

## **Strength and Potential**

### **Expert's Opinion, 18.02.2025<sup>1</sup>**

(Part IV, see previous Part [I](#), [II](#), [III](#))

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#### **1. Strength**

Today, as in the past, we must once again re-evaluate and accurately define the concept of strength in the context of the Armenian nation and state. In this regard, *strength* and *potential* are invariably linked to the foundation of the country's armed forces, which represent the collective capacity to resist external aggression. This necessitates a thorough examination of our own and other countries' experiences from recent conflicts, enhancement of personnel and educational strategies within the sector, replenishment of the material and technical resources, and implementation of science-based solutions. In essence, the defense and security sector in its various forms and content must be consistently aligned and adapted to both current and potential challenges. Additionally, there is a pressing need to reconsider certain public attitudes and perceptions concerning several key issues within the field.

We date the birth of the Armenian nation from the life-and-death battle between Hayk and Bel on August 11, 2492, BC. Once again, flattering our national pride, we can note that according to "The History of Armenians" by Movses Khorenatsi, this was the first war ever mentioned in the history of mankind after the Flood. Indeed, as one of the ancient nations, Armenians have always been involved in wars and military arts and were known in the ancient world as excellent archers and a nation with an unbeatable powerful cavalry. The first foreign written sources<sup>2</sup> about the Armenian regular army and military arts date back to the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century BC. In 69 BC, King Tigran the Great's 6,000-strong guard broke through the ranks of the Roman army besieging the capital Tigranakert, entered the city, took the royal treasury and the mint, and fought their way out of the city, thus surprising the Romans. This episode can rightly be considered the first documented example of an unprecedented special operation in history.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the Armenian prince Ashot Bagratuni organized a surprise attack on the Arab garrison in the city of Mush, during which the Armenian warriors used skis to descend from the mountains and unexpectedly attack the enemies<sup>3</sup>. In 925, King Ashot II the Iron, with only 11 boats and a small force, managed to defeat the enemy's large forces on Lake Sevan, marking one of the peaks of the Armenian military art, and that too on water. As early as the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, the Armenians had a document regulating the number of the Armenian troops in case of war, the "*Zoranamak*". In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Archbishop

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<sup>1</sup> The expert's viewpoint on the value-based foundations of national ideology is presented to the reader. The study consists of 5 parts, provided consecutively, with the included pictures taken from the internet.

<sup>2</sup> See Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* (in Rus.), <https://ancientrome.ru/antlitrt/t.htm?a=1348001000> (download date: 10.10.2024); Strabo, *Geography*, Book XI, Chapter XIV (in Rus.), <https://ancientrome.ru/antlitrt/t.htm?a=1260110000> (download date: 10.10.2024).

<sup>3</sup> The first documented case in Europe dates back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

Nerses Lambronatsi of Cilician Tarsus compiled the “*Military Code*”, a work dedicated to military affairs and order, based on the Byzantine Ecloga. Even after the fall of Cilician Armenia, the enemy could not capture some fortresses, which fell only decades later, after the natural death of their defenders. Only in 1515 did the Ottoman Turks manage to capture Cilicia completely, while Zeytun, which belonged to it, remained semi-independent until the 1860s.

With the loss of national statehood, Armenian military and martial traditions were mostly lost in their own country and continued only at an individual level in the armies of foreign states. The natives of historical Armenia, divided between Safavid Persia and the Ottoman Empire, with few exceptions (Syunik, Artsakh, Zeytun), were deprived for centuries not only of military service but even of the right to bear arms as Christian subjects of Muslim empires. The loss of the weapon factor in Armenian daily life and culture is clearly visible in the national costumes depicted in paintings from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. While cold weapons and firearms were widespread among neighboring nations and ethnic groups as part of national dress, they were much rarer among Armenians.

Later, Armenian fighters actively participated in various wars and military operations individually and even as part of Armenian units (for example, in the Soviet army during WWII), earning the highest military ranks and awards of the counties of their citizenship. Summarizing the combat path of the Armenian units in the context of world history, we can say that Armenians are the only people among the present nations of the world who participated in both the siege and capture of both Babylon (539 BC<sup>4</sup>) and Berlin (1945) in the format of a national unit.

