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The Nagorno-Karabakh Story the US Does Not Want You to Know

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Région : Russia and FSU

In the early morning hours of April 1-2 Azerbaijan launched a major military offensive into the disputed region Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) that's been controlled and defended by NK Armenian forces since the Russian brokered truce ended a bloody three year war in 1994. While Azeri President Ilham Aliyev was flying back to Baku after meeting 24 hours earlier with John Kerry in Washington who claimed "an ultimate resolution" had been reached, Azerbaijan was already once again at war with the NK Armenians.

The surprise element combined with the full scale major military operation spearheading a three pronged attack on Nagorno-Karabakh contact line from the southern, southeastern and northeastern directions resulted in the Aziri army seizing at least five Armenian villages and several strategic elevated heights inside the disputed territory with heavy loss of life reported on both sides including Armenian civilians whose home were shelled by Aziri artillery mortars and rockets. Though a ceasefire three days into the heavy fighting was brokered by Russia, repeated ceasefire breaches and continued combat operations have been observed.



Evidence that you'll never see in Western MSM coverage is now surfacing from Armenian press documenting not only is the Azeri military still daily violating Tuesday's ceasefire but far more significant and alarming is that the Azeris have been attacking villages inside the Republic of Armenia, not just in the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave. On Friday April 8 the press secretary of the Armenian Republic Ministry of Defense Artsrun Hovhannisyan disclosed that Azeri forces have been shelling civilian settlements with 120mm mortar fire in the villages of Karmir, Ttujur and Baghanisin within the Armenian provinces of Tavush and Gegharkunet. Fortunately there has been no reported casualties as yet. But when the first victims do get reported, the consequences for Azerbaijan could become far reaching.

By committing an act of war killing Armenian civilians on a second warfront by shelling civilian targets within the Republic of Armenia, the Azeri government is showing that its unilateral aggression remains unfazed, attacking an allied nation holding a mutual defense pact with Russia that stipulates if Armenia is attacked, Russia is compelled to come to Armenia's aid and defense. Azerbaijan's artillery shelling may force Russia to shift from acting as prime mediator in the Azeri-Armenian conflict to being drawn into the escalating war against Azerbaijan. The implications of such an expanding war are so serious it could destabilize not just the immediate region but trigger a rippling effect globally. This potentially grave development of course feeds right into the sinister hegemonic plan that the neocons behind US Empire have been fiendishly hoping and working towards for some time, to tie up Russia directly involving Putin in fighting yet another war on his doorstep that could quickly unravel to ignite World War III.

Obviously prior to firing artillery shells into residential villages inside Armenia, the Baku government was fully aware of the risks involved in committing such acts of war against the Russian bear's defense ally Armenia. Because the precedent of launching artillery volleys into Armenian villages have occurred largely unnoticed and unaccountable before as three civilians were killed last September from Azeri shelling, Baku appears willing to take the

calculated risk that Moscow will again not respond. Upping the aggression ante also suggests that Azerbaijan has full support not only from its closest, war-zealot Turk ally but also at least US-NATO's tacit approval as well. And if this is the case, it confirms the US Empire continues to recklessly throw all caution to the wind, constantly baiting and provoking an all-out West versus East military showdown heading in only one direction – world war.

With a population close to 10 million possessing land that holds some of the world's largest oil reserves, the Azerbaijani government has been busily buying up the deadliest weapons its oil-rich money can afford from Russia ($4 billion), Israel ($1.6 billion) and the US among others just to seek revenge against Armenians living in Nogorno-Karabakh, the de facto autonomous enclave the Azeris maintain was stolen from them in the war they lost in the 1990's. So from 2004 to 2014 Azerbaijan has increased its military spending twenty-fold. In contrast, the NK target that the Azeris are wanting so badly to vanquish and destroy by brute military force is a population of little more than 150,000 that receives no big arms deals from any major power. Instead they are totally dependent on the economically strained Republic of Armenia for its sole military support and supplies

The unbroken will of this small Armenian population to defend its ancestral homeland that it's inhabited far longer than Azeris ever became a Turkish offshoot as a nation or ethnicity is the same reason why 20,000 Armenian soldiers outfought and defeated 64,000 Azeris. And the Azerbaijani military actively recruited mercenary foreign nationals from Turkey's Grey Wolves, Chechen militants and al Qaeda terrorists back in the 1991-1994 war. In recent years ongoing skirmishes at the contact line along the NK as well as Armenian borders with Afghanistan have increased with last August and September flurried gunfire exchange an example of the growing intensity of border flare-ups.

