An Identikit of Enemy

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In every occasion of force majeure situations, mass protests or discontent of limited scope in Azerbaijan, pro-government and government-friendly media, politicians, and experts tirelessly repeat one mantra: the citizens of Azerbaijan hear an approximate statement in the following sense: *foreign dark forces and their puppets* which cannot stand Azerbaijan are at work once again but they have failed as usual in the face of the people-government unity.

State officials, members of parliament, numerous politicians and experts expose these enemies with most acute and literary-artistic expressions in national television channels, print and online media, as well as, in recent times, as in social networking websites. In turn, the public does not remain a passive receiver of these diatribes. Representatives of the public (sometimes their names are mentioned, and sometimes they are referred to in general terms such as *a resident of the capital* or *a resident of the district*) join the choir of these denouncers when necessary. For example, on state television, along with MPs, political pundits, journalists, artists, and athletes, one can also see residents of different cities and districts such as capital Baku, as well as Mingəçevir, Göyçay, Zaqatala, Lənkəran, Ağdam and etc. exposing enemies.

The recent such furious tirade by the state propaganda machine about *foreign dark forces and their puppets* coincided with the assassination attempt at Elmar Vəliyev, the head of Gəncə City Executive Authority, on July 3[i], and the following riot attempt and the killing of two high-ranking police officers in Gəncə[ii].

One immediately noticeable feature of this last *performance* was the organization of the denunciation process in the

electronic media and social networking segment at a fairly professional level. For this purpose, several high-profile players with many years of experience in electronic media and social networks had been transferred to a team of traditional propagandists / denouncers. One of these new players has even come up with a new word *cell*, which will be possibly used in the future in many occasions and therefore, may be considered a successful addition into the vocabulary of denouncers.

However, phrases such as *foreign dark forces and their puppets* are so repeated and circulated by the state propaganda machine, as well as so much mocked by those who are dissatisfied with the activities of the government that it is getting difficult to understand whether they are said seriously or jokingly. We should note with regret that we are witnessing here a dilution of a concept. The concept of *foreign dark forces and their puppets*, which has already been diluted enough, is rapidly gaining a contradictory content.

On the other hand, a justifiable objection can arise: this type of expressions is a propaganda tool designed to influence the general public. These statements had no essence or coherence from the very beginning; therefore, what is happening now is not about dilution, but it is a babble originating from internal contradictions of the concept itself.

For a moment, let us assume that the latter hypothesis is not true – that is, *foreign dark forces and their puppets* indeed is (or had been) a concept with a coherence and is (or had been) a reflection of enemy image possessed by administrators of the state propaganda machine – then a new question arises: can we reconstruct a generalized portrait of *the enemies of Azerbaijan* from the analysis of *foreign dark forces and their puppets*? If we isolate such phrases from the specific socio-political events that cause their usage, and reconstruct the portrait of this imaginary enemy based solely on the analysis of these phrases themselves and the way they are used, then

what will be the characteristics of this imaginary enemy?

This article attempts to create a generalized portrait, that is, some sort of identikit of the enemy based on the analysis of similar expressions mentioned in the main news programme and *Günün nəbzi* (The Pulse of the Day) current affairs programme broadcast on Azerbaijani State TV, on July 11, 2018 after the Gəncə events. All expressions were used by numerous denouncers – journalists, government officials, members of parliament and other politicians, experts as well as residents of the capital and the regions – on AzTV broadcast on the specified date. Their list is added to the end of the article.

Paradoxical Enemy

A quick glance at the enemy image presented to the population by the state propaganda machine suffices to reveal its paradoxical nature.

On one hand, the enemy is *quite feeble and helpless*. These enemies failing incessantly are often referred to as *a group* and *an element*. If a denouncer uses the word *forces*, the other denouncers immediately correct his / her word – remarks something like *not forces, but elements* can be repeatedly heard on AzTV. Some denouncers consider even these words too much to describe enemies. For instance, *Rövşən Raqifoğlu,* the host of *Günün Nəbzi* programme, proposes to refer to them as *individuals* by stating that it is wrong to use the word *elements*. *Vüsalə Mahirqızı*, the president of APA Holding, considers them *cells*. Another denouncer resorts to *pars pro toto*: people opposing the government officials shrink into *hands raised against the state*.