The absence of an armed force and the long history of lack of national statehood have significantly influenced and continue to shape the Armenian public's perception of the military sector in the broadest sense. Let us address this with two symptomatic examples.

The sight of high-ranking military officers and civilians on podiums during military parades, with troops marching in formation, is commonly recognized. Another scene depicts an atmosphere around a campfire, where volunteers of various ages, attired in military uniforms, are assembled with their rifles in hand. They are captured singing patriotic songs to the camera, responding to inquiries from the filmmaker, making remarks, and sharing jokes.

Let us start with the fact that the practice of formation adopted in the Prussian army to harmonize new recruits who did not know each other into a combat unit<sup>5</sup> – an approach advocated by Frederick II (1740–1786) – was imitated in the Russian army during the reign of Emperor Paul I (1796–1801) and his successors. These rulers had a bias of giving excessive importance to parades and introducing various absurd innovations in them. In the Soviet army, the drill training received a sarcastic nickname “*shagistika*” (“*ւաշււցմուկա*”), referring

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<sup>4</sup> According to the Greek historian Xenophon (Cyropaedia), 8,000 Armenian cavalry and 40,000 infantry participated in the capture of Babylon, under the leadership of generals Tigran and Yemnass.

<sup>5</sup> Incidentally, for the same purposes, Armenian military used fight dances, the modern variations of which are known as *Kochari*, *Yarkhushta*, etc. Upon close observation, the movements of a soldier armed with weapons and armor are immediately noticeable in these dances. The significance of these dances is further emphasized by the accompanying musical instruments: duduk, zurna, and dhol.

to the training of troops in marching. This is not about the drill training itself, but it became a symbol of military service at the time, embodying the transition from irregular forces – *fedayeen* detachments and formations – to the unified command of the Armenian Armed Forces (AAF).

Precise command and control of the troops is a prerequisite for the performance of a military task, ensuring the coordination of units and making correct decisions and movements in changing tactical situations. Thus, the clear formation and flawless marching of the soldiers on the marching field was not only one of the memorable attributes of the dreamt-of national army but also, in essence, an unfamiliar phenomenon for the Armenian reality, where individuals with distinctive characteristics and peculiarities could achieve something together, in synchrony, without speaking or arguing, under a unified command. Can we recall any other field or activity where the principle of collectivism could genuinely prevail and push to the background the bright individuality and its manifestations, which are so beloved in our society? After all, if we give people in any collective outside of the “marching logic” a little individual freedom and the right to make decisions, we very quickly get to the deep-rooted reasons for our failures in team sports. Nevertheless, the somewhat idealized approach to military affairs mentioned above can be conditionally called “*officer’s perception*”.

The other “picture” presents an opposite scenario that exactly reproduces the environment depicted in literary works and archival photographs of the *Haiduk–Fedayee*<sup>6</sup> milieu, which also has its distinct layers. Initially, it is ideologically alien to the outlined hierarchical structure of the AAF, preferring instead an environment and atmosphere of squads – brotherhoods of equal comrades formed on a voluntary basis, under the command of the most experienced and capable comrade. This system is characterized by a military democracy, predicated on a traditional “*older–younger*” relationship, wherein individuals voluntarily join but remain only after “*demonstrating their aptitude*”. At the core of this structure is the Armenian who has gained the privilege of bearing arms. This individual has shed the yoke of the foreigner surrendering to the power of that weapon and overcoming his fears. He stands ready to engage in a life-and-death struggle with the enemy at a moment’s notice. That is why he always carries with him his personal weapon – a rifle (submachine gun) and a dagger (bayonet) but neglects the helmet and body armor, as they were not part of the free *Fedayee* culture. He rarely wears a military cap, as it also lacks appropriate cultural packaging; instead, he tends to wear various “*subconsciously familiar*” types of hats and headscarves. For such a fighter, there are only two combat commands: “*Fire*” and “*Forward*”, and all else, in his view, is deemed superfluous, as it is executed based on