Spokesman for the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic David Babayan stated several days ago that evidence is emerging that strongly points to Azerbaijan once again being joined by the unsavory likes of Turkish Grey Wolves and even Islamic State terrorists fresh from the Raqqa, Syria battlefields. Firsthand accounts from witnesses in the overrun NK village of Talish claim that Armenian families and soldiers are being beheaded and brutally executed with ears cut off that confirm the pattern of barbaric foreign mercenaries fighting alongside the Azeri army. Babayan also added that townspeople from surrounding Azerbaijani villages have recently fled for their lives while terrorists looting their homes have even been reported to murder and rape local Azeri citizens. Other accounts based on military sources also reveal that an Aziri ISIS brigade has rushed from Syria to fight another war in Nagorno-Karabakh. Finally the Iranian *ARAN agency* has published that ISIS has had a special training ground reserved for Azeri Islamic State recruits located on the Iraqi-Syrian border that is now fighting against Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. With the media blackout in Western nations, you will never hear that ISIS terrorists are now fighting and committing atrocities against civilians in the Armenian enclave.

Already calls for Hague war crime tribunals are sounding as officials in the Republic of Armenia are beginning the lengthy process to gather eyewitness testimonials and accounts documenting war crimes that the Azeri military has committed against civilians in Nagorno-Karabakh. Vice President of the National Assembly of the Armenian Republic Eduard Sharmazanov was actually speaking to the Armenian Diaspora:

> We must use all the platforms to show the civilized world that Azerbaijan, that

> takes military actions against civilians, must be punished for violating the norms of international law and of the Geneva Conventions.

Ever since the 1994 truce, the Azeris have been plotting revenge for losing the Nogorno-Karabakh War. Their agenda has always been as soon as they gain a military advantage with all its bought advanced weaponry, they will invade and retake the small enclave by force. Impatient over "the frozen conflict" after twenty years of OSCE Minsk Group's utter failure to resolve the conflict, recently spurred on by fellow Turk Erdogan's "fight to the end" rhetoric and backroom pressure along with US Empire's tacit approval meeting with Kerry 24 hours ahead of the latest incursion, combined with continued record low oil prices that created domestic unrest and public protest in Baku in recent months, a week ago Azeri President Ilham Aliyev chose to rally his nation behind the Azeri "wag the dog" flag launching the biggest military offensive into Nagono-Karabakh since the war ended 22 years ago.

While the deranged Erdogan was in Washington last week, he met with high powered lobbyists Mercury LLC he has hired to push the absurdist propaganda that Armenians are the biggest threat to everyone's national security since their military alliance with Russia is rapidly building. As the Armenian genocide remembrance day April 24th approaches, Erdogan as Aliyev's "big brother" is on the warpath to finish the job not completed a century ago and it's no accident that a day after he railed on about the threat Armenians pose to the world, little brother launched his military campaign against the NK Armenians. The Russians are fully aware of Erdogan's antagonism as vice speaker of Russia's State Duma recognized the Turkish president as "a third force" behind the NG violence.

Yet another behind the scenes culprit to unrest and violence in this world is Israel. It's just been learned that Azerbaijan has given Israel full use of its airfields near the Iran border. Israel's sophisticated advances in unmanned drone technology changing modern warfare and the Jewish State's increasingly close relationship in recent years give both Iran and Armenia pause for concern. That on top of recent sales of Israeli drones as part of a 2012 $1.6 billion arms deal package procured by the Azerbaijani military have been widely deployed in recent days for both enemy surveillance and kill purposes in Artsakh (the Armenian name for Nagorno-Karabakh). One UAV was shot down the other day spying over the Artsakh capital city of Stepanakert while OSCE officials were meeting below with NG leaders. Another Israeli-made kamikaze drone hit and demolished a bus killing seven Karabakh volunteer soldiers inside. Alleged accusations have been made that the drones are being remotely piloted by Israelis. As an aside from that Minsk Group meeting, the Russian co-chair announced that representatives from Artsakh will finally earn a place at the negotiation peace talk table.

