

SUSPENSION OF COMPLIANCE BY RUSSIA WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE CFE AND THE REGIONAL SECURITY IN SOUTH CAUCASUS

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The article deals with the situation around the Russia-announced moratorium on complying with the provisions of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, as well as on the effect of this step by Moscow upon the outlook of regional security and the military and political processes in South Caucasus. Analysis is done on the dynamics and basic elements of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe implementation with regard to the region of South Caucasus and the stabilizing role of this Agreement in the context of reducing tension, establishing the measures of confidence and of restricting arms race. Some assumptions are made on the possible political processes in the domain of security and arms control in South Caucasus in case of a final withdrawal of RF from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

Introduction

On July 14, 2007 President Putin of the RF signed a decree to suspend the observance of Russia's treaty obligations of conventional armed forces in Europe and some relevant agreements and minutes. According to the Russian statements, the main formal condition of this action by Moscow was the ongoing rejection by most countries, partakers of the treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, of the new adapted version of the Treaty (signed in Istanbul Nov. 19, 1999), allegedly putting Russia in obviously unfavorable conditions with regard to her Western partners after expanding NATO by admitting new member countries. However, as thought by many experts, the moratorium of the Russian party on implementing the currently operational Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe should be explained not only by the Russian intention to satisfy their formal requirements to the other participants to speedily ratify the adapted Treaty, but rather by the political reasons of another, more global level, viz.: a general

deterioration of relations between Moscow and the countries of the West, as well as a peculiar response to the US actions on deploying a new anti-missile system in Eastern Europe.

According to the edict by V. Putin, on Dec. 13, 2007, Russia will start a moratorium for compliance with the Treaty, (in particular, on the exchange of military information, issuing permits for trips by International inspectors, etc), and conceding other partaker states another 150 days, up to July 1, 2008 (in keeping with Article 19 of the Treaty) for a full ratification of the Adapted TCAFE.

1. CFE Treaty and the Adapted CFE Treaty

On November 1990 in Paris 22 countries, members of Warsaw Pact and Nato, signed CFE Treaty that came into force in November 1992. The Treaty established quantitative restrictions to deploying the conventional armaments and military equipment in Europe (from the Atlantic to Urals) in five basic categories, subject to reduction: tanks, armored combat vehicles (ACVs), artillery pieces gauging above 100 mm, combat aircraft and attack helicopters. Weapons in excess of the required ceilings had to be destroyed within 40 months since the Treaty entered into force. To prevent destabilizing force concentrations and to eliminate capability for a surprise attack by one of the opposed military blocs, according to the provisions of the Treaty, ceilings were placed on the number of tanks, armored vehicles, and artillery systems in the four zones: Central Europe, Extended Central Europe and the logistical area. Distinctly to the North and to the South of the CFE area of application flank regions were identified (Bulgaria, Rumania, South Caucasus, Leningrad, North Caucasus, Odessa Military District for the Warsaw Pact; Greece, Iceland, Norway, and Turkey for NATO).

Following the collapse of the USSR it became expedient to divide the Soviet quota of armaments among the New Independent States, which was done on May 15, 1992, at the CIS summit in Tashkent. Collapse of the USSR, the disappearance of Warsaw Pact, elimination of block-to-block confrontation in Europe and joining the NATO by the East-European countries prompted a review of the basic provisions of CFE. In March 1999 the former participants of Warsaw Pact moved to NATO along with their ceilings in tanks, armored vehicles, artillery, combat aircraft and attack helicopters, while the Treaty remained operational with the balanced bloc ceilings. Moreover, Russia was particularly dissatisfied with the so-called flank limitations in the old CFE Treaty, restricting the amount of armaments and military equipment within its armed forces in North Caucasus (North Caucasus Military District) and in the North-West of the country

(Leningrad Military District), by means of the gray areas created on several NATO countries that did not join CFE (Slovenia and Baltic states) as well as by means of some other provisions of this Treaty [1].

On November 19, 1999 the OSCE Summit in Istanbul effected signing of an Agreement on the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe which had to take into account the newly emerging political realities within the application area of the Treaty. The adapted Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe the ceilings were introduced for individual countries, rather than for military blocs. Quoted for each European partaker state were national and territorial limited ceilings. The National limited ceilings put a limit on all categories of the Treaty-specified armaments, hosted by a specific country, while the Territorial limited ceilings put a limit on the amount of domestic and foreign tanks, ACVs and artillery on its territory.