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<sup>6</sup> In Armenian culture, the terms *Haiduk* and *Fedayee* are closely intertwined and hold significant historical importance. ***Haiduk*** (Հայդուկ) is derived from the Hungarian word “*hajduk*”, meaning “*foot soldier*”. It refers to Armenian irregular armed groups or militias that formed to defend Armenian villages from persecution and attacks by Ottoman forces, Kurdish gangs, and Hamidian guards during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. ***Fedayee*** (Ֆեդայի) comes from the Arabic word “*fedayeen*”, meaning “*those who sacrifice*”. Fedayees were Armenian civilians who voluntarily left their families to form self-defense units in response to the mass murder and pillage of Armenians. Their ultimate goal was to gain Armenian autonomy or independence. The bravery and sacrifices of these Haiduks and fedayees are celebrated in Armenian culture as symbols of resistance and the struggle for independence.

individual decisions. In this context, there are no stringent requirements or limitations imposed by military regulations. Here, factors such as past experience, education, and social status are rendered irrelevant; they do not confer an advantage, but rather the fighting spirit and the universal method that supplants military education and knowledge – the “*nostril*”<sup>7</sup>. His understanding of warfare is vivid, it remains limited, largely conditioned by the length of the frontline assigned to his squad. This depiction, however, is an idealized one, and this form of “military life” can be conditionally called “*soldier’s perception*”.

The observations under consideration have emerged within a particular historical period and milieu, and they complement each other, reflecting a generalized perception of strength, the army, and the battlefield as they are conceptualized in our minds. However, in our view, the solution lies in the bridging of these observations, with the strategic depth of problems understood in the individual’s inner world and the readiness to flawlessly perform one’s own duties. Military service is characterized by modesty, prioritizing the collective over the individual, adherence to orders and discipline, and the readiness to act in challenging conditions.

“And that is why the image of, for example, Albert Hovhannisyan, dusty, sooty, but steadfast and true to his oath, captured against the background of his cannon during the 44-Day Artsakh War of 2020, is imprinted in our memory, in which our society recognized the National Hero of Armenia”.



Or the image of any modest hero who sacrificed his life for duty, because, as we have said, “*The servant is not greater than the one served*”.

In the context of the army, there is a persistent emphasis on the need for special treatment and care. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that a weak society cannot sustain a fully robust army. Moreover, considering the Armed Forces are performing their functions on the brink of existential threats, the identified deficiencies are likely to be more pronounced. Individuals from diverse family backgrounds and social strata possess varied

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<sup>7</sup> In the context of Armenian idiomatic expressions, the term “*nostril*” (քթածակ, k’t’atsak) often symbolizes an individual’s intuition, acumen, or ability to navigate through challenging situations. It’s used to denote someone’s ability to “*sniff out*” or detect things keenly, similar to how a nose works to sense smells.

worldviews, levels of education, values, and customs. The army, as a distinct and relatively insular institution, under specific conditions, is able to effect changes within society and influence its prevailing atmosphere. As a distinct and relatively insular institution, it can serve as a model for the development and dissemination of values and agendas, act as a framework for future social relationships, and function as a leadership training ground. This capability of the army has been making it a forge for the nobility and leaders of nations for centuries.

Individuals of conscription age accept the army as a school of life, a “test” for personal growth and maturation, preparing for its unique challenges and environment in advance, even before donning the uniform. Parents entrust the state, embodied by the army and its officer corps, with the care and well-being of their children during this pivotal stage of life. This is, in reality, the most important “*civil contract*” between an individual and the state, and it is the paramount task of the state and society to qualitatively improve the atmosphere in the armed forces, aimed at eradicating subcultures and customs that are incongruent with the military environment, both among the conscripts and, even more so, within the officer corps.

Regarding this category of military personnel, it is important to acknowledge that St. Mesrop Mashtots is a figure who, by modern standards, could be regarded as a military officer. He significantly contributed to the development of the written culture of the Armenian people and showed scholarly qualities by creating alphabets for three different languages spoken by various nations, due to his educational, intellectual, and spiritual abilities. This prompts the question of the existence of other instances of such scholar-military men in the last 1.5 millennia of human history. Irrespective of the answer, it is reasonable to infer that a nation that has produced such an officer in its history must have elevated expectations and set a high bar for the commanders of its armed forces nowadays.

