

ОБОРОНА И БЕЗОПАСНОСТЬ

The Guidelines of the Defensibility of the Republic of Armenia in the Context of Global Turbulence

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Ориентиры обороноспособности Республики Армения в контексте глобальной турбулентности

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Аннотация. Современные проблемы безопасности, с которыми сталкиваются страны Ближнего Востока и Восточной Европы, заставили многих экспертов задуматься о возрождении традиционной парадигмы безопасности. В этих условиях переоценка руководящих принципов безопасности Армении предполагает многоуровневое изучение взаимосвязи между отдельными лицами, общественными институтами и государством. Более того, существующие вызовы сформировали потребность в «хищнической оборонной стратегии», которую необходимо рассматривать в контексте интеграции функций армия-система образования-церковь.

Ключевые слова: обороноспособность, глобальная турбулентность, культурное насилие, творчество и хищничество, биологический детерминизм, социальные институты

Հայաստանի Հանրապետության պաշտպանունակության ուղենիշները գլոբալ տուրբուլենտության համատեքստում

Պողոսյան Գարիկ Գ.

ՀՀ ՊԿԱ քաղաքագիտության ասպիրանտ (Երևան, ՀՀ)

Ամփոփագիր. Անվտանգության ժամանակակից մարտահրավերները, որոնց բախվում են Մերձավոր Արևելքի և Արևելյան Եվրոպայի երկրները, շատ փորձագետների ստիպել են մտածել անվտանգության ավանդական պարադիգմի վերածննդի մասին: Այս պայմաններում ՀՀ անվտանգության ուղենիշների վերաաթևորումը ենթադրում է բազմակարգակալ ուսումնասիրություն անհատ-հասարակական ինստիտուտներ-պետություն ծիրում: Ավելին, առկա մարտահրավերները ձևավորել են «գիշատիչ պաշտպանական ռազմավարության» անհրաժեշտություն, որն անհրաժեշտ է դիտարկել բանակ-կրթական համակարգ-եկեղեցի գործառույթների ինտեգրման համատեքստում:

Հանգուցարաներ` պաշտպանունակություն, գլոբալ տուրբուլենտություն, մշակութային բռնություն, ստեղծարար և գիշատիչ, կենսաբանական դետերմինիզմ, սոցիալական ինստիտուտներ

Recent violent transformations on the global stage-from the forced exile of the native Armenian population of Artsakh bordering on genocide to the renewed fighting between Israel and Hamas-demonstrate formerly humanistic post-Cold War contours of politics and foreign policies have yielded to large-scale security challenges worldwide, while there are no legal-institutional mechanisms to stem the virulent tide. In this wider context, our aim is to argue in favor of newly emphasized guidelines of the defensibility of the Republic of Armenia with an aim to combine internal creativeness and productivity with external counteroffensive. By the former, we refer to

inventiveness and progressive growth in all domains of societal life within Armenia and in the diaspora, while the latter refers to rigid state and societal mechanisms aimed at the enhancement of the security of the nation at all levels and across the spectrum. The broad analytical base is multi-level (individual-society-public institutions-state) and, at the same time, associated with the Copenhagen School of security studies, which “defines the state as the referent object, the use of force as the central concern, external threats as the primary ones, the politics of security as engagement with radical dangers and the adoption of emergency measures, and it studies security through positivist, rationalist

epistemologies” [3, p. 21]. This suggests that at the conceptual level interchangeability and swaps are possible. Thus, the article strikes at the conceptual core of the problem of security and defensibility putting forward particular analytical frameworks for the exposure of specific modes and models with regard to continuous improvement of strategic defensibility. Contemporary global turbulence has led to a number of conceptual reassessments. For instance, it has been argued that, “*status-quo powers like the United States are naturally more vulnerable to surprise because they are deeply invested in the rules of an international system and have constructed warfighting technique to fit that system*” [4, p. 26]. The volatility of the international system is an indication that the dynamics of international relations need to be perceived as a political game with varying degrees of adaptability rather than a rigid international body of rules governing the behavior of international actors. This interpretation crosses into being coterminous with the definition of strategic thinking which, “*is based upon fundamental skills and helps to understand how to make the most of them*” [14, c. 15]. There is more to strategic thinking, however, than the manipulation of fundamental skills in a political give-and-take. To be precise, “*strategic thinking implies that you have to try your best in order to understand the position of and the interconnections among other participants of the game, including the position of those actors who prefer to keep silent*” [14, c. 47]. Hence, in the context of Armenian defensibility and security, it is becoming increasingly significant to redefine defense and security in a way that accommodates and reflects a multitude of principles and schools of thought running the gamut from humanism, biological determinism, realism to security dilemma or the Copenhagen School of security studies. The integration of risks and challenges into a whole predisposes analysts to employ a tri-dimensional temporal tool of analysis with regard to challenges stemming from the past and the vision of the future. Within the confines of this broad discussion of defense and security, it is necessary to narrow down the list of plausible scenarios, models and solutions to a simple question, “Am I secure?”. While the concept of human security arguably involves the notion of the freedom from fear, external and internal facets of security distinguish between feeling safe and secure at individual, societal, state and transnational levels, something that places the individual at the epicenter of regional political dynamics. To be sure, upon the native population of Artsakh falling prey to a blatant aggression targeting civilians, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted Resolution 2517 of 2023, which stated that,