However, by now, the Adapted Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe has been ratified only by Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. The Western countries deny ratification to this Treaty on the pretext that Russia defaults on its political commitments assumed at the Istanbul Summit on dismantling the Russian military bases in Moldova and Georgia [2]. Moscow's response is that those commitments have been fully met, while the terms and conditions of dismantling the Russian military bases in Georgia and withdrawing military equipment from Near Dniester having a bilateral nature, cannot impede the ratification of the Treaty by other countries [3].

In the meantime some experts think that the underlying reason of the Russian moratorium on compliance with the CFE Treaty is in the political background of a general deterioration of relations with the Western countries, and that the virtual quota for Russia and the NATO countries and particularly the armaments and military equipment currently in service of the CFE Treaty parties is by no means a real military threat for Russia's security [4].

2. Implementation of the CFE provisions in South Caucasus

In keeping with the Tashkent Agreements as of May 15, 1992, Russia and the three states of South Caucasus, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, agreed on the maximally admitted ceilings of the armaments and military equipment in the region, having divided among themselves the available quotas of the former USSR in the Caucasus Region (See Table 1). In the course of the Istanbul summit of the OSCE South-Caucasus states also signed the Adapted CFE Treaty providing for some correction on the so-called flank armaments, however, by the

reasons mentioned it never came into force nor was it ratified by any country of South Caucasus.

Table 1

*National and Territorial Ceilings of Armaments for South Caucasus states,
according to CFE Treaty*

Country	Combat tanks	ACVs	Artillery Systems	Combat Aircraft	Attack Helicopters	Mil. Personnel ¹
Azerbaijan	220	220	285	100	50	70 000
Armenia	220	220	285	100	50	60 000
Georgia	220	220	285	100	50	40 000

The record of compliance with the provisions of CFE by the states of South Caucasus for the past 15 years was very differing. Georgia and Armenia did not violate the Treaty as a whole. Moreover, during the hostilities in the Karabakh conflict zone in Armenia there were International inspections within the framework of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe that registered no violations of the International commitments on this Treaty on the part of Armenia [5].

However, in the case with Azerbaijan there were obvious violations during the entire life of the agreement. In particular, since termination of hostilities in Nagorno Karabakh to the mid-1990s, the amount of Azerbaijan-declared tanks, ACVs and artillery systems were far in excess of its maximum quota (perhaps, the Azerbaijani FO through ignorance showed the real figures of the Azerbaijani armaments and military equipment), but in subsequent years Baku started to declare the number of units that it was allowed to possess with regard to the national ceilings of conventional armaments and military equipment, as limited by the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe with no reductions. Thus, there is every reason to believe that Azerbaijan in reality is far ahead of the armaments and military equipment restricted by the Treaty [6]. Moreover, the active acquisitions of large amounts of new armaments and military equipment in the last years (see Tables 2 – 3) have been quite independent of the data displayed by this country [7].

¹The manpower of the armed forces for the partakers of the Treaty is restricted by the provisions of the additional Closing Act on Manpower in Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (the so-called DOVSE-1A).

Table 2

*Armaments and Military Equipment imported by Azerbaijan in 2004 – 2006,
according to the UN Register on Conventional Armaments*

Category	Exporting State	Type of Armaments & mil. eqpmnt	Amount
ACVs Total:	Belarus Ukraine	T-72 T-72	60 45 105
ACVs Total:	Ukraine	БТР-3У БМП-1	3 2 5
Artillery Systems Total:	Ukraine	300-мм РСЗО 9А52 «Smerch» 120-мм mortar ПМ-38	12 85 97
Combat a/c Total:	Ukraine Georgia	fighter a/c МиГ-29 at- tack a/c Су-25 attack a/c Су-25	12 ¹ 5 7 24

Table 3

*Amounts of Armaments & mil. Eqpmnt hosted by Azerbaijan acc. to official data
on Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe*

Год	Combat Tanks	ACVs	Artillery Systems	Combat a/c	Attack helicopters
2004	220	210	285	54	15
2005	214	185	285	54	15
2006	217	183	260	62	15
2007	261	183	343	64	15

