

## « Pragmatic » Partnership In The Name Of Stability.

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"As my partner has been appointed for this post and this is our first meeting let me congratulate him on the occasion of his being appointed to the post of the Foreign Minister of Georgia," said the Foreign Minister of the RA Vardan Oskanian at the meeting with his Georgian colleague Gela Bezhuashvili.

As V. Oskanian reported all the questions included in the agenda of relations between the two countries have been touched upon, including bilateral economic, transport, power engineering relations, the question of specification of the borders, as well as regional questions and relations with European Institutions. "I introduced to the Minister in details the latest developments of solving the Mountainous Kharabakh antagonism, and he in his turn introduced the situation around their conflicts," informed the RA Foreign Minister.

Touching upon the bilateral relations V. Oskanian reminded that a special committee has been formed to specify the Armenian-Georgian border. As G.

Bezhuashvili informed the committee is going to gather in Tbilisi one of these days to discuss the question of delimitation of the borders. As regards to economic questions the both ministers expressed their gratification concerning the fact that besides foreign investments there are already bilateral economic investments in the region. V. Oskanian is mostly glad that "Armenia appears through Georgia in the form of both tourism and investments."

V. Oskanian informed the correspondents that during their consultation they also touched upon the building of Kars-Akhalkalak-Tbilisi railroad. "I introduced our orientation: if there is a ready railroad, what is the use of spending resources to build a new one?" said V. Oskanian and, introducing his Georgian colleague's remark that one railroad is not enough to transfer freights from Iran, Azerbaijan and Central Asia, added: "use the ready railroad, and in case of necessity build the second one." G. Bezhuashvili said: "From the point of view of Georgia any such project is the part of our strategy. We haven't thought of a project that would isolate our neighbors."

G. Bezhuashvili informed those Armenian correspondents, who were eager to learn about the social-economic situation in Javakhk that on the basis of the program worked out by Georgian government about \$110 million from the means of War-calls of Millennium Corporation will be spent to build new roads as well as to develop small and average business in Javakhk. "The program will be carried out in the course of coming 3 years and will try to solve the social-economic problems of the region's dwellers."

Although the Georgian side has not yet signed an agreement with Russian "Gazprom" concerning gas delivery, nevertheless G. Bezhuashvili assures they are ready to buy gas with that price: "From the point of view of Georgia the rise in gas price was a political decision and had nothing to do with world prices and economics. Our position is as follows: a strategic partner is not decided according to gas prices. The strategy is firstly decided proceeding from defense. If the gas' political but not economically decided price is the amount of money an independent country has to pay for its defense, then we are ready to face it." And in reply to the question whether or not it is high

time Russia went over the Armenian-Russian strategic cooperation V.

Oskanian said: "There are several factors for strategic cooperation of two countries the most important of which is the factor of safety. Our relations with Russia are strategic and I don't think the rise in oil price can lead to reviewing the bilateral relations."

"Why were the relation with Azerbaijan qualified as "Strategic Cooperation" and those with Armenia - "Pragmatic Cooperation" in the regulations of Georgian National Defense?" and "What is needed for Armenian-Georgian relation have a strategic character?"

In reply to these questionings G. Bezhuashvili said: "Georgian National Defense regulations" is a document stating the main directions of defense securing. It has been worked out by the Defense Council and accepted by the Parliament. Three countries are mentioned as strategic allies there: the USA, Turkey and the Ukraine.

It is also mentioned there that Georgia is developing its relation with neighboring Azerbaijan and Armenia. The term "strategic has been used in the case of Azerbaijan as today there are several power passages in the territory of Georgia which are rather important not only in the point of view of development of the country but also its defense.

Yet it doesn't mean that we mustn't maintain strategic cooperation with Armenia. AS soon as the programs we have touched upon today are realized, we shall have the proper conditions. Some political conditions are necessary for the strategic cooperation of the three countries in the region. And we shall have some conditions some day, I'm sure."

In concern with the question V. Oskanian noticed that Armenian-Georgian partnership contribute to securing stability in the region.

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