

Armenian Expert Blowing Up Gas Mains Play Mostly Into The Hands Of US And Allies.

Gagik Ter-Haroutyunyan - the director of the Noravank research and training center (Armenia)
Regnum, Russia ; 7/2/2006

As you may know, the Northern Caucasus-South Caucasus and Mozdok-Tbilisi gas arteries and a high-voltage power transmission line in Karachayevo-Cherkessia were blown up on Jan 21-22 night.

Blown up quite skillfully and timely - which proves that the fighters had been scrupulously instructed on how to act by their clients.

Right after the explosions the US State Department State said emphatically that they were quite unaware of who could commit the acts and why. But they "urge the Russian authorities to find that out." They also said that they were glad to see that the neighbors of Armenia and Georgia were extending a helping hand to them - which was due, as they said, to the American diplomacy. The US State Department was hopeful that the gas pipelines would be quickly restored - in some 2-3 days - and said that the Armenian and Georgian peoples could hope for their gas supplies to be shortly resumed.

In this statement the US State Department was unprecedentedly caring for the Armenian and Georgian peoples, and all this can be regarded as an instruction that the fuel-related processes be given an additional political overtone. The responsibility for the explosions was cast right off on Russia, with Georgia and Ukraine being especially active and Poland even proposing to create a European energy security system, a kind of "energy NATO" to be able to "oppose the Russian gas attack." Some other European countries said they would search for other gas sources (particularly in Africa).

In Armenia too, noteworthy, most people and media are inclined to believe that the breakage was organized by Russia. In this light, it should be noted that they in Armenia are a bit primitive in their propoganda over the new Russian gas tariffs and they will hardly succeed with it in the face of Russia's new much tougher strategy on the CIS countries. Besides, they should realize that Russia has a definite role in counter-balancing the US-provoked processes over the Nagorno Karabakh problem and that Armenia is not that important for the US as Azerbaijan is. And so, such an anti-Russian campaign may put the Armenian political elite in a half-way between Russia, who is not already a strategic partner and the US, who is not yet a one.

Reverting to the explosions, it should be noted that given the generally aggravating gas problem, such actions would hardly benefit Russia, and so the "Russian order" scenario is impossible. Unstable gas supplies are only compromising Russia and are feeding the belief that it is an unreliable partner. And so, in its new strategy the Kremlin is staking on energy sources and would readily sustain losses (like with the gas supplies to Europe via Ukraine) just to retain its image of a reliable partner.

Quite logically, the key rivals of Russia and the opponents to its geo-economic strategy on energy should try to lower its rating and to "spoil its image." No doubt, the explosions of the gas main pipeline are playing into the hands of the US and its allies. Such terrorist acts are inclining Georgia more and more towards the energy sources

of Turkey and Azerbaijan, which is quite in line with the US strategy (even cooperation with Iran would be more preferable in this context).

The same is with the gas supplied to Europe - for whatever happening in the Russia-Europe economic cooperation and political integration today is happening exactly around fuel supplies. This is against the US interests as this is loosening the US ties with Europe. It should herewith be noted that the energy processes are presently the most painful issue in the international politics. And so, myriads of research centers have been spawned in the US, Europe and Russia (particularly, a Special Energy Institute was recently set up by the Academy of the Russian Foreign Ministry), who are ordered by their governments and big companies to analyze and forecast energy-related developments in the economy and the politics.

But the geo-political logic aside, there are also other proves of the Anglo-Saxon "trace" in the explosions. It is known that the UK has the most serious capacities of quick operation in the Caucasus. They infiltrated the region as far back as the Tsar and Soviet times and enhanced their presence during the perestroika. It is noteworthy that no remarkable "American trace" has been found in the Caucasus so far, while there are plenty of references to the British one there - that is Great Britain has been "appointed" to "oversee" the work in the area and to, incidentally, represent the US special service interests there. It is also known that they in the US are often there to finance political or other special initiatives by the British.

No secret that Halo Trust, a British NGO engaged in "demining," has got engaged in teaching Chechen fighters how to demine. No secret either that Halo Trust has been founded by the British MI 6 (who also had an office in the NKR and Armenia). Experts see some British technique and methodology in the "style" of the terrorist acts in the Northern Caucasus. And they know for sure that Halo Trust agents not only train but also recruit their "trainees." All this is enough for one to assume that blowing up pipelines in the Northern Caucasus might well be fighters under British influence.

Judging from media reports, the Russian special services are well aware of what Halo Trust and their British counterparts are actually doing in the Caucasus. Appearing in Moscow recently was a special TV program providing documentary evidence that the local British embassy had a whole network of spies in Russia. In tune with the KGB tradition, by this report and successful operation the FSS has seemingly "marked" the authors of the explosions in the Caucasus and has "countervailed" their actions by an effective counter-action. The exposed British "diplomats" are said to have advised and financed a number of Moscow NGOs, including Eurasia Foundation and Helsinki Group, NGOs having offices in Armenia too. The compromised Eurasia Foundation has reacted by closing its office in Moscow (and simultaneously opening another organization of the same type of activity), while the FSS spokesman has said that most of Russian NGOs get instructions and financing from western structures.

One may think that what is going on over the energy sources in our region is just tactics not worthy of special attention. But our reality has something of the cruelty of the Cold War - something that will, henceforth, determine the relations of the US and Russia in the Caucasus and everywhere in the world.