Moreover, for several years Azerbaijan has unsuccessfully attempted to extend its quota on armaments in circumvention of the Treaty On Conventional Armed Forces In Europe, and thus to vindicate the armaments hosted by their armed forces in excess of the maximally allowed by the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces. E.g., with reference to the population and area of Azerbaijan being larger than the similar characteristics determining ceilings of other small states, members of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the Azerbai-

¹ The report by Azerbaijan quotes delivery figures as 5 a/c MIG-29, while the Ukrainian report shows 12 a/c. The difference in numbers perhaps is due to the export of fighter planes to Azerbaijan being effected in late 2006 – early 2007, which is differently indicated in national reports by Ukraine and Azerbaijan for 2006. According to other data, the total amount of MIG-29s delivered from Ukraine was 14, including 2 a/c in a training-combat modification or MIG-29УВ, which however was not shown in the UN Register for 2006.

janis suggested that their quotas on those categories should be largely extended¹. As admitted by the Azerbaijani researchers, since this agreement (Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe – M.S.) sets strict limitations to the amount of personnel, armaments and military equipment for Azerbaijan, he is under an obligation to conceal the real numbers [8]. Azerbaijan links that with an alleged impossibility to afford information on the armaments of its units' dislocated in the NKR-adjacent areas [9]. Moreover, in order to adjust the amount of AVCs in the active forces of Azerbaijan, a large part of its Territorial Limited Ceilings (nearly 200 units) was transferred to the interior and frontier troops of the country, although for the countries of South Caucasus the ACVs ceiling for interior security was 135 units.

Of course, neither the basic Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, nor its Adapted version have comprehensive mechanisms for control of Armaments in South Caucasus, affording Azerbaijan, the initiator of regional militarization, extensive opportunities of skirting its provisions (including a simple towaway of military equipment from places of permanent stationing just before the arrival of International military experts, etc.). This legal ghost of the cold war has proved to be legally incapable to be applied for regional and sub-regional security systems within the zone of its competence in Europe, as well as in the zones of frozen conflicts and in non-recognized states on the post-Soviet territory. On the other hand, the political problems between the leading Western countries and Russia have also made this document a hostage to the global political processes. Nevertheless, even with regard to its possible imperfection, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe with respect to South Caucasus does introduce some mechanisms of deterrence and confidence in the military domain, like regular exchange of information, monitoring exercises and movements of personnel and equipment, visits by International inspectors, etc.).

¹ Thus, the use of the so-called average coefficient of one unit of land armaments as derived by the Azerbaijani experts (tank, ACV) per one thousand sq. km (territorial setting) or per one million population (demographic setting) yielded that the Azerbaijan's ceilings for the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe had to be raised to 727 tanks and 1030 ACVs (by territorial setting, resp.), or 607 tanks and 870 ACVs (by demographic setting, resp.). For more detail, see: *Aliyev Y. Arms Control Process in Transcaucasia // Polaris Quarterly, Vol.1, Issue 2, Summer 2004. P.45-46.*

3. Political Aftermath of a Possible Withdrawal of Russia from the Treaty on conventional Armed Forces in Europe: the regional context of South Caucasus

It is thus to be supposed that Russia (in case of non-ratification within the suggested term of the Adapted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe by other partaker states, which is highly improbable) will by the mid-2008 withdraw from the Treaty. It can be assumed theoretically that the withdrawal by Russia may entail a situation when the effect of the Treaty will naturally not be applied to Russia, but other European states will keep to it inertially, at least prior to developing some new International document in the domain of arms control in Europe or when delegating competence to an authoritative military-political entity like NATO. However, without Russian participation all new initiatives on restricting conventional armaments in Europe are inefficient, irrational and near-sighted. It is nonetheless clear that for two countries of South Caucasus, Armenia and Georgia, a continuing validity of this Treaty would be advantageous under any conditions, in view of their political interests and security priorities.

In particular, Georgia favors the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, since it provides an indirect support to her position on dismantling the Russian bases on her territory citing the Istanbul Agreement of 1999, and also using the Treaty as a propagandistic and legal resource against the Russian military presence in Abkhazia (the military base in Gudauti) [10]. On the other hand, for the NATO-craving Georgia it is important to rigorously observe the Treaty, especially in data exchange, so as to create an image of a respectable partner in the domain of security as seen by the US and the countries of Europe. That explains a particularly detailed approach in the data released by Georgia on the procedures of the Treaty and the data dispatched to the UN Register on conventional weapons (cf. Tables 4 and 5). Besides, the flank limitations for Russia on the Treaty on conventional Armed Forces in Europe do restrict the sizes of the Russian military presence in the North Caucasus Military District bordering on Georgia.