Addressing societal attitudes toward the military, it is imperative to first examine the “intra-army” realities. Unfree and humiliated individuals, for whom the fake “us” and the enemy are almost indistinguishable, are unable to serve their Homeland with the requisite dedication. The organization of military service and the formulation of its agenda must be predicated on a comprehensive understanding of prevailing challenges within the military, taking into account national traditions and mentality, and involve clergymen, psychologists, and other specialists. In instances where certain families encounter difficulties in the upbringing of their children, the army plays a significant role in the development and maturation of the last, something that in turn impacts national security.

On this path, a controversial yet crucial aspect is the resurgence of the tradition of legal ownership of weapons within the Armenian society. The possession and mastery of weapons remains pertinent, even in the context of national statehood and the existence of national military forces. This process is intricate and demands responsibility, which, for rational reasons, may cause dissatisfaction among the state power structures. Nevertheless, the capacity to manage weapons, the cultivation of a culture of a “weapon-owning” and “weapon-bearing” society, physical training, survival skills, military and psychological training should become an integral part of national culture and lifestyle. It means the spread of pre-



conscription, military-sport, and educational club life, active recreation, and tourism (extreme), sports and amateur shooting, survival and mountaineering courses among us.

Such preparation is important not only in terms of military service readiness but also for daily life in general. The global experience in dealing with the consequences of natural disasters and catastrophes shows that people who have knowledge and training are better able to cope with dangerous situations and can also take care of others. This logic is also relevant for the Armenian diaspora outside the Homeland. Under appropriate conditions and organizational activities, Armenian social structures operating in foreign lands, in the form of unions, can be ready to ensure the safety of their compatriots and fellow citizens. These structures can cooperate with the relevant authorities of the country of residence during natural disasters, internal instability, and other situations.

And, of course, the ideological vision within us plays a key role in creating and consolidating national potential in the defense and security sectors.

In the wake of another episode of determining the fate of the Armenian people by external forces, the Catholicos of All Armenians Mkrtych I Vanetsi – Khrimyan Hayrik – circulated the well-known discourse on the “porridge pot”, the “paper” and the “iron ladle”<sup>8</sup>. The spiritual leader of the Armenians offered a precise characterization of the prevailing circumstances, as well as the internal logic and tools of modern international relations, which he perceived with dismay. Subsequently, in the wake of further calamities and attempts to counteract them, Garegin Nzhdeh articulated the renowned phrase “*Might is the right*”, which expressed the conviction of no longer relying on the “Berlin Conferences” but on us.

The historical and political context of Nzhdeh’s “*Might is the right*” phrase, must be taken into consideration when evaluating the validity of the aforementioned editorial. The prevailing universal truths indicate that if the principle of power as a right is accepted, then grievances and complaints about atrocities committed by those in positions of strength become futile. Complaints also become meaningless, because according to the abovementioned logic, the strength of others and our weakness, give them the “legal right” to massacre and dispossess us. All our current appeals to the international community and its institutions for justice are in vain. It turns out that if we are weak, then our resistance is also meaningless.

We do not think that such a philosophy can be useful for Armenians. We believe that truth, not strength, creates right. If we fight for truth, then we have divine support. The pursuit of truth is a righteous endeavor that entitles us to the right even if we lack the strength. We can be deprived of everything but not our inherent rights. The beginning of our strength is the consciousness of justice. Therefore, the presence or absence of strengths

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<sup>8</sup> The terms are associated with the prominent Armenian clergyman and national leader in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The “Iron Ladle” refers to a speech he delivered in 1878 upon returning from the Congress of Berlin. In this speech, Khrimian used the metaphor of an iron ladle to describe the helplessness he felt at the Congress, where the Armenian cause was largely ignored by the great powers. He urged Armenians to take matters into their own hands and defend themselves rather than relying on foreign powers for help. For more see, for example, Iron Ladle by Khrimyan Hayrig – The Armenite, <https://thearmenite.com/2014/03/iron-ladle-khirmyan-hayrig/?form=MGoAV3>.

(might) can be temporary, while the truth and the resulting right are beyond time and space. Therefore, as long as we exist, we have the right.

