
Is Gabala Radar working for Armenia?

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SPECULATIONS THAT THE GABALA RADAR IS WORKING FOR ARMENIA ARE ELEMENTS OF THE CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED TO CLOSE THE INSTALLATION; Official Baku has reasons to want the Russians out.

The matter concerns the Darjal-type radar in the environs of Gabala leased to Russia, the installation of the missile attack early warning system. Speculations on how it is allegedly working for Armenia began in Azerbaijan, clearly fomented by Baku's intention to exact revenge and up the rent in Moscow is paying off.

Here is a quote from theoretizations by Arif Yunusov, the head of the Department of Conflict Studies of the Institute of Peace and Democracy in Baku, "Suppose the hostilities between Azerbaijan and Armenia break out again. It goes without saying that the Gabala radar will keep track of everything. Where are the guarantees that information, say, on movements of Azerbaijani military hardware, is not imparted to the Armenians? Have we given shelter to a spy working for our enemies? Members of the CIS Collective Security Treaty, Russia and Armenia are supposed to share military information with each other." Yunusov is convinced in other words that the Gabala installation does not promote the interests of Azerbaijan in the least. It is only working for Russia and, partially, for Armenia. The political scientist therefore maintains that Azerbaijan should rid itself of the radar data which may already be in the hands of the Armenians.

The Gabala radar was originally built to detect ICBMs launched in the Southern Hemisphere (launches by USSNs in the Indian Ocean included) and to keep an eye on the southern hemisphere of outer space. It can and does monitors airspace above the territories of Iran, Turkey, India, Iraq, Pakistan, part of China, and some African countries.

Being an undeniably strategic tool, what kind of information can the radar provide Armenia with? Yunusov fears that the matter concerns movement of Azerbaijani military hardware. Isn't that amusing? As though it takes such a powerful radar to guess the destination of such equipment.

There must be something else then, something Yunusov deliberately omits. Azerbaijan with its pro-Western orientation is supposed to tell the Americans sooner or later if it intends to allow them to install their own military bases on its territory. And if it does (which this correspondent, at least, has no doubts of), then the campaign to close the Gabala radar will only gain momentum. The principal agreement to sign documents on deploying a mobile American contingent in Azerbaijan was reached during US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's visit to Baku in 2004.

AF General Charles Wald, US Commander in Europe, had spared neither time nor effort to brainwash the Azerbaijani leadership before the visit of his superior to Baku. American specialists examined Azerbaijani airfields in Kjurdamir, Nasosny, and Gala. Kjurdamir runways were repaired and the cantonment nearby was upgraded to NATO standards. The Americans even planned to set up mobile TRML-3D radars with the range of 200 kilometers near the settlement of Sanchagaly on the coast. It goes without saying that the Gabala radar run by the Russians is the last thing these objects needs close by. It means that Armenia does not really have to do anything with Baku's true motives of wanting the Russians out.
