

## **RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH CAUCASIA - ALEV KILIÇ**

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There is still no stability in the region of south Caucasia consisting of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. This is due on the one hand to Armenias ongoing invasion since 1992 of Nagorno-Karabakh and the seven provinces at its periphery, to the failure to end the invasion, to the failure to provide a peaceful solution that will allow millions of people who were forced to migrate to return to their homes; and on the other hand due to the Georgia-Abkhazia and Georgia-Russia wars. For Turkey, to which all three countries are neighbors with shared borders, the establishment of peace and stability in the region is no doubt an important and prominent subject. It is possible to state that despite Turkeys effort to guide the region toward stability, peace and cooperation; relations in the region have come to a deadlock, especially due to Armenias unconstructive, even hampering demeanor.

There have been noticeable new happenings and new trends in the region in recent times. The overshadowing of these is Armenias decision in September 2013 to change course away from the European Union, and to join the Customs Union-Eurasian Economic Union spearheaded by Russia. With this decision, Armenias future, its relations with Russia, and Russias role and activities in the region has come to the fore that no doubt must be taken into account. Russia saw no harm in demonstrating its increased interest towards the region and announcing its desire to increase its influence in the region. As a matter of fact, in the short time that that has elapsed, important economic and military steps have been taken.

At the beginning of January 2014, Armenias natural gas distribution company handed over its remaining 20% share to the Russian Gasprom company in exchange for its 300 million dollar debt. With this, the Gasprom company has acquired all the shares of the natural gas distribution network in Armenia. After this, Russia declared its decision to bolster its military bases and power in Armenia through air support, by adding attack helicopters to its Mig-16 squadron in the Erebuni airbase in Yerevan, which is a part of the 182th military base in Gyumri.





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