THE A,B,C OF HEADLINE STUPEFACTION

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Category: Opinions

By Jirair Tutunjian, 4 July 2013

We live in strange times. Truths are lies and propaganda is the coin of the realm. People are bombed to the Stone Age for their own protection. Countries are destroyed with chemical bombs to make them democratic. There are foods which make you slim, smart, beautiful… An intelligence contractor is branded a criminal for "revealing" the global electronic monitoring network which has been a public knowledge for more than two decades…

Yerevan and Moscow have flashed an uncanny talent in the sorcerer's game of turning dross into gold and black into white in their recent quarrel over Armenia see-saw membership in CSTO and its ally Russia's $1-billion sale of arms and armaments to Armenia's enemy Azerbaijan.

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Here's a whirlwind of recent headlines and statements from Armenia and Russia:

A) The Russian-led Customs Union will ensure positive effects on all participants.

- The Customs Union is nothing more than a dangerous phantom.
- EU warns Armenia against joining Customs Union.
- Armenia Expert: Armenia to deepen ties with EU, Russia and Iran.
- Armenia is the only Collective Security Treaty Organization's (CSTO) member to participate in NATO peacekeeping missions in Afghanistan.
- Dikran Sarkissian denies any contradiction between Yerevan's involvement in Eurasia Union integration process and the desire to sign a far-reaching Associate Agreement with the EU.

B) Nikolay Borduzha, secretary-general of Collective Security Treaty Organization's (CSTO), said the sale of $1-billion worth of weapons to Azerbaijan is just a business deal.

- Nikolay Petrushev, secretary of Vladimir Putin's Security Council, says the arms sale to Azerbaijan poses no security threat to Armenia.
- "Armenia should condemn the deal and submit an official protest." Ara Papian, director of

Modus Vivendi think-tank.

- Artur Baghdassarian, secretary, National Security Council: “Armenia should not criticize Russia for selling weapons to Azerbaijan despite its military alliance with Armenia.”
- Political analyst Hrant Shahnazarian: “The type of military equipment Azerbaijan has purchased cannot shift the situation.”
- Naira Hayrumyan, ArmeniaNow: “What is the meaning of being a member of this organization if it assumed the responsibility to defend Armenia’s interests in case of aggression against Karapagh, but sells weapons to Armenia’s enemy?”
- Russia Has No Right to Sell Arms to the Enemy
- Russia Sale Doesn’t Break the Law

C) Moscow Hails ‘Strategic’ Military Ties With Armenia

- "Of course we cannot but worry about the sale of arms to Azerbaijan by our strategic ally," Deputy Foreign Minister Shavarsh Kocharian.
- Artsrun Hovhanisyan, Armenia defense ministry spokesman posted in Facebook that Azerbaijan’s acquisition of arms and armament is not controversial or problematic.
- Armenian-Russian Military and Technological cooperation Enters New Level: Nikolai Petrushev.
- Moscow sold advanced weaponry to Azerbaijan, including two surface-to-air missile system of S-300PMU2 Favorite type, which is more advanced version of the S-300PS that was delivered to Armenia.
- Armenia’s Air-Force Will Be Expanded. The Russian military base No. 102 in Gyumri and frontier will be re-equipped as well as 2014 will be very important year in respect to rearmament, said the secretary of Armenia’s National Security Council. As well, the base will be modernized and upgraded. It’s home to S-300 anti-aircraft missiles and MiG-29 fighters.
- Military Expert David Jamalyan noted that Baku is buying weapons, which would break our defense on the Artsakh front, but is confident that the recent purchase of arms will not help Azerbaijan reach its objective. He added: “There are no ideal allies.”

D) While Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan are CSTO allies of Armenia, at a recent summit of Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States agreed with Turkey and Azerbaijan to combine their forces against the Armenian Diaspora.

E) Russia’s policy toward Armenia is a copy of Byzantium policies toward Armenia. It’s to undermine

- Armenia politically, militarily demographically, and to eventually swallow Armenia.
- The Russian base’s contract to stay in Armenia was extended through 2044.
- Russia’s agenda for Armenia is to weaken it into incorporation.
- Armenia is a fulcrum for Russia’s efforts to rebuild its clout in the post-Soviet Transcaucasia.
- Through its Compatriot States program Russia lures thousands to leave Armenia and settle in Russia.

- Russia and Armenia Sign New Defense Accord. The new document includes a treaty on the development of collaboration in the defense technology sector between the Armenian Defense Ministry and Russia's Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation.

F) President Ilham Aliyev Threatens Armenia With War.

- Russian Expert Rules out Karabakh War Renewal.
- Russia Prepares for War.
- Russia Attacks Armenia.
- Moscow's Blackmail Goes Beyond All Bounds.
- In Case of War Russia Will Fulfill its Obligations to Armenia.

G) President Serge Sarkissian Does Not Attend CSTO Summit in Kyrgyzstan. Cites Being Busy.

- Serge Sarkissian Skips CSTO Summit to Vacation in Germany.
- PM Dikran Sarkissian attends CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) Conclave in Minsk. He is accompanied by Armenia's minister of finance, deputy minister of foreign affairs, and the minister of defense.
- Sarkissian's non-attendance of the CSTO summit was perceived by Russia as a prelude to Armenia's possible withdrawal from the organization… it demonstrated its displeasure by selling arms to Azerbaijan.
- Armenian leader's non-attendance at CSTO summit not big trouble: Hmayak Hovhanissyan, president of the Armenian Political Analysts' Union.

H) Customs Union Proposal Would be in the Ordinary Armenian's Interest

- Customs Union of No Use to Armenia
- How Warm is the EU Embrace?
- Russia Should Know Armenia Always Has an Alternative
- EU is Still Upbeat on Association Agreement with Armenia

I) Armenia's Number-One Problem is Emigration: Communist Party First- Secretary Ruben Tovmasyan. (And all the time we wrong-headedly thought it was poverty and unemployment, corruption, and the absence of the rule of law.)

J) Armenia's refusal to join Customs Union resulted in Russia increasing the price of gas.

- Alexander Krilov, Russian expert: Armenia is purchasing Russian arms at domestic Russian prices, while Azerbaijan pays higher prices.
- Vladislav Shurgin, editor-in-chief, "Zavtra": The motive is clear—the Russian side needs money.

K) Armenia and Russia Advancing Space Cooperation.

(Perhaps facing Martians, they will not quarrel with each other out there).