

Video: Turkish Risk Investments in Local Conflicts and Prospects of Armenian Counter-offensive in Karabakh

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Global Research, November 04, 2020

[South Front](#) 3 November 2020

Region: [Asia](#), [Europe](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#)

In early November, the Azerbaijani-Turkish advance in the directions of the Lachin corridor and the town of Shusha in the Nagorno-Karabakh region slowed down.

The main factors are the fierce resistance of Armenian forces, the complicated terrain, deteriorating weather conditions and overextended communications that run through recently captured territories, where Armenian sabotage units are still able to deliver regular attacks. 9 villages, the capturing of which Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev announced recently, are in fact located inside the territory captured by Azerbaijani forces earlier. This showcases the lack of progress of Baku's forces in the recent battles.

Commenting on this situation, Armenian sources argue that right now Yerevan has been preparing a powerful counter-attack to push the Azerbaijanis out of the south of Karabakh. The only factor that allegedly stops Armenia from such a move right now is the commitment of the Armenians to the reached ceasefire agreements that Baku blatantly violates.

https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/03.11.20_IMR_Armenia.mp4

Meanwhile, the Armenian side continues to regularly release updates about the losses of Azerbaijan in the conflict. The Azerbaijani military allegedly lost 10 UAVs, 21 armoured vehicles, and 103 soldiers in recent clashes. While the high casualties of the sides are not a secret and widely confirmed by visual evidence regularly appearing from the ground, the claims that the Turkish-Azerbaijani bloc somehow lost the strategic initiative in the war are at least overestimated. Azerbaijani artillery, combat drones and even warplanes still regularly pound fortified positions, manpower and military equipment of the defending forces. The Armenians do not have enough means and measures to protect its supply columns and manpower from regular and intense airstrikes.

As of November 3, Azerbaijani forces supported by the Turks and Turkish-backed Syrian militants are still deployed within striking distance of Lachin and Shusha. The loss of any of these points may mark the collapse of the entire Armenian defense in the area. Any large Armenian counter-attack, if it does not deliver a rapid and devastating blow to the Turkish-Azerbaijani forces, will likely not allow to achieve a strategic success. Instead, it will uncover the existing Armenian units and increase the number of casualties from air and artillery strikes. The dominance in the air also means an advantage in reconnaissance and target accusation. In these conditions, small regular counter-attacks mostly aimed at disturbing the advancing Azerbaijani-Turkish units, and undermining their efforts to secure the newly

captured positions, look more likely. Despite the lack of notable Azerbaijani gains in recent days, the Armenian defense is still in crisis and, if Ankara and Baku succeed in securing communications and regrouping their forces, the new push towards the Lachin-Shusha-Stepanakert triangle seems to be inevitable.

The diplomatic attempts to de-escalate the conflict have so far led to little progress as Turkey and Azerbaijan feel themselves too close to the desired military victory. President Aliyev wants to write his name down in history as the leader that returned Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan, while his Turkish counterpart Erdogan sees himself as the sultan of the New Ottoman Empire, pretending to be the leader of the entire Turkic world and even wider – of all the Muslims in the Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asia.

The entire Turkish foreign policy of previous years was a policy of aggressive advances, confrontations and raising bets. This led to particular diplomatic and economic problems on the international scene and undermined the Turkish national economy. However, it looks like the Turkish leadership believes that the potential revenue of turning the Neo-Ottoman and pan-Turkic declarations into a hard reality will generate revenue of such a scale that it would allow to compensate for existing tactical difficulties. Therefore, the Turkish-Azerbaijani stance towards the further confrontation in Karabakh is not something surprising.

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