The position of Armenia is that expressing doubt on the real validity and efficiency of the Treaty on conventional Armed Forces in Europe for containing the militarization of South Caucasus, she nonetheless favors the retention of the Treaty, since The Treaty still presents some mechanism of containing the regional arms race [11]. Despite the allied relationships with Russia, Moscow's withdrawal from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe would not be in keep-

ing with Armenia's interests. Even in the occasion of Russia's complete withdrawal from the Treaty in the mid-2008, and in case the Western countries should update the Treaty, Armenia will probably retain its membership. However, it will be sensible for Armenia only in case Azerbaijan is committed to the provisions of the Treaty as well, which is doubtful.

Table 4

Georgia-imported ACVs in 2006 by the UN Register on Conventional Armaments

Category	Exporting state	Type of ACV	Amount
Tanks Total:	Czechia	T-72	35 35
ACVs	-	-	-
Artillery systems Total:	Czechia Bosnia & Herzegovina	152-мм self-prop. gun 122-мм howitzer Д-30 120-мм mortar	12 30 15 57
Combat a/c Total:	Georgia	attack a/c Су-25УБ	1 1
a) missiles b) rocket launchers Total:	a) Ukraine Kazakhstan Bulgaria b) Ukraine	ЗУР 9М33МЗ для ЗРК «Оса» ПТУР 9М114 «Shturm» 57-мм НАР С-5ПКБ ПТУР «Фаргот»/«Конкурс» ЗРК «Оса-АКМ»	48 758 5552 450 1 system (battery) a) 6808 b) 1

Table 5

Georgia's Import in 2006 of light and small arms

Category	Exporting state	Type of ACV	Amount
Machine guns Total:	Ukraine Czechia	7,62-мм ПК and ПКМ 7,62-мм ПКТ ¹	53 35 88
Aut. guns Total:	Ukraine Ukraine	7,62-мм АКМ 5,45-мм АК-74	10000 11700 21700
Hvy mach. guns Total:	Czechia	12,7-мм М-15 ¹	35 35
Autom. gren. launcher Total:	Ukraine	30-мм АГС-17	64 64
Mortars Total:	Bosnia & Herzegovina Bosnia & Herzegovina	82-мм М-69А 60-мм М-57	25 50 75

¹ Для укомплектования импортируемых Грузией из Чехии танков Т-72.

The only country in the region that is in principle interested in a complete collapse of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe is Azerbaijan, which is actively militarizing, claiming at the highest level the need for a military solution of the Karabakh problem. By unambiguous estimations of experts, a withdrawal of Russia from the Treaty will be immediately used by Azerbaijan for triggering an unrestrained and unlimited militarization and escalation of the arms race. According to the Azerbaijani military experts: "It is a good step for Azerbaijan: since we are going to escalate the armaments, then Russia's withdrawal will only loosen our hands. It is expedient now that our authorities should not compromise with the forces that will try to make us remain within the limits of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe" [12].

At the same time, some experts think that Russia's withdrawal from the Treaty can result in some enhancement of the Russian military presence in South Caucasus and specifically in Armenia, by expanding armaments and military equipment of the 102nd Russian military base deployed upon its territory. It is to be reminded that the Russian military presence in Georgia and Armenia has been officially registered within the framework of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (following the Istanbul Summit, 1999) as the so-called "temporary deployment" envisaged by the Treaty and allowing for a deployment of foreign troops on the territory of another Treaty partaker to the amounts not exceeding 153 tanks, 243 ACVs and 140 artillery systems. Currently there is only one Russian military base in Georgia, #12 of Batumi, being withdrawn, and to be fully shut down by the late 2008. As regards the Russian troops in Armenia, the amount of armaments and military equipment does not exceed the level of temporary deployment, with the tanks including the tanks in service in Armenia not exceeding the territorial limit.

