



Armenia's Strategic Large-Scale Military Exercises



Armenian army sniper during a field exercise in 2019.

Source: BoNDex via Wikimedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armed_Forces_of_Armenia#/media/File:Armenian_Sniper.jpg, CC BY-SA 4.0

OE Watch Commentary: Earlier this year, Armenia's Defense Minister David Tonoyan stated that the country's armed forces would no longer remain on a strategic defensive position and would look to neutralize the ambitions of any enemy preemptively (see: "Armenia's "Offensive" Strategy?," *OE Watch*, April 2019). These statements came amid the announcement that the Armenian government would acquire Su-30SMs fighters from Russia within the next few years. The accompanying excerpted articles report on a large-scale exercise of Armenia's armed forces alongside civilian agencies, providing a measurement of how the Armenian government is following through with any change in its strategic posture.

The articles from *Lragir* and *Armenpress* report on the exercise, including how its scenario involved a "deployment of the armed forces, countering the aggression of the enemy," a "conditional martial law" and that a member of the Armenian General Staff even "called on citizens to not interfere with the movement of military equipment on the roads." It is also noted how "exercises of this scale have not been carried out in Armenia" and that it featured reservists receiving orders to mobilize, though "only 6 percent of participants will be involved in the exercises." The articles do not mention any detailed information on how Armenian forces might counter the aggression of the enemy and while the scale of the exercise was large, the scenario focused largely on reacting to an enemy's actions, not any preemptive operations. The recent exercise suggests that part of the country's active deterrence policy includes boosting the military's assault capabilities to be prepared to, if necessary, respond to any aggression militarily. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

"Only 6 percent of participants will be involved in the exercises for 3-5 days..."

Source: "В Армении объявлено условное военное положение: начались широкомасштабные военные учения ВС Армении (A conditional martial law has been declared in Armenia: the start of a large-scale military exercise in Armenia)," *Lragir*, 24 September 2019. <https://www.lragir.am/ru/2019/09/24/156692/>

A conditional martial law has been declared in Armenia...on 24 September, large-scale strategic exercises on the scenario of "Deployment of the armed forces, countering the aggression of the enemy" started in Armenia, which also involves state and local agencies...

The head of the information department of the General Staff of the Armenian Armed Forces called on citizens to not interfere with the movement of military equipment on the roads...The exercises will last until October 5.

Source: "В Армении пройдут беспрецедентные военные учения (An unprecedented military exercise will take place in Armenia)," *Armenpress*, 19 September 2019. <https://armenpress.am/rus/news/988621.html>

...The Defense Minister noted that exercises of this scale have not been carried out in Armenia..."The remaining 94 percent will just be called to mobilization points. Only 6 percent of participants will be involved in the exercises for 3-5 days..." said David Tonoyan...