
Serzh Sargsyan : We Are Sincerely Interested In Expansion Of China's Presence In The Region

Noyan Tapan - 8/8/2008

Prior to leaving for Beijing, the Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan gave an interview with Xinhua news agency (China).

NT was submitted this interview by the RA presidential press service. Below is its text with some abridgement.

Question: Mr. President, what kinds of sports are you fond of? What would you like to wish the Olympic teams of China and Armenia? What hopes do you link to the Armenian Olympic team?

Answer: Armenia is a country of sports. It is also thanks to the triumphal pages of famous Armenian sportsmen and Armenian sports that the world knows our small country. Although the population of our country is small, Armenia has left quite an impressive trace in the biography of world sports and Olympic movement. According to historical sources, one of medieval Armenian kings, King Varazdat, became an Olympic wrestling champion in the 4th century. Nowadays many Armenian sportsmen have immortalized their names in the register of winners and record-breakers of Olympic Games. So the Armenians have Olympic blood.

I am a great fan of sports. I head the Armenian Chess Federation. Chess is a kind of sport in which both Armenian and Chinese chess players have achieved striking results, while our team is the current Olympic champion. Today everybody's attention in Armenia is turned to Beijing. I am leaving for Beijing in good spirits, I will be alongside our sportsmen and encourage them.

Question: The friendship of the Chinese and Armenian peoples has a rich history. In the past few years the bilateral relations have been developing more rapidly and dynamically. How do you assess the development prospect of relations between the two countries? In which sectors do you see prospects of closer cooperation?

Answer: China is a friendly country to us. The current high level of relations has a strong legal basis that includes more than 40 interstate and intergovernmental agreements. Our relations in the political sphere are characterized by the absence of problems and the existence of either coinciding or close opinions concerning major regional and international problems. We in Armenia follow with respect the process of reforms implemented by the leaders of China for the purpose of development, modernization and establishment of a harmonious socialist society.

In the past few years the commodity turnover between our countries has grown several fold, one of the greatest joint projects, Shansi-Nairit - construction of a chloroprene rubber plant with an annual capacity of 30,000 tons near the city of Daton is being completed. Progress can be seen in agriculture, high-tech and humanitarian sectors. Long-term cooperation programs in culture and sports are being prepared. Despite all this, I see great potential for cooperation of our countries and work should continue in this direction.

Armenia accepted with enthusiasm the invitation to participate in Expo-2010 to be held in Shanghai. We will try to display our achievements and our

potential for developing relations between Armenia and China at this exhibition.

We are sincerely interested in the expansion of China's presence in the region, which will have a positive impact on the whole South Caucasian region. We welcome China's recent achievements in the international field.

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China plays a leading role in international politics. China is a responsible member of the international community, and we feel China's unbiased and balanced position in many issues of international and regional importance.

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