

The development of Armenian-Iranian cooperation is a necessity



By Zhanna Vardanyan
Iranologist

After the end of the 2020 war in Nagorno-Karabakh (Armenian: Artsakh), the region did not achieve peace; instead, new challenges arose, which are now common to both Armenia and Iran.

First of all, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remains unresolved, and in addition, Azerbaijan violated the November 9, 2020 agreement by closing the Lachin Corridor, which connects Armenia and Artsakh, and has kept Artsakh under blockade for more than seven months. As a result, Baku does not even allow humanitarian cargo transportation to Artsakh, depriving Armenians of basic living conditions and deepening the humanitarian and energy crisis in the country.

Moreover, Azerbaijan extends its territorial ambitions to Armenia and Iran. To legitimize its actions against these two countries, Azerbaijan promotes the so-called West Azerbaijan and South Azerbaijan theses, claiming that the territory of Armenia and the northwest of Iran belong to Azerbaijan and should be "returned". The issue of the so-called "Zangezur Corridor" was put forward as the first action on the way to achieving that goal. "The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Armenia have common interests and common concerns in the field of national security," emphasized Iranian Ambassador to Armenia Abbas Badakhshan Zohuri in a recent interview with the Armenian think tank Orbeli. It is evident that the so-called 'Zangezur Corridor issue' is one of those common concerns for Armenia and Iran.

This corridor idea, sponsored by Turkey and Azerbaijan, aims beyond merely connecting Nakhichevan and Azerbaijan, which already have an existing connection through Iran. Instead, the actual objectives are to conquer Armenian territory, particularly Syunik, to eliminate the Armenian-Iranian border, to present territorial ambitions to the north of Iran, and pursue the unification of the Pan-Turkic world.

Many observers were surprised as to why the two governments of Azerbaijan and Turkey are insisting so much on the possibility of rising tensions among related parties. Gradually, the realities became known and the understanding of experts is that the intention behind these extensive links

that connect Nakhchivan to the Republic of Azerbaijan is that, first, they would divide Armenia into two parts and, secondly, they disconnect Iran and Armenia, severing a link that dates back to the era of the Achaemenid and Parthian Empires. Third, it would limit Iran's connection to the outside world, and from then on, we would be neighbor to 14 countries, instead of 15, and the Islamic Republic of Iran's free connection with the North Caucasus, Russia and the European Continent will be disrupted. Any change in regional borders will cause long-term tensions.

Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior adviser to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei pointed out in his last article.

Despite Armenia's repeated statements that it is ready to provide rail and road communication between Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan through its territory, it insists that these routes must be under the exclusive control of Armenia.

Unfortunately, Azerbaijan continues to employ threats of force to obtain the "corridor". Periodic attacks on Armenia's borders are aimed at oppressing Armenia and extracting concessions. In September 2022, Azerbaijan even launched a large-scale operation, attacking the borders of RA Syunik, Vayots Dzor, and Gegharkunik. It should be mentioned that the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia clarified that Iranian actions helped to stop a further deterioration of the September 2022 attack from Azerbaijan.

Nevertheless, Azerbaijan persists in escalating the situation to this day. It continues to arm itself, with significant purchases from Israel, and further strengthens relations with Israel through high-level visits, including the president and the minister of defense. Additionally, Azerbaijani-Turkish military exercises continue, and Azerbaijan undergoes a wide process of integration with Turkey's NATO army. All these developments indicate Azerbaijan's preparation for another potential war.

Given these circumstances, the development of Armenian-Iranian cooperation, especially in the security sector, becomes imperative. The longstanding Armenian-Iranian relations in the region must be placed on a qualitatively new basis to prevent any threat to the interests of both countries. Armenia and Iran serve as the main barriers to disrupting Pan-Turkic plans. Moreover, Armenia is considered an important route for Iran, while Iran acts as a gateway to the outside world for Armenia. This connection between the two countries must remain uninterrupted to avoid potential disaster in the region.

Armenia - Azerbaijan: Even a zero-efficiency process can be important



By Armen Petrosyan
Expert on regional issues

On July 15, the second meeting of the current year between Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan and President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev took place in Brussels through the mediation of the president of the European Council, Charles Michel. After the meeting, Michel made a final statement presenting the results of the negotiations. The Azerbaijani and Armenian sides also issued official statements regarding the meeting.

