
Decade-long alliance of Moscow and Yerevan

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President Putin meets with President Kocharian of Armenia; Russian-Armenian cooperation is moving into high gear. Trade turnover in the first six months of 2007 amounted to \$337 million. President Vladimir Putin received his Armenian counterpart, Robert Kocharian, in Sochi yesterday.

Meetings between presidents of Russia and Armenia are regular, and have been for years now. Armenian President Robert Kocharian visits President Vladimir Putin whenever the latter comes to Sochi (exceptions are extremely rare).

"This particular meeting is quite important. The basic Russian-Armenian Friendship and Cooperation Treaty will soon be ten years old," Putin said. Indeed, the document in question provided the foundation for all contacts between our countries.

"Trade turnover between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia is growing," Putin continued. "I'm not even talking of political relations. There is only one definition for them - they are relations between allies."

Kocharian was anxious to support his host. "Relations in all fields, from trade turnover to military technology cooperation and political cooperation, are developing steadily," he said. Kocharian admitted that he would like to have bilateral relations discussed at the meeting and promised aid and assistance to their advancement on his part.

Russian-Armenian cooperation is indeed moving into high gear. Trade turnover in the first six months of 2007 amounted to \$337 million (a 70% rise against that shown in the same period of 2006). Moscow and Yerevan confidently expect it to exceed \$500 billion by the end of the year.

Moscow remains Yerevan's principal investment partner. Russia invested sum total of \$800 million in the Armenian national economy these last fifteen years. The Russian-Armenian cooperation in the energy sector, for example, stipulates investment of \$500 million in Armenia by Gazprom alone before 2008. Russian capitals are involved in all sorts of projects in Armenia including development of the Razdan Hydroelectric Power Plant, construction of a refinery, modernization of railroads and transport infrastructure.

Establishment of the International Center for Uranium Enrichment in Angarsk added momentum to the development of Russian-Armenian cooperation in the field of nuclear energy. Armenia became one of the first countries to join the project. Russia and Armenia set up a joint venture that will survey and develop uranium deposits in Armenia.

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Translated by A. Ignatkin