“military operation took place after a ten-month period during which the Armenian population of this region has been denied free and safe access through the Lachin Corridor, the only road allowing it to reach Armenia and the rest of the world, leading to a situation of extremely acute food and supply shortages and high vulnerability of all inhabitants. This was in clear disregard of the provisional and interim measures addressed to Azerbaijan by the International Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights, whose decisions also noted the obligation of Azerbaijan under the 2020 Trilateral Statement” [11]. The sheer scope and depth of the catastrophe, another recent manifestation of regional security volatility, speak volumes about the far-reaching implications of the violent transformations of conflicts, something that has not only geostrategic but also sociocultural significance for the purpose of reassessing the defensibility of the Republic of Armenia. When it comes to such implications, Johan Galtung and Dietrich Fisher aptly reveal the multi-faceted notion of cultural violence. According to their definition, it is composed of “*those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics) that can be used to justify, legitimize direct or structural violence*” [7, p. 41]. The move on to describe the symbolic elements which form part of cultural violence: “*Flags, military marches, the portrait of the Leader everywhere, inflammatory speeches, many national anthems*” [7, p. 41]. The climax of the interpretation of these interactions at a multitude of levels is, however, the discussion of biological determinism. The authors conclude: “*Could there be still a deeper stratum, human biology, with genetically transmitted dispositions or at least predispositions for aggression (direct violence) and domination (structural violence)? The potential for direct and structural violence is certainly there. But so is the potential for direct and structural peace*” [7, p. 48]. This is important as biological determinism, if it is understood and directed appropriately, can enable the security guidelines of the defense strategy of the Republic of Armenia to reach a level where the creativeness and productivity of the Armenian people boosts the development of the Armenian civilization and enhances the vitality of our statehood. At the same time, it is expected to facilitate the integration of Armenian sociocultural values with a sense of mission and civil defense-preparedness and readiness to take on a security challenge and respond meaningfully. This means being prepared to organize civilian defense in times of military operations, having highly trained special forces, a

conscious collective effort at self-defense, civilian infrastructure to support a counteroffensive etc. In other words, if Armenia's adversaries use the language and means of cultural and physical violence, the assurance of symmetric response should be viewed as a strategic measure on the Armenian side. We are convinced, even though Armenia succeeded in defending its external borders as well as Artsakh prior to the defeat in the 2020 war in Nagorno-Karabakh, it has not developed a strategic capability to pose a similar threat to its menacing neighbors neither in the realm of physical resources nor in terms of cultural and symbolic confrontations. The history of conflicts in the world offers considerable evidence with regard to the perceptions of interests across a variety of human clusters. Strategically speaking, Armenia's prospects of decreasing its external and internal vulnerabilities and augmenting its potential go hand in hand with its ability to perceive its national interests at local, regional and global levels. To give an example, the conflict in Afghanistan showed the inherent incongruence of the interests of different groups. When the post-conflict reconstruction efforts gathered force, the phenomenon manifested itself in a number of ways. To be precise, a human security report on Afghanistan concluded that "the *human security* of the Afghan people, defined as freedom from both fear and want, should not take a back-seat to the security interests of the state or to those of the international community which is currently using Afghanistan as a base from which to conduct a global war against terror" [13, p. 4]. The report pitted the human and state security against each other in a very straightforward way, something that indicates the existence of underlying tensions between the two, and, by extension, between any pair of security issues. On a more prosaic level the report distinguished between group interests and perceptions: "For a school teacher in Jalalabad security was the fact that he could properly clothe and educate his children and invest in the construction of his house, confident that the little he had today would not be taken away from him tomorrow" [13, p. 4]. These explanations in turn lay the groundwork for distinguishing between security in the singular and securities in the plural. The multiplicity of actors entangled in the game of identifying the center of gravity of interests in terms of "me-you-us-them" evolves into clusters with congruent or incongruent interests. This leads to the formation of perceptive superstructures of security in which the same groups can potentially respond to the question "are we secure?" in a variety of similar or distinct ways depending on their respective group classifications of external challenges, existential threats, societal cleavages etc. In the context of the