During the summary of negotiations, which lasted about two hours and 45 minutes, the most impressive circumstance was perhaps the enthusiastic attitude of a high-ranking EU official. It is natural in case of such situations, when there is an objective need to "save the face" of the negotiation format under the minimal effectiveness of the process. Since, according to Michel's statement, all the acute issues of the settlement process were discussed: border delimitation, unblocking of communications, the humanitarian crisis created in Artsakh and the rights and security of Artsakh Armenians, as well as the issues of the roadmap for a peace treaty. However, no final agreement was reached on any of the deep issues in Azerbaijan-Armenia relations, which is the core of the process.

According to the president of the European Council, the meeting was "frank and important". With the above-mentioned thematic division, regarding territorial integrity and sovereignty, the two sides reconfirmed their willingness to mutually recognize the territory of Armenia, which covers 29,800 sq. km and Azerbaijan's 86,600 sq. km. Furthermore, they reconfirmed the implementation of the delimitation based on the 1991 Almaty Declaration. The leaders of the two countries agreed to accelerate the work of the commissions. Regarding the unblocking of regional communications, the technical details of future transport agreements which will respect the principles of sovereignty, jurisdiction, equality and reciprocity. The promotion of railway construction has been encouraged, and the EU is ready to support it financially.

Regarding the humanitarian crisis caused by the blockade of Artsakh, Michel noted: "I emphasized the need to open the Lachin Road and also noted Azerbaijan's willingness to provide humanitarian supplies via Aghdam. I see both options as important and encourage humanitarian deliveries from both sides to ensure the needs of the population are met".

Regarding the issue of the rights and security of the people of Artsakh, the EU once again expressed its support for "direct dialogue between Baku and the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast."

Regarding the peace treaty negotiations, Michel said that now is the most decisive stage and called on both leaders "to take further courageous steps to ensure decisive and irreversible progress on the normalization track." They also discussed humanitarian issues, particularly the topic of the fate of Armenian detainees and Azerbaijani criminals.

As it has already been mentioned, looking point by point at all the key directions of the Brussels negotiations, it is clearly seen that no progress has been recorded in the fundamental disagreements of the parties. The reason for this is very simple: under the current geopolitical and regional realities, Azerbaijan is not ready for even the slightest compromise. The position of the Azerbaijani authorities remains fanatical and uncompromising. The political officials of Azerbaijan believe that after the 44-day war in 2020, Armenia has completely capitulated, and they should not make even the slightest concession to establish peace in the region. The presence of competing Russian and Western platforms in the Azerbaijan-Armenia settlement process significantly contributes to Baku's position, which provides an additional maneuverability opportunity for Azerbaijan, as well as the lack of mood of the international community to push Baku to concessions, which is due to the geopolitical situation caused by the Ukrainian crisis, Azerbaijan's energy and infrastructure capabilities, and the nature of Baku-Ankara relations.

As a consequence, while using the continuous policy of force and threat of force in the direction of both Armenia and Artsakh, Azerbaijan is trying its best to disrupt the negotiation process and, what's more, on behalf of Armenia, so that Yerevan would refuse the negotiation and

The need to prevent the destruction of the Armenianness of Artsakh



By Artak Khachatryan
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The rhetoric of some political officials of Azerbaijan, particularly, the statements about the disintegration of state institutions in Artsakh, are not new in the context of Azerbaijani politics. Since the Soviet times, Azerbaijan has conducted and currently continues to conduct a policy of destruction of Armenianness in Artsakh. This policy has been particularly active since the 1930s, within the framework of the so-called 'korenization' policy. Soviet korenization in the case of Azerbaijan

created institutions: Academy of Sciences, Turkic Studies Centers, and Theories about History. Institutions created processes, with the end result of forming mobilized nation. From an anthropological point of view, the important existential basis of a mobilized nation is the creation of history. Contrary to Azerbaijan, which was just on the way to creating these institutions, they already existed in the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO): The territory as a compact collective existed, history, language, cultural continuity, educational centers existed, in terms of statehood, the institutional memory about the merits of khamsa was present. There was also an important fact, that both during the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan (1918-1920) and during the first years of the Soviet Union, the Armenians of

Perspectives on Armenia

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