
Armenia In The Crossroad Of The Conflicts

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As a result of the Russian-Georgian conflict the issue of the search for the new communication channels has become urgent for Armenia. Though after a short break the transit deliveries by Georgia has been restored, it can be destroyed any time. And by the way the conversation here is both about the deliveries made by the railway and the gas pipeline.

At this stage the provision of gas delivery is number one issue for Armenia, especially because winter is not very far.

It is quite understandable that any time Russia can stop gas supply to Georgia. Which means Armenia will also be deprived of gas supply. Georgia will hardly tolerate Russian gas supply to the third country by its territory, no matter how much income it will bring.

On the other hand life shows that in such cases Georgia makes use of the gas intended for Armenia, something that Russia will naturally not tolerate.

Thus Armenia must think of alternative ways to receive gas. In that respect, lots of work has already been implemented. Due to which today it will be easier for Armenia to overcome the existing energy problems.

We have an alternative in the person of Iran-Armenia gas pipeline. Of course it is not completely ready. The problem is because of low carrying capacity of the gas pipeline functioning in the territory of Armenia, which is not able to push sufficient amount of blue fuel required for Armenia.

Taking into consideration that circumstance the works aimed at the increase of the carrying capacity of Meghry-Ararat gas pipeline have started from last year, which is previewed to complete at the end of this year.

In case of the launch of Iran-Armenia gas pipeline Armenia can receive sufficient amount of gas from Iran.

If the problem of gas supply is much easier to solve, in case of alternative gas pipelines, the same can't be said about railway transportation. The situation is a bit different in this case. Despite Russian-Georgian conflict Armenia can continue to make use of Georgian railway but the existing contradictions will have influence on transportation of the loads. Moreover for different reasons the load transportation can stop from time to time.

One thing is clear - that direction is hopeless for Armenia. Thus we should also think of an alternative railway exit. Iran - Armenia railways can serve as an alternative in this regard. But unlike the gas pipeline the processes here are mainly on the level of programs and it is not clear when they will be put into practice. The works are in process on the level of experts. Even if they manage to complete these works in a short period of time it will take around 2-3 years to build Iran-Armenia railway.

Though the funding of this project is more than 1 billion dollars, it will not hinder its implementation. Moreover Armenia will most probably not shoulder financial load.

As we know a Russian company has taken the long-term governance of Armenian railway and according to the agreement the governor commits himself to

serious investment obligations, which are directly linked with the construction and launch of Iran-Armenia railway.

So we can say that the problems linked with funding are settled. But there are lots of questions in terms of the efficiency of the railway's activity, which needs to be grounded.

Therefore the construction of Iran-Armenia railway can become part of a complex program. It presumes also construction of an oil-reprocessing factory in Meghry. The program has been elaborated 2 years back. But as it was in case of the railway the works have not yet started.

Anyway Armenia can't wait any more. We must make the search of the alternative communication ways more active.
