

**FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK**

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**NEW GEOPOLITICS FOR A SMALL COUNTRY:  
ARMENIA IN WIKIPEDIA**

Armenia is a country with small territory and population. Its territory takes the 137<sup>th</sup> point in the world, and the population occupies the 131<sup>st</sup>. Armenia is not rich in natural resources. It has no developed economy. In terms of GDP, it takes the 130<sup>th</sup> point in the world (according to IMF). All these indicators are unbiased. We can add a number of others, not very different from these ones. According to all these indicators, Armenia belongs to the group of small countries, ranking second, the bottom half of the world list.

Besides, Armenia is a landlocked country. It has four neighboring states. Two of them closed their borders with Armenia. One of them has involved the country into a long-lasting conflict, which from time to time develops from low intensity to high intensity armed conflict.

All the above-mentioned factors determine the “vulnerability” of Armenian position in terms of geopolitics. Such disadvantageous circumstances necessitate to struggle for survival, or if we apply to a geopolitical tool, the fight to keep control over a certain space or, in other words, territory. For a quarter of the century since the restoration of Armenia's independence, the country's ruling elite has developed a certain geopolitical paradigm. In this report, I use the concept of paradigm as it's defined by French philosopher Michel Foucault, who described a paradigm as a specific discursive formation, a historically rational way of understanding reality.

The basis of such a paradigm is the idea of the strategic alliance with Russia. This paradigm has been operating up till now. Its further development has become the membership of the military and economic alliances in which Russia plays the leading role. I mean the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EaEU). As this topic is not the purpose of our report, I will not go into its details. I'd only like to note that this paradigm contributes to the solution of the country's main geopolitical

problem - it ensures the security. However, it is largely deterministic and puts the Armenian policy on the international platform into fairly strict limits.

At the same time, ladies and gentlemen, the world offers new opportunities for the states like Armenia. These opportunities are related to the fact that along with the traditional space in our time, there is the different, virtual scope - so-called cyberspace. The traditionally basic factors of classical geopolitics, such as area, population, geographical location, the economic situation and so on, lose their seniority. Thereby Geopolitics loses its significance in its classical form. The new form of Geopolitics becomes essential. Like the traditional one, it has been directed to master the space and maintain the control. However, in this case we are dealing with cyberspace. Thus, the new geopolitics is the geopolitics of cyberspace. It hasn't replaced, but accompanied the classical Geopolitics. One can also say it exists in parallel with it, creating its own system.

The new Geopolitics needs new paradigms. In the case of Armenia we offer to base one of them on the idea of the Armenian civilization. We proceed from the fact that the Armenian people have created spiritual values and expressed their identity for millennia. All these values combine the phenomenon we call the Armenian Civilization. Of course, this idea is one of the possible paradigms. We should also use others based on different ideas. We are interested in the area of cyberspace, where information warfare is launched. However, this issue does not belong to the subject of our report.

The use of "civilization paradigm" in Geopolitics in cyberspace provides benefits for Armenia. As it is one of the oldest currently existing civilizations in the world and has had continuous operation for several thousand years. This fact is an objective indicator, exactly the same as the 130<sup>th</sup> -131<sup>st</sup> position on the territory, population or GDP. The use of this indicator makes it possible to overcome the complex of "the country from the bottom of the list" in the geopolitical paradigm, or at least in the cyberspace.

The implementation of our civilization paradigm of "cyberspace geopolitics" should maintain the control over the distribution area of

the Armenian civilization in cyberspace. In other words, we are dealing with the geopolitics of survival, the cyberspace survival.

However, unlike the traditional geopolitics, the initial basic factors in this case are much more favorable. The following facts prove the above-mentioned idea. So, let me remind you that approximately one third of all the Armenians of the world - about three million people, live in Armenia. But about six million Armenians constitute the Diaspora and are dispersed all around the world. A large majority of them live in the countries with a high percent of internet distribution. At the same time the percentage of the Armenian internet rates is approaching the European numbers and makes up approximately 70 percent. For comparison, the neighboring Georgia constitutes about 47 percent (according to 2016 data).

We should emphasize that the struggle for control over the Armenian civilization sphere takes place in multilingual media, both in Armenian and foreign languages, primarily English and Russian. The civilization paradigm in these areas has its own peculiarities. We are going to analyze them during the study of the implementation of our paradigm in a specific area of cyberspace. We have chosen Wikipedia to show the problems caused during the implementation of geopolitical civilization paradigm. Let me remind you that it is a free universal public multilingual online encyclopedia, which can be completed and edited. Besides, there are certain rules in Wikipedia. Their execution is strictly monitored by the group of so-called “administrators”, “bureaucrats”, etc.

Wikipedia is one of the cyberspace areas, where the geopolitical struggle is arranged among various states and groups for the possession and space control, in this case in the form of content. In such a struggle, the Armenians mainly use the content in three languages: Armenian, English and Russian. The application of the civilization paradigm is reflected in the creation of articles on various aspects of Armenian civilization. The increase of quantity of the articles on such topics in the above-mentioned languages helps to afford the opportunity of the operation of Armenian civilization in cyberspace. Armenian civilization is a part of the mankind civilization “body” (Toynbee). Thus, the article in Armenian, studying various

aspects of the entire human civilization, contributes not only to the content in Armenian, but also to the upturn of awareness of the Armenian society. Surely, the content is created in accordance with the Armenian perception of the world. Thus, such content is added to the all-Armenian content.

I would like to mention another factor. As we have already noted, about two-third of all Armenians are still live in the Diaspora. Wikipedia, in the three above-mentioned languages, is a means of creating a particular Armenian area in cyberspace. The Wikipedia articles of special value should play an important role there. We can mention different attempts to publish articles both in Eastern Armenian version of the Armenian language, which is spoken in Armenia and in a certain part of the Diaspora, and the Western Armenian, which is used in some parts of the Diaspora. Thus, we can say that the Civilization Geopolitics of Armenia has more chances to succeed in the cyberspace than the traditional geopolitics in real life.

In the final part of the report I'd like to focus on some specific cases that support our main points.

The Armenian Wikipedia is supported by the state. The issues related to its development are discussed at the government meetings. Another example: the country's president has recently visited the office of the "Wikimedia" organization, which coordinates the activities of the Armenian sector in Wikipedia. Since 2014 the Armenian state has carried out a nationwide program called "one Armenian - one article in Wikipedia". It is supported by a variety of governmental agencies and their leaders. A number of ministers have announced that they are involved in this program and become the authors of the articles. Young people, mainly schoolchildren and students have increasingly been involved in the process of writing articles. Several times a year the most active of them are invited to special camps in the resort areas of the country. Along with having a rest they have been writing articles for Wikipedia for several hours a day in accordance with coordinated topics. By the way, the representatives of the diaspora are more and getting invited to such camps more often. This program makes it possible to increase the number of Armenian content in Wikipedia. So, after one of the

preceding camps, it was announced that the Armenian-language Wikipedia was able to change a level in the global rankings of various Wikipedias on the number of articles - from 42<sup>nd</sup> point to 41<sup>st</sup>, as a result of their work. Compare these figures with the 130-131<sup>st</sup> point according the basic parameters of traditional geopolitics - they represent themselves.

Our conclusion: The example of Armenia shows that small countries, if they properly apply the elements of civilization Geopolitics in cyberspace, obtain the opportunity to increase their geopolitical value, at least in cyberspace. In our opinion it is important in the modern world.

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