

From: Tavlarides, Mark <mtavlarides@bgrdc.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2019 3:23 PM
To: Tavlarides, Mark <mtavlarides@bgrdc.com>
Subject: Azerbaijan Update

Good afternoon,

I thought you might be interested in the below article from Stephen Blank, a senior fellow at the American Foreign Policy Council, titled, "[How to resume a war.](#)" Blank discussed the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, noting Armenia's failure to adhere to the Madrid Principles regarding a solution to the conflict. He wrote, "Repudiating those principles and trying to force the Minsk Group or the OSCE to recognize an independent Nagorno-Karabakh, almost certain to unite with Armenia to create a greater Armenia that occupies Azerbaijani territory, is nothing more than a recipe for endless war."

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,
Mark

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How to resume a war

By Stephen Blank - - Sunday, April 21, 2019

ANALYSIS/OPINION:

The war in Nagorno-Karabakh does not only occur in the South Caucasus. It also plays out in the United States with members of the Armenian diaspora and its organizations,

such as the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), playing proxy for any number of issues. Though, to Nagorno-Karabakh, their posture has no basis in reality, for the territory occupied by Armenia is overwhelmingly recognized as belonging to Azerbaijan by a majority of governments of the world.

In international efforts to broker a peace, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) established a group of three powers, France, Russia and the United States, known as the Minsk Group. In turn, it formulated the Madrid principles in 2007-09 to guide a solution to the conflict.

These agreed upon principles call for the immediate return of Azerbaijani territories occupied by Armenia other than Nagorno-Karabakh; an interim status for Nagorno-Karabakh providing guarantees for its security and self-governance; a corridor from Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh; a future determination of Nagorno-Karabakh's legal status through a binding expression of will, the return of all internally displaced peoples to their residence and international security guarantees, including a peacekeeping operation. Period.

Seemingly coordinated with Yerevan, starting in 2016, the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) began attacking the Madrid Principles as being somehow reckless or undemocratic. The ANCA's real complaint, however, is that the Madrid Principles do not accept the idea that Nagorno-Karabakh is an independent territory. Of course, the Madrid Principles cannot accept Nagorno-Karabakh as independent because it is not independent by any measure.

Recently, though, the Armenian National Committee of America declared its opposition to the Madrid Principles pro forma. Driven by seemingly excessive nationalism, this statement not only demands Nagorno-Karabakh's independence, it also contains all manner of spurious charges. Essentially, the ANCA wants Nagorno-Karabakh declared independent, legitimizing thereby the acquisition of territory by conquest and ensuring that there will never be a solution to this conflict.

The Armenian National Committee of America holds facts ever-undisclosed, held jealously away from the world, that since the '90s, including following last year's Armenian revolution, the Nagorno-Karabakh war and the territorial claims growing from it have hijacked Armenian politics, leading to protracted demographic and economic crises.

Armenia is among the poorest nations of the world, cut off from all progress and prosperity its neighbors enjoy. Perhaps most closely held, Armenia is no friend nor ally of the U.S. and shares little of America's values. Armenia, again, largely as a result of the war, is a vassal of Russia, menially supporting the Kremlin on the world stage and closely allied with Iran.

These crises spawned the 2018 revolution that promised major democratic and economic reforms. A year later, these promises remain unfulfilled. Armenia and its new prime minister, Nicol Pashinyan, failed to formulate an effective negotiating strategy to bring the peace that is a precondition of effective reform, end the hemorrhaging of its population, stimulate effective democratic reform and economic growth, and even possibly extricating itself from Moscow and Tehran.

Armenia continues to promote the idea that delegates from Nagorno-Karabakh should participate in the negotiations as members of an independent state or political entity. This demand, suspiciously close to the Armenian National Committee of America's posture, guarantees that there can be no future negotiations because it prejudices their outcome from the outset. Neither do the ANCA's and Armenia's demands conform to the Madrid Principles that remain the only game in town and effective negotiating framework supported by the Minsk Group, Baku and Yerevan.

Although not in agreement on implementation, the principal actors have steadily negotiated on the basis of that document. Repudiating those principles and trying to force the Minsk Group or the OSCE to recognize an independent Nagorno-Karabakh, almost certain to unite with Armenia to create a greater Armenia that occupies Azerbaijani territory, is nothing more than a recipe for endless war. Certainly Armenians, except for the numerous war profiteers and extreme nationalists, will gain nothing from a renewed war.

Armenia's government's involvement with shaping this new ANCA document is unclear, however the resemblance between its demands and the Pashinyan government's stated position regarding negotiations is quite clear.

Neither the Armenian National Committee of America declaration nor Mr. Pashinyan's confused and contradictory stand on the peace process advance Armenian interests. In addition, Armenian Defense Minister David Tonoyan's recent bellicose call for "war and conquest for new territories" undermines the fragile peace process even further.

Instead, this declaration is an invitation or demand for resuming the war, a war that it is not certain Armenia would win. All it would obtain is a legacy of bitterness and more economic catastrophe, certainly not democracy, prosperity or an end to the decline in its population.

If Armenia truly wants all those beneficial outcomes, it must recognize that a settlement acceptable to both sides is the precondition of domestic progress and rein in inflamed nationalistic lobbies like the Armenian National Committee of America.

Stephen Blank is senior fellow at the American Foreign Policy Council. He is a former MacArthur fellow at the U.S. Army War College.

