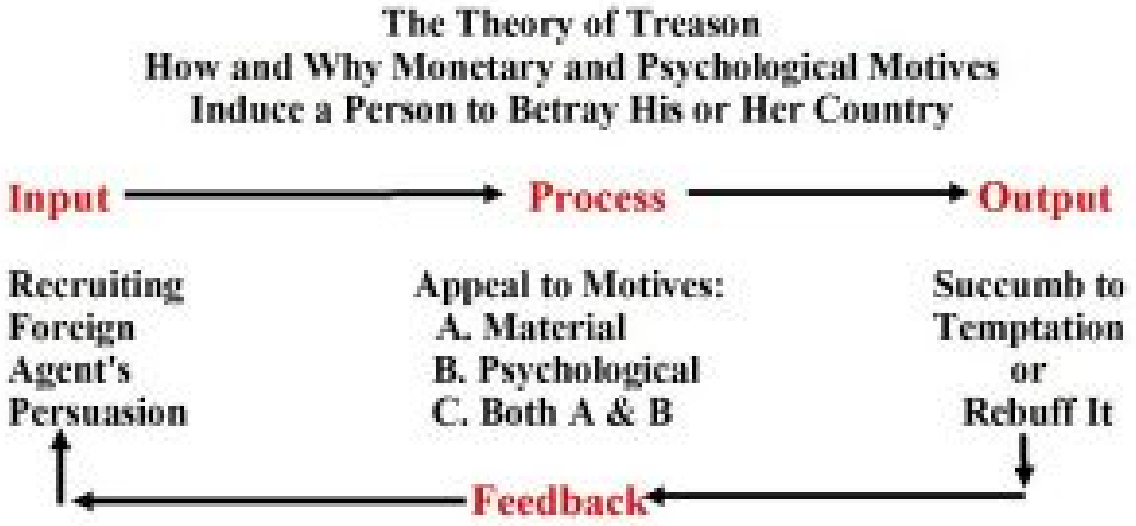
The Sympathetic experience of oneself as a victim of being an Underdog – and when a person experiences himself as a victim, he needs to help the weak, because the weak are actually one of him. Those are exactly the psychological components we try to discover. These people look upon themselves as "freedom fighters".

The Thrill of doing something extremely dangerous and wrong and not being caught may move some people to persuade themselves to participate in negative or wrong activities.

As for Lack of Patriotism, this variable is self-explanatory. My extensive review of the literature failed to disclose "lack of patriotism" as being a salient variable in triggering treason in someone. Arguably, patriotism as love for and loyalty to one's country should be included in explaining and predicting treacherous behavior. Therefore, I added patriotism to the list of psychological motives for treason.

Material Plus Psychological Motives. In most instances, the foreign recruiting agents use both material (e.g., money) and psychological (e.g., ideological) motives to persuade a target to spy for them. For example, one Azerbaijani agent promised to pay $4,000 for some important military information from an Armenian soldier. Although not known, the agent may have also appealed to the would-be-traitor's sense of fairness in helping the return of the displaced Azerbaijani refugees (as a result of the First Artsakh War in 1994) back to their homes.

The major functions of science are to describe, explain, and predict a phenomenon. Ideas have changed the world; ideas can also help enhance its position in relation to its enemies. To help others do research based on a theoretical framework, I present the following simplified model:



To summarize the theory, a recruiting foreign agent selects and befriends a target (e.g., an Armenian officer), and applies a persuasive communication by emphasizing various rewards such as monetary,

psychological, or a combination thereof to provide some classified information in return.

The targeted pigeon either succumbs to the temptation and becomes a traitor or because of scruples and patriotic feelings rebuffs the temptation to betray his or her country.

Feedback occurs when the output results of the system is routed back as input(s) of a chain of cause-and-effect that forms a circuit or loop. In this way, the system is considered to be fed back into itself.

This model can be used for theory validation or simply hypothesis testing by manipulating the motive variables in various situations in a scientific study (to satisfy the requirements for a master's thesis or a doctoral dissertation).

We already have here two variables of money and ideology that support the theory based on descriptive study; evidence for the rest of the variables can be obtained either from secondary data or an experimental study. Creating a betrayal situation for the experimental subjects upon which to manipulate the independent variables of different material and psychological motives would be a real challenge, though, but not an impossible one.

The model of motivation was presented to kill two birds with one stone: answer some of our reader's question as to why certain individuals succumb to temptation to betray their country and also to present my answer to that question in an organized systematic approach to encourage some of our new generations to do research based on that theoretical model.

Based on the seven psychological motive variables in Figure 1, Armenia should have a valid treason potentiality test to be able to some extent predict a would-be soldier's propensity to betray his or her country.

Additionally, a separate battery of tests should be prepared to determine the degree of patriotism of the person whom shall be entrusted with secrete information about national security. If possible, it would be interesting to see what kind of tests is administered to candidates who would be working for the FBI, CIA, Pentagon, and the White House

As a community service, I'd be glad to assist any serious student who may want to do this kind of research for his or her degree, provided the outcome of this symbiotic relationship will also help Armenia and Artsakh in continuing to build on this study to mitigate the problem of treason and betrayal facing the Armenian nation.

Comments



Davo – 2023-01-10 13:34:39
Nice analysis by Dr. Demirdjian. Long overdue. Maybe some Armenians are still pro-Russian or pro-Soviet/Communist (from before 1991). Thus, they may side with Azerbaijan because they see Russia as currently being pro-Azerbaijani and wanting to punish Armenia (which the traitorous Putin is certainly doing). These Armenians are still traitors and misguided. Also just plain evil. They deserve anything they get, and more, from the justice system.



Harry Armen – 2023-01-10 11:32:43
It's all about incompetent, unfit bad leadership