## 2. Potential

The ideological basis of the economy are the Lord's words<sup>9</sup> about a man who is deprived of the blessings of paradise and earns his livelihood by his sweat. It also means that a man must earn to live and not live to earn, because the means of life should not become the meaning of life.

Speaking about the sphere from the perspective of the national agenda, we should distinguish between two related but different philosophies of *earning* and *spending* money.

It is known that after the loss of the national statehood the Armenian capital concentrated mainly on trade activities, in the course of time establishing reliable connections between the trade centers of Europe and the Far East, dealing with the trade of silk, spices, carpets, and precious stones, creating a good reputation, and ensuring their entry even to the markets tightly closed to foreigners. Being skilled merchants, Armenians, nevertheless operated within clear value systems, avoiding, for example, the slave and hashish trade, etc. In the Middle Ages, Armenian craftsmen were also known for their high-quality products and craftsmanship in weaving, carpentry, jewelry, pottery, and metalworking, which were famous in many countries and adorned churches and palaces around the world. As a result of their good reputation, Armenians had the right and opportunity to freely practice their faith, build Armenian churches and institutions, and preserve their values and culture in many locations.

However, due to historical circumstances, having been deprived of national political leadership for centuries, Armenians did not form national concepts to consolidate significant financial potential and direct it towards the realization of certain national visions, although there were some separate attempts. Having accumulated rich experience of earning money in various regions of the world and economic sectors for centuries, we have not developed a systematic approach, traditions, or institutions for managing national capital, unlike other nations<sup>10</sup>. The absence of our own statehood has resulted in leaving the initiation and implementation of public programs to the discretion and preferences of individuals. Being a nation with brilliant examples of large-scale national initiatives and projects brought to life by wealthy individuals and their efforts, we have also not formed **the rules of conduct for wealthy people**, as well as a **culture of socially responsible business**. Having lost the national statehood and having mainly kept the capital and production capacities outside the Homeland's borders, we have even sidelined the agricultural sector, which has been connecting the Armenian individual to the native soil for millennia. In modern and contemporary history, we have acted in the same way, and as a result of political changes, wars, disasters, and other reasons, we have gradually lost what was created over centuries, in those foreign countries.

In the context of such logic of historical development, we must rethink the deeper meanings of national institutions and make them practically serve the needs of the public,

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<sup>9</sup> "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground..." (Gen. 3:19).

<sup>10</sup> For example, Jewish, British, Dutch, Venetian, Genoese, etc.

rather than national vanity. In this regard, the national business environment has significant tasks to accomplish. Today, unfortunately, we are still confronted with a reality in which many issues, especially in the social sphere, are not taken care of by the state's attention. Today, unlike in the times of the Armenian Catholicos Nerses I<sup>11</sup>, we, as a state and society, have not formed an understanding of the necessity of a “*social security network*”, psychologically and institutionally reconciling with the idea that our compatriots, for some reasons, can be ignored and miserable in their own country<sup>12</sup>. In our assessment, the foundation of economic development of a country is to address the challenges faced by the socially vulnerable class (SVC). Effective development must be calculated from the standpoint of resolving these issues. The national business sector can implement systematic measures to ensure genuine protection of SVC representatives' interests within the legal framework. This can be achieved through government sources or various NGOs, with full transparency regarding their funding sources. Additionally, efforts should be made to support their inclusion in pertinent state and private programs, establish and maintain an appropriate information platform, and provide targeted assistance at the individual, organizational, and corporate levels. Furthermore, the institution of sponsorship, including guardianship, should be introduced at multiple levels, such as individual volunteerism, local self-government, community groups (e.g., neighborhoods), and corporate structures. Such a systematic policy can fundamentally change the public's perception of national capacity and potential, with numerous resulting consequences.

It is generally accepted that the business is a sensitive system that quickly responds to external influences and circumstances and depends on various internal factors. At the same time, business is highly dependent on the country's internal realities, in many cases being a more accurate indicator of democracy (which is expressed by the existence of free competition) than political elections, which are determined by temporary preferences. Despite all this, the “national economy” can be guided by its own country's agenda, identify, and develop its competitive advantages<sup>13</sup>, and serve as a system that creates opportunities for other businesses in the Homeland. The importance of entrepreneurship for the nation lies in first giving people the opportunity to earn in their own land and only then pay taxes. It is for this function that businesses are given tax breaks and “holidays”.

