
ARMENIA IS NOT A FULLY RELIABLE ALLY, SAYS RUSSIAN EXPERT

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Director of the Carnegie Moscow Center, member of Council on Foreign and Defense Policy Dmitri Trenin believes that "Armenia is not a fully reliable ally to Russia.

The political scientist makes that statement in the article Russias alliance policy: What should be done and what should be changed? which is a review of the book Allies.

Historically, Armenia was Russias vanguard toward Near and Middle East. Now, Armenia hosts the 102nd military base of the Russian Armed Forces. However, this vanguard is geographically isolated from Russia; it is a strategic exclave and thus carries the factor of vulnerability. Military presence in Armenia is not particularly valuable for Russia in terms of defense: Russias strategic border in the region passes on the Greater Caucasus Mountain Range, with positions in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Neither is Armenia a base for promoting Russias interests in the South Caucasus, in Turkish and Iranian directions. The economic value of relations with Armenia is quite low for Russia. The main value of the position in Armenia is the possibility to maintain relative stability in the South Caucasus and the balance between Azerbaijan and Armenia, as well as to restrain Turkeys ambitions, writes Trenin.

For Armenia, on the contrary, allied relations with Russia are vital. In this regard, Russia cannot ignore the feelings of over 1.2 million Armenian Russians. Nevertheless, the Yerevan elite, which is mainly gravitating towards the parts of Diaspora outside of Russia (in USA, France and other countries), is often dismissive to Russia and treats Russia with a consumerist approach.

The change of power that occurred in Armenia in 2018 did not lead to a change in the countrys geopolitical vector: lack of alternative to Russian support is obvious even for those who is not in Russias favor. However, Armenia is not a fully reliable ally for Russia now. If the situation does not change in the future, the role of relations with Russia will grow smaller and the nature of ties with Armenia can be reviewed and corrected with damage to Russias interests, concludes Trenin.

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