On the other hand, *the enemy is very powerful*. If it is not taken into consideration on time, it may produce unpleasant consequences. The propaganda machine spends a lot of resources not only in Baku, but also in the entire country to organize numerous denunciation events. The cream of public officials and public figures, popular people, even artists and athletes

who are winners of international competitions, and prominent religious leaders are involved in the denunciation process. Special correspondents of state television are dispatched to the regions, and local correspondents conduct interviews with local residents. In some of these interviews, especially in the regions, local residents often stand in front of the camera in groups. One of them stands in the center of the frame and denounces the enemies with the most acerbic expressions while other residents form a semi-circular group around the denouncer and look at the camera with serious and threatening glances. It is obvious that a *social mobilization* in this scale and nature can only take place in the face of a life-threatening, not a feeble and helpless, enemy.

How can *enemies of Azerbaijan* be both powerful and weak at the same time? The answer to this Azerbaijani style paradox most probably hides in the structure of interactions of imaginary enemies. For *enemies of Azerbaijan are hierarchically organized*.

Hierarchical Enemy

The statements of the denouncers possess enough information about the organization of enemy structures. The analysis of their statements allows us to come to a conclusion that the enemy has a complicated hierarchical structure along with its organization at an international level.

Foreign dark forces and their puppets, as evident from their naming, are divided into two groups. According to descriptions provided by denouncers, they can be classified as internal and external structures. There is a hierarchical relationship between these two structures: *Thinking head* of the structure is located abroad while its *implementing hands* are in the country. In the statements of *Rauf Arifoğlu* (*people raising hands against the State, and their supporters*), who is a newcomer to the choir of denouncers, or an inexperienced public representative (*forces which fulfil wishes of forces*

that do not like Azerbaijan) this relationship seems to be based on the principle of voluntarism – *desire* and *support*; however, Professor *Elman Nəsirov*, an experienced denouncer and an MP, does not hesitate to identify hierarchical structure of this relationship (*executors (implementers) and bigger political forces*)[iii].

Judging from the numerous speeches by denouncers, we can assume that the external and internal structures of the enemy organization are also organized hierarchically. Denouncers sometimes refer to foreign institutions as *anti-Azerbaijani centres* or *special centres*. It is still unknown to us what kinds of relationship are there among these centres – whether one of these centres or a few co-operating / competing centres head the enemy organization? Although we do not know the answer, it is possible to propose certain assumptions about these centres themselves. In the modern Azerbaijani language, *centre* is referred to a certain organization that prepares and implements, or supervises the implementation of certain policies. A centre usually has a governing body, chairman or president, executive director, and employees. Hostile policies against Azerbaijan originate in such centres and then are implemented under their supervision.

The executive base of the enemy structure within the country was too vaguely described until recently. Expressions such as *forces*, *groups*, and *elements* did not allow us to form a coherent idea concerning the way these executors (implementers) were internally organized. At first glance, the word *cell*, used after the events in Gəncə, seems to clarify the issue. However, in this respect, the word *cell* is a kind transformation of an archaic word into a neologism. In Azerbaijani language, a non-common word *hücrə* means a small room in a mosque or a place of worship[iv]. Therefore, it may be necessary to wait for a while to understand which content was meant by the denouncers. One probability is that this word is a translation of *cell* from English. As a general rule, the organization of terrorist groups or armed resistance movements

occurs in the form of a cell, inside which there are complicated hierarchical relationships, too.

Nevertheless, as the latest trend, some denouncers also emphasize that there is no or insignificant hierarchy in the internal structure (for example, *Rövşən Raqifoğlu*, who suggests to refer them as *individuals*). Most probably, in the future, we can witness an interesting debate between the supporters of the *cell* and the *individual* approaches. The content of the ambiguous expressions such as *forces* and *elements* will be revealed as a result of this debate.