It should be remembered that business activities using natural resources, human potential, and other capacities of the country are based on the free determination of the performer and nowadays cannot be imposed against the owner's will. In our society, the memory of the process of national capital redistribution of the early 1990s, as well as the “*blessed times of general equality*” that preceded it, is still vivid, which causes certain reservations about local capital. Among the peculiarities of the **hyper-competitive environment** and other issues, this is also why the people involved in the sector constantly

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<sup>11</sup> Saint Nerses I the Great | Biography, Death, & Facts | Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Nerses-I-the-Great> (download date: 12.02.2025 )

<sup>12</sup> This refers not to the phenomenon of vagrancy and similar lifestyles known in almost all countries but to people who have worked yet live in poverty.

<sup>13</sup> For competitive advantages see, for example, E. Atanesian. Faith, Homeland, State (Part III), ARVAK Analytical Center. 25.11.2024, [https://arvak.am/en/faith-homeland-state\\_3/](https://arvak.am/en/faith-homeland-state_3/) (download date: 14.02.2025).



face the challenge of self-improvement, learning and applying new knowledge. And realizing that addressing the fundamental issue of Armenians living and creating on their own land requires the harmonization of business and national-state interests. It is the correct (acceptable) formulation of the relationship between what is **profitable for business** and what is **expedient for the nation** by every businessperson concerned with the national agenda.

We proceed from the premise that, while adhering to all economic laws as much as possible, business should be a **means** for the nation, the nation should be a **potential** for business (consumer market, labor source), and the state should be a safe (closed for unnecessary external dangers) **environment** for cooperation. It so happened that it is the Armenian business community, represented by its conscious and socially responsible members, that found itself at the forefront of advancing the national-state agenda. Many of them, having gone through the stages of self-affirmation and establishment of their companies, now face the imperative of qualitatively different issues that require “interdisciplinary” approaches. How they will self-organize, and work is their own business and decision.

From our side, we will only say that, given the challenges facing the nation and the peculiarities of the economy (the small size of the market, the lack of quality labor force, the need for technological progress, etc.), the national (Homeland and Diaspora) vision of development in the economic sphere requires the initiation of a number of interrelated processes by interested parties.

## **2.1 Formation of human potential**

*- Educating new human potential<sup>14</sup>, involving it into institutional and programmatic frameworks*

The business world is a rapidly changing environment, whose processes constantly present new challenges and perspectives that require additional effort and work, especially in the conditions of opening borders and liberalization of economic relations. The issue is even more relevant in the context of wide involvement of economic tools in the fight against various problems in international relations. Due to objective circumstances, the RA business community began to form in the mid-1990s, carrying the perceptions of the moment and being satisfied with the available experience and knowledge. Today, personal, individual abilities are no longer sufficient to move forward and implement ambitious programs; therefore, new potential must be involved. A widespread method in the world is for companies to take on the task of educating and providing professional experience to young specialists in advance, signing contracts with them in advance and providing practical professional training. This can not only ensure the influx of new, modern knowledge-equipped personnel into the economy, contribute to the generational change of specialists, and change the business management philosophy in RA (where the owner overburdens

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<sup>14</sup> Alongside preparing its own personnel, the business sector can also contribute to the formation of the country's future social-political elite, clearly understanding, however, that in the latter case, the Army and the Church should play a primary role.

himself with daily management), but also increase the demand for education among the youth, providing opportunities for socially disadvantaged but talented young people.

*- Creation of a National Registry of Business Sector Professionals*

The goal is to inventory the professional potential of Armenia and the Diaspora and form a competitive professional market, with the understanding that its presence can significantly facilitate the institutionalization and rapid start of new programs and initiatives in the business sector, effectively manage the potential of those with specialized knowledge, and make Armenia more attractive for foreign investments. Naturally, it should also provide opportunities for specialists and create career growth possibilities in areas that necessarily require initial work experience but do not provide it themselves.

