SOARING ON THE WINGS OF IMAGINATION

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To Face the Inconvenient Reality (A Commentary)

Z. S. Andrew Demirdjian, Ph.D., USA, 20 November 2012

Let us begin by testing the boundaries of our imagination. What if you were told that in our life time animals will discover fire and begin to BBQ (cook) their food? Your answer would be "Na" for this would have profound implications for wild fire which would eventually wipe out life on our planet.

What if you were told that in our life time we shall see trees begin to walk to other locations in search of better nutrients and water? Your likely answer would be "Nope" for this too would be having drastic implications for our driving on the roads?

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What if you were told that in our life time land birds shall begin to swim? Again, your answer would be "not really", for this would also have drastic implications for our sushi (seafood) supplies for human consumption.

Most likely your responses to the above three questions are that these assumptions are wild prognostication, a figment of one's imagination. Agreed.

What if you were told that the Azaris will begin in our life time to wage war against Armenians in their attempt to recapture Artsakh (Ngoro-Karabakh), (an Armenian historic province long before the city of Tigranakert was built there in honor of King Tigranes the Great during the Hellenistic Period from 323 BC to 31 BC)? Naturally, the recapturing war would have dangerous consequences for the

twin Armenian republics.

What would be your response this time? Like many Armenians, if you say "farfetched" or that the "chances are very slim" because Russia is on our side and Azerbaijan will not dare to attack us or that Armenia is very strong now –then, I challenge you to continue reading this commentary to let your imagination soar to see the likely eventuality. We do not want to see you caught by the enemy while you are sleeping.

Table 1 contains some sobering statistics to convince you of the growing danger from Azerbaijan as is objectively shown in the statistical data of Armenia vs. Azerbaijan.

Table 1
Some Statistics* on Population, Economy, & Military

Armenia	Azerbaijan	Difference
Population:		
2, 970,488 (2012)	9,493,600 (2012)	219% >Armenia
Population Growth Rate:		
0.107 % (2012)	1.17% (2012)	990% >Armenia
Total Fertility Rate:		
1.38 child./woman (2012)	1.92 child./woman	39%>Armenia
Budget Expenditures:		
$2.57 billion (2011)	$20.56 billion (2011)	700%>Armenia
Budget Revenues:		
$1.92 billion (2009)	$12.85 billion (2009)	569%>Armenia
Debt – External:		
$7.34 billion (2011)	$3.89 billion (2011)	88 %< Armenia
Exports:		
$1.32 billion (2011)	$23.48 billion (2011)	1680%>Armenia
Imports:		
$3.54 billion (2011)	$7.08 billion (2011)	100%>Armenia
GDP Purchas. Power Parity:		

$17.95 billion (2011)	$93.02 billion (2011)	420%>Armenia
GDP- Real Growth Rate:		
4.6% (2011)	0.2% (2011)	2200 %< Armenia!
Unemployment Rate:		
5.9% (2011)	1% (2011)	490 %< Armenia
Labor Force:		
1.194 million (2011)	6.119 million (2011)	412%>Armenia
Armed Forces Personnel:**		
41,000 (2008)	72,000 (2008)	76%>Armenia
Forces in aircraft:		
6 units (2008)	54 units (2008)	800%>Armenia
Forces in Tanks:		
110 units (2008)	220 units (2008)	100%>Armenia
Forces in helicopters:		
8 units (2008)	15 units (2008)	88%>Armenia
Manpower – Males Ages 15-49:		
919, 582	2,159,450 (2008)	135%>Armenia
Manpower – Reaching Military Age:		
30, 548 (2008)	94,402 (2008)	209%>Armenia

*The sources of the above statistics are based on estimates provided by the CIA (Central Intelligence Administration of the United States) Factbook, Walden University Research Department, and Michigan State University Research Center – and not by the Armenian or Azerbaijani governments; (therefore, they are rather more reliable).

**The branches of the Armed Forces of Armenia consist of Ground Forces, Nagorno-Karabakh Self Defense Force (NKSDF), Air Force and Air Defense while the Azerbaijani Armed Forces consist of Air, Army, Navy, Air and Air Defense Forces. While the stats on the population and the economy of the two countries are current from 2011 and 2012, the military estimates are from the year 2008 which were the latest available. Military information is ordinarily sensitive and secret. During the last

decade, however Azerbaijan has amassed greater military might because of petro dollars and "allies" like Israel, Turkey, and the USA.

Let your mind soar on the wings of imagination to see the daunting reality of the impending national problems facing the Republic of Armenia, and the Republic of Artsakh. Most of us adhere to the fossilized idea that we are protected or even invincible and that Big Brother Russia will come to the rescue in the event of a full-fledged attack.

The twin Armenian republics are doing their best to be ready to defend the motherland. The idea is not to alarm anyone but to serve as a wake-up call to the Diaspora to get up and organize for such an eventuality. History tells us that the Armenians have been caught unprepared, unorganized too many times in the past. It seems we tend not to learn from our experiences. Let us not use stone age speed for moving forward.

As is shown in Table 1, Azerbaijan outshined Armenia in all the three major areas of the population, economy, and the military. There was only one exception in the economy area and that Armenia had a higher GDP growth rate than Azerbaijan. In all other aspects, Azerbaijan excelled with a flying color.

