

Rapprochement between France and India: perspectives for Armenia

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Following the visit of FR President Emmanuel Macron to India in late January 2024, a package of cooperation agreements was signed between Paris and New Delhi in the fields of defense industry, civil aviation, digital technologies, nuclear energy, space research, etc.

The event is not sensational, as Franco-Indian cooperation, especially in the defense sector, already has a long history. In particular, the FR is the second, after the Russian Federation, largest supplier of weapons and technology for the Indian military-industrial complex. Nevertheless, the new agreements between the nuclear powers contain details that indicate a radically increased quality of their interaction and resolution of military-political tasks of mutual interest.

International media, citing the official releases of Paris and New Delhi, mentions among others, an agreement on the joint production of various types of weapons, including submarines and helicopters. It is noteworthy that due to this agreement, the parties emphasized that joint military products would also be supplied to *“friendly countries”*.

The list of these *“friendly countries”* for both France and India is quite extensive, and there is every reason to assume that both sides have Armenia on this list, and by no means in the last positions. Considering the whole range of dynamically growing relations between Yerevan, Paris and New Delhi over the past few years, the convergence of their positions regarding regional and geopolitical trends, as well as the accumulated experience of interaction in the field of arms supplies, it can be assumed that Armenia may become one of the countries that will benefit from these transactions. Of course, we are not talking about submarines or, necessarily, helicopters, but about the types of weapons that the RA Armed Forces need first.

Hypothetically, such a scheme will allow NATO member France to technically eliminate the North Atlantic Bloc's taboo on arming the CSTO member country such as Armenia. Therefore, the assumption that Paris has already found a solution to legitimize expanded military assistance to Yerevan sounds quite convincing.

In a broader context, the multi-level *rapprochement* between Paris and New Delhi can be considered into the logic of the emerging new military-political alliance in Eurasia along the West-East axis, something that was directly announced by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his historic visit to Greece in August 2023. They discussed the prospects of a coalition between India and Greece, as well as the possibility of Armenia joining them. France was not mentioned then, but given Paris's warm and active relations with all these countries, and Macron's ambition to restore France's former greatness, it is highly likely that the Fifth Republic is on the way to membership and the policy of expanding the emerging new alliance covering the geographical area from the Western Mediterranean to the South-East of Indian Ocean, where, incidentally, according to the latest agreements between Macron and Modi, the French and Indian Navy are to carry out joint training and intelligence activities.