## **2.2. Formation (reformation) of national business culture**

*- Introduction of the National Code of business relations, protection of workers' interests and rights<sup>15</sup>*

The aforementioned code (written or unwritten) should compile the existing and previously practiced norms and customs in “Business-to-Business” (B2B), “Business-to-Consumer” (B2C), and “Business-to-Employee” (B2E) relations and become a guide for individuals' business behavior and practices<sup>16</sup>. This would rebuild the reputation and reliability of the Armenian business environment and increase its competitiveness in the face of potential external economic expansion.

*- Introduction of a culture of consumption of products made by national producers or with the participation of national capital*

The habit of giving preference to the products of national producers, at least in equal conditions, is a kind of civic patriotism<sup>17</sup>. This ensures the sustainability of national companies and guarantees their ability to pay salaries and taxes. On the other hand, it is impossible and should not be mandatory for consumers to use low-quality products and services that abuse their origin.

*- Ensuring priority for national producers and investors in the Homeland, at least under equal conditions*

The Armenian economy cannot survive and develop under the conditions of global and regional competition without exceptional care not only of the society but also the national state. The state's capabilities may be limited in some matters for several reasons; however, the principle of national priority in any type of economic activity must be maintained.

## **2.3. Consolidation of the national (economic) potential**

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<sup>15</sup> Innovative activities in the sector can be based on studying the history and experience of the Armenian *Khoja Capital*, the *Chelebi*, the *Amira*, and the Armenian guilds.

<sup>16</sup> We have already talked about the unity of *thought*, *speech*, and *action* and others in our previous publications. See E. Atanesian, Armenian National Ideological Standpoint. The Path of Hayk and the Path to Hayk (Part II), ARVAK Analytical Center, 25.11.2024, [https://arvak.am/en/armenian-national-ideological-standpoint\\_2/](https://arvak.am/en/armenian-national-ideological-standpoint_2/) (download date: 14.02.2025).

<sup>17</sup> A vivid example of such a culture is the practice of consuming kosher food and other products, which is gradually spreading beyond the purely Jewish traditional environment to among consumers from other religious and cultural backgrounds.

We believe that the steps taken to implement the culture and processes resulting from the aforementioned points can raise the agenda for overly ambitious national programs and initiatives, which can scale positive programs, increase the international role and importance of national statehood, and strengthen its resilience against all types of threats.

*- Encouragement of cooperation, joint and shared-ownership business formats*

It is unfortunate, but we must admit that there is a lack of positive experience in this format of business activity in our country, which is why, as it is often said, “*One does not make two*”. There are many reasons for this, including the factor of interpersonal relations, the weakness of the culture of decision-making in horizontal equal-rights formats, the strict vertical management of business ventures, and the reluctance to work with professional management invited from outside. Unfortunately, the problem exists even within the family format.

*- Introduction of pan-Armenian formats of economic cooperation*

The implementation of programs with shareholding capital not only expands the financial base of the programs but also unites large groups of people around various promising programs, making them beneficiaries and participants of national programs. This method of cooperation between Armenia and the Diaspora is the format that actively involves representatives of the Armenian communities in the agendas of Armenia without “striking” the sovereignty of RA.

*- Formation of a Pan-Armenian Market/Exchange for Goods and Services*

This concerns the pan-Armenian format of civic patriotism mentioned earlier, where each transaction and purchase are not only aimed at solving individual problems but also at strengthening intra-Armenian ties, supporting national entrepreneurship without additional efforts and, in many cases, expenses.

*- Consolidation of the Pan-Armenian Banking (financial) Capital*

This point implies the presence of the necessary professional potential and institutions among Armenians, the formation of wide Armenian connections and mutual trust, as well as awareness of the global economic trends and the place and role of RA and Armenian capital in them. How feasible this is under our conditions is a complex issue, depending on many objective and subjective factors, including the ability of the national business class to form leadership and work as a team, their ability to make efforts for the success of the common cause and to abandon personal ambitions, strategic orientation, and readiness to overcome various obstacles. In any case, it is clear that representatives of the sector understand very well that in their field inaction is unacceptable at first, because in business one is obliged to make efforts not only to move forward, but even to stay afloat.

*(To be continued)*