



The Function of the Russian-Armenian United Group of Forces

OE Watch Commentary: When the Armenian government finalized the agreement to establish the United Group of Forces with Russia a few years ago (see: “The Russian-Armenian Joint Military Force,” *OE Watch*, January-February 2017), it did not appear that it believed the agreement would necessarily include support from Russia in an operation against Azerbaijan. The accompanying excerpted article reports on the involvement of the United Group of Forces in the recent Kavkaz-2020 exercise recently held in Russia and it helps gauge how the Russian government would provide support to Armenia through the United Group of Forces in light of the recent clashes between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno Karabakh.

The article, from the Russian-language news website *Eurasia Daily*, reports “from 21-26 September, motorized rifle units, aviation and air defense systems of the (Russian) Southern Military District and Armenian Armed Forces were involved in actions under the leadership of the commander of the United Group of Forces Major General Tigran Parvanyan.” It is worth remembering that in the event the United Group of Forces

responds to a conflict, it will fall under the operational command of Russian forces, not Armenian as depicted in the exercise. The article also mentions how the goal of this portion of Kavkaz-2020 was to “assess the readiness of the units of the Southern Military District to localize and deal with armed conflicts in connection with combating terrorism as well as to protect the interests and ensure the security of the two countries.”

Overall, Kavkaz-2020 focused on counterterrorism and it marked one of just a couple of exercises involving the United Group Forces. If this is any indication, the United Group of Forces appears to be focusing largely on counterterrorism efforts and not other types of operations. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**



Armenian soldiers training at the Vazgen Sargsyan Military Institute.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_Army#/media/File:Armenian_soldiers_at_the_Vazgen_Sargsyan_Military_Institute.jpg Attribution: CC BY SA 3.0

“During the exercise, the command will assess the readiness of the units of the Southern Military District to localize and deal with armed conflicts in connection with combating terrorism as well as to protect the interests and ensure the security of the two countries”

Source: “Объединённая группировка войск Армении и России развернула «Кавказ-2020» (The joint group of forces of Armenia and Russia have deployed to “Kavkaz-2020”),” *Eurasia Daily*, 21 September 2020. <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2020/09/21/obedinyonnaya-gruppirovka-voysk-armenii-i-rossii-razvernula-kavkaz-2020>

Russian and Armenia units started joint operations today, 21 September, at the “Alagyaz” high-altitude training facility during the “Kavkaz-2020” strategic command and staff exercises...

“From 21-26 September, motorized rifle units, aviation and air defense systems of the Southern Military District and Armenian Armed Forces were involved in actions under the leadership of the commander of the United Group of Forces Major General Tigran Parvanyan,” – said the Russian Defense Ministry in a statement.

During the exercise, the command will assess the readiness of the units of the Southern Military District to localize and deal with armed conflicts in connection with combating terrorism as well as to protect the interests and ensure the security of the two countries...