Irrational Enemy

But what are sins or guilt of the Republic of Azerbaijan, its state, and its people that had turned them into the targets of such an *insidious* enemy organized at an international level? Fortunately, statements of denouncers inform us, sometimes with details, about the motivation of the enemy. However, this information enlightens as well as surprises us at the same time. From the statements of denouncers, we learn that the sole guilt of Azerbaijan is its achievements within the country and its successes in the international arena. In short, the enemy builds up its hostile activities on irrational grounds, *the enemy is thus irrational*. The enemy *is jealous of Azerbaijan, it does not like Azerbaijan*, *it cannot digest successes of Azerbaijan*, *it cannot stand Azerbaijan and its achievements*, *it does not like the stability in Azerbaijan*. Every time they see achievements and accomplishments of Azerbaijan, *they go through nervous breakdown and decide to act against Azerbaijan.*

Indeed, as indicated by numerous denouncers, enemies of Azerbaijan have a hierarchical structure and this irrationality applies to external structures (*centres, political circles, countries, etc.).* Internal structures (*groups, elements, individuals, cells*) can be considered rather rational actors. They are executors and probably the

only factor that impels them to be executors is their financial interests (*foreign-funded forces*). Let us not forget that executors are considered insignificant elements by denouncers in the enemy structure. If we take into account the statements of denouncers, it would be as easy as pie to get rid of the executors, and the government agencies are able to cope with them. Since foreign structures are located outside the sphere of activity of Azerbaijan, and sometimes they are more powerful than Azerbaijan, it is impossible to neutralize them. Irrational ones are also these *bigger forces* which cannot be neutralized.

Clausewitz noted that two motives lead men to war: *instinctive hostility* and *hostile intention*[v]; however, in the definition of war, the second motive was considered to be more important than the first one. Clausewitz thought that a war can only be characterized by the hostile intention because it was "impossible to conceive the passion of hatred of the wildest description, bordering on mere instinct, without combining with it the idea of a hostile intention"[vi]. In this respect, the main motive of the enemy in this *undeclared war* against Azerbaijan would undermine Clausewitz's all theoretical system because the main motive dragging the enemies of Azerbaijan into the war is *the passion of hatred of the wildest description, bordering on mere instinct*, which was impossible even for Clausewitz to image the possibility of its existence in its own. All *enemy intentions* towards Azerbaijan are essentially the second and this is exactly due to *instinctive hostility*.

Permanent Enemy

If we summarize what has been derived so far from statements by denouncers, we face with a strange and somewhat horrendous view. There are *bigger forces* operating against Azerbaijan. They hate Azerbaijan at the instinctive level, and they are extremely irrational. At the same time, they are organized as special anti-Azerbaijani centres and have almost unlimited

financial resources. Every success of Azerbaijan irritates these forces and they react immediately. Although they are located abroad, they have no difficulty finding executors for their own plans within the country because of their inexhaustible financial resources.

This organized, irrational, and affluent enemy can and does attack anywhere and anytime. During these sudden attacks, the Azerbaijani state and its people neutralize these executives, once again demonstrate the people-government unity, and then continue to work for new successes. Because the external structure of the enemy is located outside the sphere of activity of the Azerbaijani state, it maintains its existence and begins to work on its next plans. In a word, *the enemy is permanent*. The enemy is *undefeatable*.

Even the perspective of a *permanent* and *undefeatable* enemy in this form would be enough to frighten the political elite of world's any superpowers. However, denouncers – state and government officials, political experts and journalists, artists and athletes, residents of the capital and the community members of the regions, in short, the political elite and the people equally stand strong against this enemy. They abase the enemy's dignity with the sharpest expressions and cast the most threatening glances upon the enemy on TV screens. They are not only refusing to be afraid of the enemy, but also enjoying challenging the enemy. But why? What can be behind this calmness, even *boldness*?

Existential Enemy

When denouncers use expressions such as *foreign dark forces and their puppets*, their facial expressions, gestures, and emotions appear as if they are experiencing *a jouissance*. Even when a colourless and banal expression, such as *destructive forces*, comes out of the mouth of news anchors, it creates a firework explosion effect. The atmosphere created by the statements of those denouncers appearing on AzTV, with

determination, self-esteem, and even with great enthusiasm, indicate that enemies of Azerbaijan are a kind of *an existential enemy*. That is, *foreign dark forces and their puppets* are not just threats to, but also the main reason behind the very existence of Azerbaijan. If these enemies do not exist, not only the denouncers themselves, but also Azerbaijan, which they represent and speak on behalf of, will not exist.