Experts however think that under the comparatively restricted potential theater of operations there is no more need for heavy military equipment at the military base in Armenia. As to the extended format of the foreign military presence in the countries partaking of the Treaty in the form of the so-called emergency temporary deployment (to the amount of 459 tanks, 723 ACVs and 420 artillery systems), this format does not touch the cases of the flanking states (including Armenia), in keeping with the provisions of the Treaty.

Therefore, with the currently operational Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe the theoretical chances of expanding the Russian armaments and military equipment on the 102nd military base in Armenia is highly improbable (except for the scheduled replacement and updating the currently opera-

tional armaments and military equipment). As to the situation of the massive flooding of Armenia by the Russian armaments and military equipment in case if following the Russian withdrawal from the Treaty, the Western states should decide to keep to its provisions (or should try to create a similar mechanism for arms control), it is highly improbable through following restrictions:

- In the legal sphere Armenia, according to the official statements by FO, will in every likelihood try to formally comply with the provisions of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, including its restrictions on the amounts of foreign armaments and military equipment on its territory. On the other hand, the Russian withdrawal from the Treaty will also result in its naturally ensuing inability to apply the provisions of the still-unratified Adapted Treaty related to transferring to Armenia its quotas on armaments and military equipment restricted by the Treaty;
- In the political sphere the restriction is a possible reluctance by Armenia to expand the Russian military presence and a probable pressure on Russia by Azerbaijan (particularly in view of a crucial component of the Russian-Azerbaijani military-political relations like the Gabala Radar Station);
- Restrictions in the communications sphere: the strained Georgian-Russian relations and delivery of heavy armaments and military equipment via Georgia to Armenia is theoretically possible but problematic. Delivery via Iran or by air is also problematic, both politically and economically.

There may be a situation whereby Russia will completely withdraw from the treaty after July 1, 2008, and the NATO countries will discontinue adherence to this Treaty unilaterally or else another mechanism will emerge for arms control without Russia, then with regard to South Caucasus there will be all preconditions for a full-scale arms race and total militarization. In that case, the prospects for expanding or conservation of the Russian military presence in Armenia will have to be considered at another level and on the strength of other political circumstances.

4. The probability of a regional arms race and the role of containing elements in the Karabakh confrontation

In this situation perhaps the only relative plus for Armenia may be only expansion of its argumentation on the need to retain the NKR control over the Lowland Karabakh as a realistic condition of retaining the political balance in the zone of the Armeno-Azerbaijani confrontation and a guaranteed non-renewal of hostili-

ties. Meanwhile, the arms race is double-edged, so it is difficult to say, in what way the escalation of Azerbaijan arms (which is sure to happen after the recall of the Treaty) will affect its assault capabilities in case of renewed hostilities in the Karabakh theater. Any action produces a counteraction. Despite extensive financial capabilities by Azerbaijan and their ever increasing acquisitions of expensive assault weaponry, the Armenian side can balance it with less expensive counter-systems or defensive armaments costing less by an order of magnitudes, but nonetheless efficient for maintaining the current front line. Moreover, Armenia can compensate for the obvious financial mismatch by using a beneficial format of her inter-allied relations with Russia as well as its membership in the Organization of the Treaty on Collective Security.

As has been noted, this open and obvious militarization of Azerbaijan creates certain political preferences for the Armenians in the Karabakh problem. Firstly, the belligerent rhetoric by Azerbaijan afford Yerevan and Stepanakert a good pretext for their use as additional arguments for talking to the European structures and to leading powers when substantiating their rights to the Lowland Karabakh and the need to retaining it under the Armenian control, those territories being an important element of preserving stability and the general military balance in the Armeno-Azerbaijani confrontation. The harder is the talk by the Azerbaijani party on a speedy start of military activities aimed at liberation of Karabakh, the louder and surer the Armenian party can state the impossibility of any concessions of the Lowland Karabakh territories. The argumentation in the eyes of the world community (all the more so inside Armenia, which may be even more significant!) is quite convincing, since surrendering the territories can change the military balance and tempt Azerbaijan to really start hostilities, thus, it is even more in the interest of the world community to retain those territories under the Armenian control as the most efficient pledge of the non-renewal of war on the part of Azerbaijan and of preserving the regional security and stability.