Azerbaijan's might is predicated on its ethnic diversity consisting of the amalgamation of Mountain Jews, Caucasian Albanians, Pontic Greeks, Arabs, Armenians, Assyrians, Georgians, Persians, Kurds, Turks to name a few. I read somewhere that during the Soviet era over 30,000 Armenian women had married with Azari men.

Azerbaijan's might is also based on its main jihadist religion of Islam, steady population growth, rising petro dollars and committed allies. What I mean is that we are not dealing with a small primitive nomadic Turkish tribe coming from Central Asia any more. Like Turkey, Azerbaijan is achievement oriented with a vibrant population imbued with many cultures.

While the Armenian Diaspora raises funds for roads, schools, and housing, the defense of the two Armenian republics is relegated. We need to beef up the defense; without it our roads, schools, and houses will probably be trodden and destroyed one of these days.

Akin to earthquake preparedness, it is imperative to face the near future challenges looming on the horizon despite our reliance on foreign intervention on and in our behalf.

If the Diaspora were organized, we would have made capital of the recent release of the convicted murderer (Azerbaijani officer Ramil Safarov) for the gruesome axing of an Armenian officer while in sleep in 2004. NATO, Hungary, and Azerbaijan should have been put to shame for the transfer, release and glorification of this mad man.

The criminal was not a lone man, or just one person. Condoning the act, rewarding the criminal, treating the criminal as a national hero indicates that Azerbaijan fails to meet the human standards of Western civilization. The entire nation, therefore, has to be blamed for glorifying the criminal who committed a barbarian act and whose government not only condoned it, but also treated the

heinous crime as a brave act.

The Talmud has a saying: "Who can protest an injustice but does not is an accomplice to the act". To leave the destiny of Artsakh in the hands of the Azaris would be a precarious proposition to say the least.

The barbaric act alone should justify to the rest of the civilized world as to why the Armenians of Artsakh should remain independent based on self-determination and not under the criminally minded government of Azerbaijan.

In the event of war, a worldwide Armenian organization would play a vital role in defending the motherland. How many Diaspora Armenians would be willing and ready to come to the rescue of their brothers and sisters should be known in advance? How many Diaspora Armenians would volunteer for the defense? What basic preparedness is needed and who would provide that, etc., etc.?

When Armenia is under attack, most of the young and able-bodied Armenians are in overseas working. A large number of them are married and have families. When war breaks out, it would be difficult to respond to the call of duty. It would be chaotic as the war drags on. Sustainability is the main issue here. How long can Armenia endure the human and material loss as a result of protracted war?

A worldwide Armenian organization would instill and even boost confidence in the twin Armenian republics that their brothers and sisters have committed themselves to helping out with the conflict. Such a social mobilization would also serve as a deterrent to the enemy by showing that they will be facing the federation of the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Artsakh, and the formidable Armenian Diaspora. In this way, we would be practicing management by objectives rather than management by crisis.

History is mostly made by individuals rather than groups. We need leaders to step forth and begin to organize the Diaspora.

A glance at the Armenian history would show one that Armenians have been disunited even in the face of the enemy. Then as now, Armenians have suffered from lack of a world organization as noted by many non-Armenian observers.

Against the backdrop of increasing threat from Azerbaijan, we cannot sleep while the sworn enemy readies for a forceful recapture of Artsakh. Let us not kid ourselves about the power of Azerbaijan. Let us take that as given even if we are wrong about it, and proceed planning from that premise. As you well know, wars are not fought on horseback nowadays nor are they carried on in the trenches anymore.

High-tech warfare has already been used in many of the recent international conflicts. For example, weapons in Iraqi war have been high-tech wonders, like unmanned drones that drop Hellfire

missiles on the enemy below, troupes like US Sergeant Christopher Lejeune went into battle with different kind of weapons, one so stealthy that few Americans even knew of its deployment. In today's world, where paradigm shifts are the order of the day, change is the only constant.

Many Armenians hold the notion that in the event of war with Azerbaijan, Armenia will come out victorious. That may very well be true, but the price of victory maybe too high. However, there is such a thing as victory in defeat: the fateful epic Battle of Avarayr (May 26, 451 AD) is a case in point. Also, there is defeat in victory: the tiny Armenian nation cannot afford to lose any part of its youth to war. Armenia is already bleeding from dual loss of mostly able-bodied young men and women to debilitating brain drain, skilled laborers and to the imperceptible jaws of assimilation of the Diaspora around the world.

Unleash your imaginative powers to soar in the realm of possibilities and to come up with the conviction that Armenians should unite internationally in order to be able to face this impending calamity. I know that most of you agree with that, yet hesitate to clear away the negative energy of dwelling on our differences to put the muscle behind the unity idea.

Our national purpose is bigger than our differences. Our only hope is you, the young Armenian men and women, to come forth and put some activation energy in our veins to make us find a common ground to move forward and face the inconvenient reality of the growing threat to our very existence.

Note: My special thanks go to Ms. Zara Mokatsian for her careful review of the statistical data in Table 1.

- *Dr. Z. S. Andrew Demirdjian is the author of* ***The Viability of a Worldwide Armenian Organization***