

## On the supply of military equipment to Azerbaijan

Expert's comment, 08.08.2024<sup>1</sup>

Ara H. Marjanyan<sup>2</sup>

On 22.07.2024, our article “Between Global South and North” was published<sup>3</sup> on the website of ARVAK Center. Among other things, article presents a comparative analysis of the arms, ordered by and delivered to Azerbaijan and Armenia after the 44-Day War in Karabakh in 2020.

In particular, the article states (Table 5 and below), that in 2020–2024 Azerbaijan received arms worth 57.15 million TIV in SIPRI<sup>4</sup> indicative values, mainly from Turkey and Israel, but also from Italy and the United States. In the latter case, we are talking about C-27J Spartan military transport aircraft from the Italian company Leonardo and modern, highly efficient AE-2100D3 turboprop engines from US. Moreover, from the various press reports it was clear, that the Italian aircraft would arrive in Azerbaijan in their final form, i.e. with engines. In this connection, the article posed the following questions:

*SIPRI database of arms deliveries to Azerbaijan presents AE-2100D3 turboprop engines in a separate line. Does this mean that in addition to the C-27J Spartan aircraft with their engines, Azerbaijan is also being supplied with a separate batch of AE-2100D3 engines in unknown number? All the more, "new" as indicate SIPRI, and subject to the strict export control, to prevent technological leaks. And if answer is “yes”, then what is the purpose of this delivery? Besides, it is known that [AE-2100D3](#) engines manufactured by British company Rolls-Royce are used, for example, in the American military transport plane C-130J Hercules. What is the purpose of this agreement with Azerbaijan? And what is the role of Italy and Great Britain in it?*

On 01.08.2024 some Armenian media reported that according to “Israeli press, a military agreement was signed between Turkey and Great Britain, according to which Turkey purchased 12 C-130J Hercules military transport planes from Great Britain. Moreover, the agreement on the purchase of these planes was kept secret”.

If this information is true<sup>5</sup>, the supply of an unknown number of AE-2100D turboprop engines from the United States (probably from Italy, as part of the C-27J aircraft deal) to

---

<sup>1</sup> The original (in Rus.) was posted on our website on 04.08.2024.

<sup>2</sup> UNDP National expert (power sector), EU National expert (transport), EAEC Expert Club fellow, Ph.D., Senior Scientific Researcher, Leading analyst.

<sup>3</sup> Marjanyan A. H., Between Global “South” and “North” (in Arm.). Center «ARVAK» (22.07.2024), <https://arvak.am/global-haravi-ev-huisisi-mijev/> (download date: 03.08.2024).

<sup>4</sup> SIPRI – Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

<sup>5</sup> This news was probably first [published](#) by [ermenihaber.am](#) at 12:15, 01.08.2024. It was then published by [168.am](#) at 23:29, 01.08.2024. Minutes later, at 23:53, 01.08.2024, it was [republished](#) by [Pastinfo.am](#). They listed “Israeli press” as the source of the news, without any details. The next day at 18:03, 02.08.2024, the Azerbaijani website [haqqin.az](#) [stated](#) the same. This time the Israeli publication Israel Defense was indicated as the source of news about the secret deal between the UK and Turkey on C-130J aircraft.

However, a search using the words “UK, Turkey, C-130J Hercules” on the Israel Defense Ministry website reveals no publications, either on August 2 or at all for 2023 or 2024. An all-time search for this query reveals

Azerbaijan, mentioned in SIPRI database in a separate line, is seen in a new light and in more complete way.

It can be assumed that the deal with the Italian company *Leonardo* is seen as a way to circumvent a number of existing sanctions restricting the export of certain technologies to such a non-NATO country as Azerbaijan. In particular, the *AE-2100D3* engines can be used to power upgraded *C-130J Hercules* aircraft equipped with *DOWTY's R-391* six-blade composite propellers (see cover image). Considering the nature and level of Azerbaijani–Turkish strategic military cooperation, it can be assumed that the *C-130J Hercules* purchased by the Turkish Air Force from Great Britain are likely to appear in Azerbaijan sooner or later.

Here there are three disturbing facts in our opinion. First, Italy is Azerbaijan's main trade partner and the country that “fills” Azerbaijan's budget to the largest extent, including the military budget. Therefore, Italy is a “natural candidate” for overcoming export restrictions on the transfer of sensitive dual-purpose technologies to Azerbaijan.

Second, information about this British-Turkish deal appeared in the “Israeli press” only because Turkish–Israeli relations have recently become extremely strained due to the latter's military operations in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, and after the assassination of Hamas political buro chief Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on July 31, 2024. Otherwise, the details of this deal would have come to light years later – for example, if they had been appeared in the SIPRI database.

And the most alarming thing is that Turkey participates in the “Steadfast Noon” NATO nuclear exercises not only with its *F-16D* fighter-bombers, which designate to carry tactical thermonuclear bombs of the *B-61* family, but also with its *C-130J* military transport planes. The latter ones are licensed to transport tactical nuclear weapons<sup>6</sup>.

It is clear that all these developments should be seen in the context of the comprehensive efforts of the United States, NATO, Israel, Turkey and Azerbaijan against Iran, and, probably, against the Russian Federation.

---

only D. Arkin's June 22, 2018 article [“Far-Reaching, Stealthy and Surprising”](#) on Israel's upgrade of *C-130J Hercules* military transport aircraft to *Avionics Karnaf*.

Moreover, a broader internet search reveals a detailed and noteworthy publication by Boyko Nikolov on Bulgaria's *bulgarianmilitary.com* dated July 26, 2024, [“12 of retired UK's C-130 Hercules aircraft may go to Turkey](#). Where “various sources, ranging from England to the Balkans” are cited as the source, which moreover “has yet be officially confirmed” (data of all dowloads: 02.08.2024).

<sup>6</sup> *Marjanyan A. H.*, Nuclear Turkey and the Region (in Rus). (19.11.2015), <http://www.kavkazoved.info/news/2015/11/19/jadernaya-turcia-i-region.html> (download date: 02.08.2024).