From: Tavlarides, Mark <mtavlarides@bgrdc.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 24, 2019 3:58 PM
To: Tavlarides, Mark <mtavlarides@bgrdc.com>
Subject: Azerbaijan Update

Good afternoon,

I thought you might be interested in the below article from Julie Stahl titled, "[Muslim Azerbaijan a Model for Co-Existence with Jewish State.](#)" Stahl noted Azerbaijan's and Israel's close relationship, including on oil, defense, agriculture, medicine, education, and information technology. She also discussed the religious tolerance in Azerbaijan, stating it is a model of co-existence with Israel. She quoted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has said Azerbaijan is "an example of what relations can be and should be between Muslims and Jews everywhere."

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,
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Muslim Azerbaijan a Model for Co-Existence with Jewish State

04-24-2019

Julie Stahl

BAKU - At a time when anti-Semitism is on the rise, one Muslim nation is getting attention for its friendship with Israel and the Jewish people. That country is Azerbaijan. Could it be a model for the rest of the Muslim world?

Azerbaijan sits at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. Like Iran, its pre-Islamic days more than 800 years ago, were dominated by the religion of Zoroastrianism.

With a population of nearly 10 million it's the 90th largest country in the world.

It's strategically positioned with Iran on its southern border, Turkey to the west and Russia to the north.

Located on the Caspian Sea, this former Soviet republic is one of the world's major oil producers. The capital Baku is the country's economic center.

"Azerbaijan is a source for about anything between quarter to one-third of the oil import to Israel and this flow of high-quality oil is very important to the State of Israel," said Dan Stav, Israel's ambassador to Azerbaijan.

Oil isn't the only thing flowing between the two countries. According to Azeri President Ilham Aliyev, Azerbaijan has purchased nearly \$5 billion worth of weapons systems from Israel.

"This is important for Azerbaijan to maintain its defense and existence in a very challenging strategic environment," Stav said.

In an interview in the Azeri capital, Baku, Stav told *CBN News* about his efforts to diversify the economic cooperation between the two countries.

"Israel can be of help, especially in development of the agricultural sector, which is a property of the government and we have cooperation with medical institutes and medical domain in general, education, IT," he said.

And the relationship goes beyond economy and defense.

"To be an ambassador to Azerbaijan is a special privilege because the relations between the Azeri people preceded the relations with the Jewish state," Stav said.

"The Mountainous Jewish community, according to some historical accounts has preceded Islam, Christianity. The first Jews, according to some myth arrived to Azerbaijan after the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 before Christ," he added.

The vast majority of the population here is Shiite Muslim but it's a secular country. For generations the Jewish community has felt at home here and since its independence, Azerbaijan has had good relations with Israel.

In a 2016 visit to Azerbaijan both Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Aliyev attested to the deep ties between Jews and Azeris.

"For centuries Jews and Azerbaijanis, lived in peace, friendship, and continue to live here in Azerbaijan and Jewish community in Azerbaijan is a very active part of our society. They contribute a lot to the development of modern Azerbaijan," Aliyev said.

"The attitude that you've shown to Jewish people in Azerbaijan over the years, one that has fostered this very strong bond of sympathy and admiration for Azerbaijan -- first of all with the 70,000 Jews who live in Israel, who are from Azerbaijan. It's a human bridge but also something we can show the world," Netanyahu said.

"The world sees so much intolerance, so much darkness. Well here is an example of what relations can be and should be between Muslims and Jews everywhere," Netanyahu added.

Many Azeri Jews from Israel go back regularly to visit their homeland.

"You don't do it if you come from an environment that (is) infested with anti-Semitism," Stav explained.

Israel and Azerbaijan have had diplomatic relations since 1992 -- after the fall of the Soviet Union.

"We don't consider Muslims as such our enemies and Azerbaijan is itself a proof that this is not the case," said Stav.

In sharp contrast, Iran is the other Shi'ite Muslim majority country in the neighborhood.

"There's such a startling difference between the two countries. Azerbaijan showed that it's not a matter of Shia," Stav added.

Despite years of animosity, Stav said there's a growing understanding among Muslim states in the region.

"Israel is not an enemy and cooperation can be very beneficial," he said. "Azerbaijan serves as an alternative model to the model that we know more -- whether it's a Salafi Islam or the political Shia Islam led by Iran and the Hezbollah."

The hope is that the Azeri-Israeli example of Muslim and Jew standing together will serve as an anchor of stability in the Middle East.

From: Tavlarides, Mark <mtavlarides@bgrdc.com>
Sent: Monday, April 15, 2019 10:47 AM
To: Tavlarides, Mark <mtavlarides@bgrdc.com>
Subject: IMF Managing Director Lagarde Supports Somalia's Efforts to Achieve Debt Relief

Good morning,

I wanted to bring to your attention the below press release from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde met last week with the Prime Minister of Somalia, Hassan Ali Khaire. They discussed Somalia's "impressive progress in building institutional capacity and implementing its economic reform program." Furthermore, Managing Director Lagarde voiced her support for Somalia's efforts to achieve debt relief, including through its current Staff Monitored Program (SMP).

Please let me know if you have any questions.

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IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde Supports Somalia's Efforts to Achieve Debt Relief

April 11, 2019

Ms. Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), met with Hassan Ali Khaire, Prime Minister of Somalia yesterday in Washington and issued the following statement:

“I was very pleased to meet with Prime Minister Khaire and his economic team at the IMF headquarters. We had a very productive meeting and exchanged views on Somalia’s impressive progress in building institutional capacity and implementing its economic reform program amid a continuing fragile security situation. The prime minister reiterated the government’s strong commitment to the policies under the Staff Monitored Program (SMP), which expires at the end of the month.

“Following satisfactory completion of the current SMP, I am optimistic that a follow-up program can be agreed that meets one of the key requirements for Somalia to reach the Decision Point under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. Continued strong performance, together with support from international partners, will pave the way for Somalia to receive debt relief in the near future. In this regard, I assured the prime minister of the IMF’s full support for Somalia’s efforts.”