Umberto Eco, an Italian novelist, semiotician, and philosopher, writes in his essay *Inventing the Enemy* that: *Having an enemy is important not only to define our identity but also to provide us with an obstacle against which to measure our system of values and, in seeking to overcome it, to demonstrate our own worth*[vii]. In short, the enemies of Azerbaijan are what makes this country Azerbaijan. To paraphrase a well-known Azerbaijani proverb – show me your enemy, I will tell you who you are. *So when there is no enemy,* – Eco continues, – *we have to invent one****[viii]***.

When we listen to denouncers on the state television, unintentionally we get an impression that if *foreign dark forces and their puppets* did not exist, the only alternative to Azerbaijan is not only to be erased from the world scene, but also join the ranks of past nations, such as *Marrucini*, *Osci*, *Emishi*, and *Capayán*. Does anybody remember them today?

Appendix

List of expressions of *foreign dark forces and their puppets* category mentioned in the main news programme and *Günün nəbzi* (The Pulse of the Day) current affairs programme broadcast on Azerbaijani State TV on July 11, 2018.

- radical elements
- criminal elements
- a group of criminal elements

- destructive forces
- some forces
- certain forces
- some opposition circles
- a trained group
- axe whose helve is one of us
- forces with anti-Azerbaijani position
- anti-Azerbaijani forces abroad
- anti-Azerbaijani centres abroad
- special centres
- international political circles
- catering opposition (quoted from *Əli Həsənov*)
- certain people living abroad
- foreign-funded forces
- certain foreign circles
- countries which do not like us
- those who do not like our stability
- enemies of Azerbaijan
- those who are jealous of Azerbaijan
- forces which cannot stand Azerbaijan
- insidious forces which cannot stand achievements of Azerbaijan
- forces which cannot digest successes of Azerbaijan
- hands raised against the Azerbaijani state
- people raising hands against the State, and their supporters (*Rauf Arifoglu*)
- cells (*Vüsalə Mahirqızı*)
- individuals (*Rövşən Raqifoğlu,* the host of *Günün Nəbzi*)
- executors (implementers) and bigger political forces (*Elman Nəsirov*)
- terrorists
- a group that has been appointed (*sic!*) by a terrorist group
- forces which fulfil wishes of forces that do not like Azerbaijan
- Those who want to drag Azerbaijan into ignorance, superstition, and the darkness of the feudal period

(*Elçin Mirzəbəyli*)

- forces hiding under the veil of religion
- religious radical groups and their patrons
- a group of religious-oriented radical elements

References

[i] "Gəncənin icra başçısına sui-qəsd" [Assassination of head of the Ganja City Executive Authority], *Teleqraf.com*, 3 iyul 2018, https://teleqraf.com/news/yasavul/178572.html

[ii] "Gəncədə iki polis zabiti öldürüldü" [Two police officers were killed in Ganja], *Amerikanın səsi*, 10 iyul 2018, https://www.amerikaninsesi.org/a/g%C9%99nc%C9%99d%C9%99-iki-polis-zabiti-%C3%B6ld%C3%BCr%C3%BCld%C3%BC-video-/4476963.html

[iii] So far this hierarchical structure has been described in the opposite form just in one case. During the raid on the cafe "26" last year, Hacıbala Abutalıbov, the former head of the Baku City Executive Authority localised "the patrons of murderers who organized the genocide of Azerbaijanis" inside the country. However, there is no other evidence to consider this rare case as one of the variations. "Bakının mərkəzindəki "26" kafesi bağlandı – Generalla Abutalıbov da gəldi" ["Cafe '26' in the center of Baku was closed – the General and Abutalibov came as well"], *Qafqazinfo.az,* 8 sentyabr 2017, http://qafqazinfo.az/news/detail/bakinin-merkezindeki-26-kafe-baglandi-generalla-abutalibov-da-geldi-196173

[iv] Azərbaycan dilinin izahlı lüğəti. Dörd cilddə. II cild. Bakı, "Şərq-Qərb", 2006, səh. 406.

[v] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. J. J. Graham, rev. F. N. Maude (Ware: Wordsworth, 1997), 6.

[vi] Ibid.

[vii] Umberto Eco, *Inventing the Enemy and Other Occasional Writings*, trans. Richard Dixon (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012), 2.

[viii] Ibid.