

# THE THOUGHTLESS NEIGHBORS OF ARMENIA

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**✘ Editorial, 30 September 2014**

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Ankara also refuses to acknowledge the Genocide of Armenians, let alone offer to return some of Western Armenia. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan soldiers make almost daily incursions into Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia as Baby Aliev Tweets threats to its western neighbor. Recently Baku has begun making deranged claims that Armenia is part of historic Azerbaijan, although the fabrication called Azerbaijan isn't even a century old. Finally, the Turkbeijan Twins have publicly gloated that because of their blockade of Armenia, the latter's economy is in a downward spiral and the population has sharply declined.

North of Armenia is—to put it mildly—an unreliable Georgia. Because it lies (double entendre intended) between Russia and Armenia, it has been--for several decades—Yerevan's lifeline to the north. Armenia needs a friendly and peaceful Georgia. However, the latter has a long anti-Armenian tradition and now oppresses Armenians of Javakhk, and through ethnocentric—if not racist--policies tries to assimilate the Armenians of Georgia. Yerevan has been silent in the face of Tbilisi's provocative policies because Yerevan needs the Georgian “bridge” to Russia.

In recent years Turkey has strengthened its presence in Georgia through investments, technical and military assistance. It has urged Tbilisi to settle Turkish Mingrelians in Armenian Javakhk. This past

summer Armenia witnessed the further strengthening of economic, political, military ties between Georgia and the Turkbeijan Twins. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline, the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway have become the cornerstones of the trilateral partnership. And just a few weeks ago, Tbilisi is said to have announced ("Chorort Ishkhanoutune", Sept. 3) that it would not allow Russian military planes to fly to Armenia using Georgian air space. According to the newspaper, the Russian base in Gyumri is short of supplies because of the ban. Such a decision would pose an existential threat to Armenia in case of Azerbaijani attack.

That leaves Iran as Armenia's only reliable neighbor. Tehran is eager to strengthen its relations with Yerevan, invest in Armenia, help build railways, roads, oil industry infrastructure, etc. Unfortunately, Iran itself is hurting in a Western blockade. As well, Iran is a revolutionary Islamic regime: no one knows where it's headed. There's also—for Armenia—the problem of putting all its eggs in one basket. Finally, Moscow had sabotaged or rejected closer ties between Yerevan and Tehran. Moscow wants to be the only game in town for Armenia. Russia has made no secret that it wants its armies in southern Armenia and in Nagorno-Karabakh as "peacemakers". Since it owns much of Armenia's infrastructure, since Armenia's economy is vastly dependent on Russia, since Armenia depends on Moscow for its safety against the Turkic Twins, Kremlin can throw its weight around at will: witness President Serge Sarkissian volte face as it switched from the European Community to Russia's Eurasian bloc last year.

To state the obvious, twenty-three years after independence, Armenia finds itself in a dismal state. The economy is hurting and the population decline continues unabated. How can a weak economy and negative demographic statistics maintain an army which would overcome nine-million population of Azerbaijan and an economy which is luxuriating in billions of petro dollars?

If Armenia's population decline continues, Yerevan/Stepanagerd could be forced to make suicidal concessions to Baku or even opt to join the Russian Federation. In the above circumstances, a besieged Armenia/Nagorno-Karabakh might also be tempted to go for a preemptive strike of bellicose Azerbaijan. In such an offensive Armenians might also be tempted to end their siege by establishing a "land bridge" to connect Nagorno-Karabakh to southwestern Russia (Dagestan). As the bird flies, the distance from Armenian-occupied Agdam to Dagestan is about 150 km. The reckless idea has already been floated by Lieutenant-General and Artsakh War hero Arkady Der-Matteosyan. It might be his idea or he could be fronting for a political group, factions in the army or even people in the parliaments of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. The idea could also be a trial balloon.

If Armenia succeeds in such a dangerous strike, it would command the pipelines which transport gas and oil to Georgia, Turkey, the Mediterranean, and to Europe. Since the pipelines were funded by Western investments, the repercussions of such an Armenian aggression would be global. Armenia would be condemned all around. Turkey could threaten Armenia. One thing is certain: the Armenians wouldn't try such a risky offensive without the green light from Moscow.

~~As reckless as such an aggression would be, desperate times call for desperate measures. Errors~~  
conceive further errors, just as lies do. As the Turkbeijan choke becomes unbearable, the Armenian  
side might decide it is do or die time.

The thoughtless Turkbeijan Twins should realize the pressure they have exerted might backfire.  
When driven into a corner, even the smallest boy will fight the bully.

It's time Armenia's thoughtless neighbors realized that hotheads in Armenia might decide to go for  
broke and send Baby Aliev's fiefdom to kingdom come.