above-mentioned interpretations, it is necessary to identify the congruent realms of societal harmony in Armenia constructing the notion of defensibility upon the logic of a symbiotic synthesis of individual and collective interests. Our own understanding of a bottom-up reconstruction of the Armenian society involves the provision of legal-institutional safeguards in order to protect the sociocultural sphere and the national psyche and uphold the civilizational code of the Armenian people. One of the chief arguments of this article is that, throughout history, the Armenian people have invented a culture as a text that is capable of buttressing a wide range of societal, institutional, state functions. Consequently, we believe the guidelines of the defensibility and security of the Republic of Armenia should necessarily establish the role of national institutions-the traditional family, the church, the army and the national educational system-as paramount in the realm of societal cohesion and organization, education and indoctrination, military security, technological sophistication, soft power and sharp power. This trilateral alliance (education-army-church) is capable of synthesizing and harmonizing societal expectations, aspirations, social compromises in the field of institutional capabilities. From our perspective, this homogenization of society-wide expectations offers a novel vision which implies a strong individual within a strong state. It is noteworthy that strength itself is understood as a multidimensional phenomenon for the purposes of this article. Not only does it indicate the formation of a physically capable individual but also the creation of a spiritual safe zone in which the self-expression, self-actualization of citizens is guaranteed and encouraged. A secure societal environment means freedom from want, unemployment or underemployment, lack of economic prospects, malnutrition, social isolation, abject poverty, poor health care and no social mobility.

The necessity of societal harmony, termed "congruent interests" in this article, are supported by other social sciences as well. To be specific, Pierre Bourdieu claims that, "Recourse to a neutralized language is obligatory whenever it is a matter of establishing a practical consensus between agents or groups of agents having partially or totally different interests. This is the case, of course, first and foremost in the field of legitimate political struggle, but also in the transactions and interactions of everyday life" [2, p. 40]. In order to understand the concept of "congruent interests" it is necessary to tap into social sciences in a way that allows the extraction of a comprehensive toolkit employed at both individual and state levels. This

will reinforce the internal mechanisms of the power vertical of “citizen-society-state”. However, the sociocultural space of societal interactions still retains its functional superiority. To give an example, “*in a society like Kabylia, where domination has to be sustained primarily through interpersonal relations rather than institutions, symbolic violence is a necessary and effective means of exercising power. For it enables relations of domination to be established and maintained through strategies which are softened and disguised, and which conceal domination beneath the veil of an enchanted relation*” [2, p. 24]. A closer look at these multifarious interactions also reveals the significance of the communicative aspect of culture both in horizontal and vertical interrelationships attaching more weight to the possibility of violence as a means. In this sense, Christian Fuchs argues that, “*ideologies instrumentalise language and meanings for justifying exploitation and domination. Communication thereby becomes an instrument of domination*” [6, p. 59]. These examples highlight the importance of revisiting the cultural text as a source of national values and guidelines, which will provide the centrality of civilizational orientation in terms of defensibility and national security. To be precise, the continuous affirmation of national symbols, values and myths will, through their propagation and popularity, form the bedrock of value-based civilizational defensibility. Ola Svein Stugu forcefully argues that, “*myths of origin have become important elements in legitimating not only regimes, but also the very existence of nations. On one hand, this implies that myths may be used consciously for instrumental purposes. But it also means that by studying the character of a nation’s myths we may get good insights into the hegemonic value systems of that nation*” [12, p. 2]. Not to become embroiled in a multitude of definitions, Ola Svein Stugu offers a concise verbal formulation of the subject matter stating that, “*myths may be seen as explanatory narratives, which by giving answers to important questions become sources for strength and meaning, models for action and patterns for interpretation in a confusing, disparate world. By giving guidance to whom belongs to an “us” group and which values are to be respected, and vice versa whom and what belong to the outside and which values are to be despised, myths play important parts in constructing collective identities*” [12, p. 3]. While individuals and societies ensure local civilizational progress within their narrow domains through inventiveness and recreation, those nations that aspire to political independence might feel obliged to consider both defensive and offensive options in the conditions of geopolitical and security