On numerous occasions the Azeri dictator Aliyev who inherited the job from his father in 1993 has sworn to "wipe Armenia off the face of the earth." Holocaust scholar Yair Auron commenting on Israel's sale of such high powered weapons to Azerbaijan stated:

The sale of weapons to a government committing genocide is like the sale of weapons to Nazi Germany during World War II.

As a parallel process example of how the Baku aggression has been ramping up in recent years, the Azeri army upped both the ammo charges and killing radius of its Howitzers from

60-82mm in December 2014 to 120mm as of March 2015, the same shelling that's now ravaging homes in Armenia as well.

Meanwhile, while Baku keeps buying bigger, more lethal weapons from Russia, Israel and America, on Saturday Prime Minister Medvedev reasserted it will continue selling arms to Azerbaijan (and Armenia) in its unsubtle attempt to lure Baku away from the West's undue influence. Russia supplies 85% of Azerbaijan's weapons. Last year the cozy relations US Empire was nurturing with Azerbaijan suddenly went sour when criticism over Baku's human rights was levied, which resulted in Baku cancelling its prelim dance to EU membership.

According to the latest International Democracy Index rating, Azerbaijan scored amongst the highest in the world for authoritarianism with a score of 6.68 out of a possible 7 being worst, cited for multiple major human rights violations chief amongst them intolerance toward dissent and freedom of press, undemocratic electoral process (score of 7) along with rampant corruption. The recent Panama papers exposing off shore fortunes indicate how the Aliyev family have made their secret billions sidestepping the law. Of course the US government's hardly in a position to criticize as it's certainly no beacon for democracy anymore. In contrast, despite not being formally recognized by the international community, the European Free Alliance (EFA) cited Nagorno-Karabakh as having demonstrated one of the highest democratic evaluations amongst post-Soviet nations.

The Soviet Union never recognized Nagorno-Karabakh as a separate sovereign entity from the Azeri state it originally gifted Baku three quarters of a century ago. But for that matter, neither has Artsakh's biggest supporter and ally the Republic of Armenia. A Russian peacekeeping force could be introduced but a peaceful outcome that all parties can live with satisfactorily seems unlikely. It appears all positions are intractable while Russia takes the lead in working on an amicable resolution that includes Iran much to the chagrin of US Empire and Israel. The South Caucasus as the ancient East-West Silk Road passageway is presently coveted by the most powerful global forces on earth, all vying for strategic chessboard turf that's ground zero for civilization crossroads.

Armenia on the other hand is a landlocked, economically depressed, geographically tiny nation without oil, flanked on each side by its enemies' closed borders which has further led to Armenia's isolation. Even a loan of $200 million from Russia was necessary just for procurement of a first installment of arms shipments that can't compete with Baku's near $5 billion a year military budget alone that's near twice as much as Armenia's total national budget. In comparison with the newer advanced killer power weaponry that big oil money buys, Armenia is stuck with last century weapons used in the 1990's Nagorno-Karabakh war. Though Moscow has pledged arms parity, they remain undelivered. The truth is Armenia is at the mercy of Russia for its very survival. Oil money, advanced arms and big business rule the world, whether it's the Western or Eastern worlds.

The dire circumstance that Armenians in both Artsakh Republic and the Armenian Republic presently face in this latest round of war with Azerbaijan, Turkey and US Empire appears rather bleak. Though it may capture appeal in its underdog role in the modern day version of David versus Goliath amongst nations, and already has the Armenian Diaspora in cities like Los Angeles and around the world mobilizing support for its cause, it has powerful enemies that would be happy to see both Armenia and Russia go down in flames. The planet is in peril, and Nagorno-Karabakh might be the archduke of the latest world war.

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