On the other hand, unwinding another spiral of the arms race in the zone of the Armenia-Azerbaijani confrontation creates a situation somewhat paradoxically sounding but familiar since the Cold War and well known to political scientists, the situation of reducing the probability of the start of hostilities. Working here is a mechanism of the so-called mutual restraint, when due to the high striking effect of the conflicting sides any benefits gained by the attacking country will not justify its incurred losses, human and material, to say nothing of the political consequences resulting from the negative reaction of the International

community. According to the theories of strategic research and the experience in preservation of International and regional security accumulated in the past decades, deterrence is understood as preventing the unfavorable military or political actions by one side against the other (commonly the weaker one) by threatening to inflict an unsustainable damage [13].

The situation is not at all new, but it describes the tendencies of the Cold War times and the bipolar confrontation of superpowers, however, at that time we dealt with the deterring potential of the nuclear weapons. In this case, however, we are looking at the deterrence using conventional weapons, with the understanding that the arms race has considerably augmented the military potential of both parties, Armenian and Azerbaijani, compared to the military operations of 13 years ago. All the more so that some weaponry, like MLRS "Smerch" and "Taifoon", approach the nuclear weapons in their destructive potential. Therefore there is a great likelihood that in case of renewed hostilities the military and civilian casualties of both warring parties may reach scores of thousands, rather than thousands. All the more so that the military and technical situation does not suggest any chances for Azerbaijan enjoying a Blitzkrieg, there is rather going to be a long-time war in trenches, like Iran-Iraq, 1980 – 1988.

Thus, paradoxically though it may sound, the mutual arms race in the zone of Karabakh conflict is currently reducing the chances of war. That can hardly though be a reliable deterrent; however it is a serious restraint to the initiating country. The ongoing acquisition by Azerbaijan of expensive armaments and military equipment are in principle capable to slightly modify the military balance against Armenia and Karabakh, however, the stability in the zone of conflict will be retained by the newly emerging balance that could be termed as "the balance of threats" causing the sides to hold on to this fragile truce for a long time to come.

Under these conditions, if one warring party is fairly sure that in any outcome of the hostilities her losses will amount to scores of thousands of casualties and huge material damage, she will think many times prior to risking a resumption of conflict under those threats.

And finally, the ever growing involvement of the Western countries and their augmenting interest to the consistent operation of energy-related and communication projects render the regional political processes more predictable, facilitate the freezing of the situation of stable insecurity in South Caucasus, impeding the resumption of hostilities in the region.

Summary

Suspension on July 14, 2007 by President Putin of the Russian compliance with the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and some related agreements and protocols created a new situation in arms control in Europe. Although, according to the Russian side, the formal reason was the continuing refusal by most partaker countries to ratify the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, however, experts think that the Russian moratorium can be explained by the general deterioration of relations between Moscow and the Western countries, as well as a response to the US deployment of the new PRO system in Eastern Europe, rather than by the wish of the Russians to satisfy their formal requirements to other partakers on speedy ratification of the Adapted Treaty.

The procedure of compliance with the provisions of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe by the South Caucasus states within the last 15 years was very differing. Georgia and Armenia have not violated the Treaty. However, in the case with Azerbaijan, throughout the operational period of the treaty there were conspicuous violations. Moreover, for several years Azerbaijan has been trying to increase its quotas on armaments in circumvention of the provisions of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, and thus to vindicate the armaments hosted by their armed forces being in excess of the maximally allowed by the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces. Of course, neither the basic Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, nor its Adapted version have comprehensive mechanisms for control of armaments in South Caucasus, thus affording Azerbaijan, the initiator of regional militarization, extensive opportunities of skirting its provisions. On the other hand, the political problems between the leading Western countries and Russia have also made this document a hostage to the global political processes. Nevertheless, even with regard to its possible imperfection, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe with respect to South Caucasus does introduce some mechanisms of deterrence and confidence in the military domain.

The only country in the region that is in principle interested in a complete collapse of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe is Azerbaijan, which is actively militarizing, claiming at the highest level the need for a military solution of the Karabakh problem. By unambiguous estimations of experts, a withdrawal of Russia from the Treaty will be immediately used by Azerbaijan for triggering an unrestrained and unlimited militarization and escalation of the arms race.

In this situation perhaps the only relative plus for Armenia may be only expansion of its argumentation on the need to retain the NKR control over the Low-

land Karabakh as a realistic condition of retaining the political balance in the zone of the Armeno-Azerbaijani confrontation and a guaranteed non-renewal of hostilities.

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