volatility. On the one hand, internal dynamics require fostering domestic harmony and inventiveness. On the other hand, external threats and challenges require offensive physical and symbolic capabilities to pursue existential aims, including the need to respond to the ideational-symbolic violence of the adversaries. Along this line of reasoning, the American political scientist Jeffrey Mankoff exposes the historical, civilizational, geostrategic evolution of the empires of Eurasia illustrating the defensive and offensive facets of great power aggrandizement through multiple examples. According to him China, “*aspires to reshape the economic, political, and potentially, military balance across central Eurasia*” with an aim to “*consolidate a regional order that is more Sinocentric, with recipient states compelled to adopt much of China’s own security paradigm*” [9, p. 211]. In addition, the author mentions that, “*Whether emphasizing the myth of descent from a common ancestor like the legendary Yellow Emperor (Huangdi) or the existence of a unified Confucian culture, the PRC government and most Chinese view themselves as heirs to a long imperial tradition*” [9, p. 209]. This comes to reinforce our perception of multi-layered configuration of defense and security as a combination of horizontally and vertically defined power structure capable of being projected onto national identity, civilizational orientation, geopolitics etc. At this stage of human evolution, the world is at a crossroads where socioeconomic realities constantly mold the demand side of human endeavors with civilization being the epicenter of defensibility. In this wider context, “*am I secure?*” acquires overtones and connotations that address individual and state security comprehensively. Hence, our principal conclusion is to propose the development of cooperative schemes and networks for the empowerment of individuals in the power vertical of institutional relationships. First, global and local policy imperatives create unique demands and raise expectations. Second, security implies the harmonization of the roles of social institutions, such as the school, the Church, the army. Finally, a holistic approach to human security and defensibility demonstrates the inherent vulnerabilities of the exclusion of mutually reinforcing institutional checks and channels. In other words, socioeconomic, legal, political, educational, physical, spiritual, civilizational, individual dimensions are structural pillars and need to be integrated into a whole. Therefore, raising the competitiveness of individuals in ways that prepare them for self-realization as physically and spiritually competitive individuals who have productive personal and professional pursuits is a chief priority from a public policy perspective. In an increasingly

network-based mobile world where standards are harmonized and universal benchmarks established, new dimensions of security arise incessantly. This reality has led some experts to conclude that, “*just as the free flow of information is critical to the functioning of our networks, free trade helps support innovation and market growth in the information age*” [8, p.17]. Further, as opportunities arise, so do risks and threats. Hence, “*developing international, voluntary, consensus-based cybersecurity standards and deploying products, processes, and services based upon such standards are the basis of an interoperable, secure and resilient global infrastructure*” [8, p. 18]. The flow of technological change and porousness of borders consequently creates new perceptions of infrastructural capacities, something that places an emphasis on the expansion of defensibility and individual security. The forced displacement of the native Armenian population of Artsakh in the autumn of 2023 in what arguably qualified as a genocidal policy and massacre of civilians, sheds light on the security dimension of the defensibility of the Republic of Armenia. Currently, the multi-layered defensibility as a concept implies a predatory nature. To be precise, if Armenia is to preserve its civilizational self and if it is to defend national statehood, then its defensibility guidelines should necessarily include a “predatory” strategy—an amalgamation of policies, attitudes and a cultural code that will link novel perceptions of security with the empowerment of the individual and traditional social institutions—the army, the Church, the educational system. The implications of a “predatory strategy” also refer to the strengthening of traditional family values, gender roles, human and ideational, symbolic capital, the preservation of natural resources and the natural environment from encroachments and exploitation. Currently, the undercurrents of geostrategic dynamics indicate the renaissance of securitization. Thomas Diez rightly expounded that, “*the problem with the securitisation of Covid-19 was however not only how it shaped the political debate but also that it led to a re-inscription of state borders into global discourse and thus reinforced an already existing trend towards a re-pluralisation of international society after the rise of populism, among others, had started to undermine the post-Cold War liberal order*” [5, p. 32]. Thus, global transmutations and shifts are on the increase and have augmented the pressure on recreating the liberal world order along the lines of power dynamics. This evidence reassures us in the necessity of a “predatory strategy” in the realm of defensibility and public policy reflected in the trio of the army, the Church and the educational system. Contemporary conflicts in greater Eurasia intensify

the need for a structural-perceptual shift in the vitality of the liberal world order, especially after the forced exodus of the native Armenian population of Artsakh and the conflict in Ukraine. John Mearsheimer objectively accepts that, “*the taproot of the trouble is NATO enlargement, the central element of a larger strategy to move Ukraine out of Russia’s orbit and integrate it into the West. At the same time, the EU’s expansion eastward and the West’s backing of the pro-democracy movement in Ukraine—beginning with the Orange Revolution in 2004—were critical elements, too*” [10, p.1]. Henceforth, the sheer unpredictability of international relations endows social institutions, such as the army, the Church and the educational system, with transformative features internally. In the context of a predatory strategy of defensibility these institutions share the burden of active and responsive socialization that will help citizens compete at various levels (both as agents of change and defenders of state and civilizational borders). To sum up, the principal goal of policy developers and decision-makers should be the integration of church- and army-led institutions of socialization, including the educational system, the Church and the army themselves, for the purpose of the realization of a new pro-growth “predatory strategy” of defensibility. This, too, will require the socioeconomic, physical and ideational empowerment of the individual within a more cooperative and integrated power vertical of social institutions, such as via the establishment of a worldwide Armenian school network under the auspices of the army and the church.

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