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THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY AND DEFENSE SYSTEM

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Introduction

For Armenia, this post-war period has been a time of unprecedented challenges, unexpected threats and unforeseen developments. In the current context of insecurity, the imperative for Armenia is to adapt to a new threat environment and adopt new responses. This necessitates a broader redefinition of the concept of security and defense to attain a more effective and comprehensive security and defense system.

To be more specific, Armenian security and defense strategy desperately needs modernization, with the adoption of more robust tactics, a more dynamic posture and the adaptation of measures more capable of addressing evolving threats and challenges.

From that perspective, there are significant lessons to learn and models to emulate, as in the cases of the Nordic countries of Finland and Sweden, the Baltic states of Estonia and Latvia, and even from Asia, from the examples of Australia and Singapore.

Assessing the demands from Armenia's post-war state of security and defense, the most relevant reform involves a transformation to a holistic "system of systems" approach, comprised of two core components: a whole-of-society effort and a whole-of-government engagement. And one of the most important primary "agents of change" in this strategy involves the role of the private sector in Armenia.

Against that backdrop of adaptation and adoption, the role of the private sector for Armenian security and defense consists of several areas, ranging from necessary areas of active current private sector involvement to needed areas of expanded future engagement.

Five Components of Active Current Engagement

- “Systems of systems” model: integrated defense for the protection of critical infrastructure and the pursuit of cybersecurity
- Dual-use Technology; air defense, defense electronics
- IT as model of innovation and entrepreneurship; Technology-based developmental model looking to the future, not prisoner to the past
- Research & development (R&D): the development of military industry, with a two-part emphasis on public-private partnerships and a new state-academia linkage
- Disaster management: earthquake risk and nuclear safety; Private sector involvement in both disaster preparedness and emergency response

Five Areas for Expanded Future Engagement

- Broadening and redefining the concept of security, deepening defense reform and adding new intelligence capabilities
- National psychological resilience and strategic communications (Western advisory, advocacy and consulting lessons, and “public relations” methods); managing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- STEM Education: science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
- Economic security: disparities and divisions: wage and income inequality (with a gender mobility aspect), the urban and rural divide
- Energy security- the development of alternative and renewable energy resources

Armenia’s Distinct Advantages

- Private sector is as much driven by flexible adaptation as it is defined by profit margins
- Armenia’s long experience with the international donor community offers some lessons on the demands, requirements and compromises inherent in any public-private partnership
- Compared to Armenia’s rivals and opponents, the country’s economy is much more open, due to an IT focus, and more flexible, given its small size and absence of energy reserves
- The ultimate goals and “end state” objectives for comprehensive security and defense are feasible, fairly inexpensive, and bolstered by demonstrable political will, national resolve (with support from the diaspora likely), and the advantage of an essentially defensive posture.