
Gul's visit necessary for the USA, Europe, Turkey, Russia and ROA

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Happened what was absolutely incredible: Turkish President Abdullah Gul finally made up his mind to visit Yerevan, notwithstanding the opposition protests and calls of the Azerbaijani politicians. Everything is clear with the Turkish opposition - in case Gul refused the invitation, the opposition would make up an excuse for the refusal. But the visit to Yerevan is a different matter. Deniz Baykal, Devlet Bahçeli and others openly blame Head of State for ignoring interests of the nation.

/PanARMENIAN.Net/ Foreign Minister of Turkey Ali Babacan replied to Bahçeli reminding him that in 1993 Leader of the 'Grey Wolves' Alparslan Türkeş met with the First President of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrossian. Well, the ex-President's Turkish sympathies are not a secret. And though the two officials met in Paris in the frames of a secret meeting, the fact remains that they did.

As for the Azeri press, it is now in panic, like it was at the time of the 5-day Georgian-Ossetian war. Everyone here accuses Gul of overlooking the interests of Azerbaijan. They might be right to some extent, as Turkey is the only ally of Baku, at least while it needs the latter. It has always been so, and it will. However, Baku has sober-minded politicians too. Azerbaijani-Turkish Inter-parliamentary Working Group holds discussions of Turkish President Abdullah Gul's forthcoming visit to Armenia. 'There are both opponents and supporters of Turkish President's visit to Armenia,' declared Head of the Working Group, MP Nizami Jafarov. According to Jafarov, the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan will not be changed, irrespective of the attitude of these two countries towards the well-known issue and other matters, including the strategic changes by Turkey in establishing relations with Armenia. Jafarov believes that the whole world, including Azerbaijan and Turkey, are interested in the regulation of the Armenian issue, that is why there might be made attempts of speeding up the problem solution. 'The turn of events shows that Turkish President has made a strategic move. It will not change the attitude towards Azerbaijan. In reply, neither will Azerbaijan change its position towards Turkey. The thing is that a new period has started in the Armenian-Turkish relations. But I do not think it would be right to believe that Turkey will make concessions to Armenia or will change its policy under pressure,' Jafarov said. As the Azeri MP assumed, Turkey would not adopt a policy of strengthening Armenia because of the latter's well-known position towards Turkey.

Taking into consideration the conditions which Armenia has set before Turkey and will not abstain from despite Gul's visit to Yerevan, the matter is whether Turkey needs relations with Armenia or not. It would be naive to consider that successor of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Kemal Atatürk would agree to recognize the Armenian Genocide, the major reason for absence of relations between the two countries. In 1993 the boundary was closed not because of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, but because Ankara realized that no president of Armenia would give up demanding recognition of the Armenian Genocide and of the Armenian borders recognized by the Sevres Contract.

The widely advertised visit of Gul can hardly become a step forward in the process of normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations. The visit is simply necessary for the USA, Europe, Turkey, Russia, and, lastly, for Armenia. Theoretically the visit promises Yerevan nothing bad, and if it were not unofficial, an excursion would be organized for the Turkish President to the Genocide Memorial. However, it is not yet possible. 'Of course, I have some political expectations behind the invitation. We should remember the past and look into the future. There should be made an agenda that would be of mutual interest, and start communication without setting preconditions. Any subject, even the most delicate ones, can be discussed at the dialogue,' declared Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and added that he expects the whole Diplomatic Corps to be actively engaged in the process of clarifying the importance of the Gyumri-Kars railway line to the RA partners abroad. 'Be armed with maps, statistics and arguments! With facts in hand, we have to prove that several kilometers of the railroad will greatly contribute to regional cooperation,' noted the Armenian President.

Meanwhile, the 'Milliyet' published Gul's statement made in 1993, when he was still an MP of the Welfare Party. Gul then criticized the policy of his Government towards Armenia. Condemning Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossian's visit to Ankara with the aim to attend the funeral ceremony of Turgut Ozal, Gul found it inadmissible to establish any kind of relations between the two countries. 'Look how defeatist a policy our Government implements, if the President of Armenia dares to be present at the funeral ceremony of the Head of our Government. He knows that you cherish only your own interests and you are afraid to take courage when it is most necessary for the interests of the Turkish Government. He knows how loyal you are. Name any other country that would be so impudent as to declare that 'Turkey is to blame for everything', when it has fought a war against your brothers and killed them. Name any other country that, killing your brothers, would dare to declare that 'the map of Europe is complete but map of the Near East and that of Asia must be remade'. Name any other country that would dare to claim that Kars is an Armenian land. And after all this, its President comes to Turkey and you extend your hand to him. How is it possible?'

Of course, time changes and politicians change all the more. However, in the above-mentioned quotation Gul's figure is much more sincere than at the time when he, with a smile on his face, was photographed with an Armenian journalist in the ruins of the ancient Armenian capital of Ani. We shall hope that the visit will do Armenia no harm. Unfortunately, history claims the contrary: when the Ottoman Turks were massacring the Armenian nation they had a friendly smile on their faces and shook hands with them|.
