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# Cooperation For The Benefit Of The Two Countries & The Region

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Yesterday MAHMOUD AHMADINEDJAD, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran arrived in Armenia on a two-day official visit. The same day the leader of Iran had a meeting with President Kocharyan.

The Presidents summed up the results of the negotiations, first held in the form of a tete-a-tete and then followed by an enlarged meeting; they signed a number of documents regarding different spheres of the Armenian-Iranian cooperation. Then, within the frameworks of an open-air briefing, they summed up the mosaic of the agreements reached at the current stage of Armenia-Iran dialogue and confirmed their determination to continue the Armenian-Iranian relations to the benefit of the two peoples, regional security and stability.

Welcoming his counterpart, R. Kocharyan particularly stated, "Iran is an extremely important partner for us. We have a very broad agenda of relations, and today we re-confirmed our positive attitude towards the large-scale programs we are implementing jointly. As you know, the construction of the Armenian-Iranian gas pipeline is under way.

Today we discussed and reconfirmed the possibility of constructing the three-sided oil refinery and railroad. Of course, all this is currently in the process of calculations, because those steps have to be economically beneficial to the parties."

The parties also signed a cooperation agreement in the sphere of banking, which, as R. Kocharyan is convinced, will enable them to extend their relations in this sphere.

The political aspects of the cooperation were not overlooked either. The Presidents agreed to liven up the external ties and discuss regional issues, including the developments around the Karabakh conflict. "Of course, I have let the Iranian President know about negotiation process. We have discussed different regional issues. In general, we had quite open discussions around all the issues, and I am grateful to my counterpart both for his visit and for accepting the invitation."

Touching upon the "continuously developing sustainable relations", the Iranian President mentioned in his turn, "I am very happy for having the opportunity to visit Armenia by the invitation of my counterpart R. Kocharyan and discuss with our Armenian colleagues the potentials of deepening the Armenian-Iranian cooperation. This is our third meeting within the last 1-year period. The first meeting took place in Tehran last year, when the RA President arrived in Iran on an official visit; the second meeting took place this March on the Armenian-Iranian border; the next meeting is taking place now in Yerevan."

According to him, the goal of this particular visit and the pivotal issue of the meetings and discussions with the Armenian colleagues is to find new ways of realizing the unused resources existing in the bilateral relations, and first of all - the economic cooperation as well as confirming them by practical programs.

"Fortunately, there are no obstacles, and we have great chances for developing bilateral relations in all the spheres. During the meeting, we both emphasized that we recognize no measures and limits for that, especially in the fields of energy, oil and gas, electric power production, communications, transportation, as well as in the sphere of mutual investments with regard to extending the cooperation between the two countries. We are sure that the bilateral disposition is constructive, and it is to the benefit of the region," stated the Iranian President, expressing confidence that the volumes of the commodity circulation between the two countries will record very speedy and visible results.

Responding to the questions, M. Ahmadinedjad estimated the Armenian-Iranian relations as "cloudless" and, what's more, "excellent". "Our relations with Armenia are friendly, based on mutual respect, and this is true for all the spheres. There is no lack of trust or feeling of coldness between our peoples in any matter," he said.

Detailing the results of the agreements achieved during the negotiations, R. Kocharyan particularly mentioned that the Armenian section of Armenia-Iran gas pipeline (let's note that the opening of the Iranian section of the pipeline took place at the beginning of the year) is to open on October 28. "I will take part in the ceremony. I hope the gas pipeline will have transit capacities. Time will show to what extent such potential will be revealed. We are seriously disposed to linking the railroads to one another. We are also seriously disposed towards the issue of the three-sided operation of the oil refinery (Russia being the third side - L.P.).

Here, I repeat, it is necessary to calculate everything. The programs are large-scale, and large-scale programs demand a certain stage of discussions and calculations. We are currently at that stage."

In short, the Armenian-Iranian relations are, in the estimation of the RA President, entering a new stage in which "our economic relations will be much deeper". The agenda of the issues discussed is quite vivid and provides the best evidence of the current stage of the Armenian-Iranian relations.

Moreover, the fact that the "the Iranian President and Government treat these issues with such attention shows that the development of the bilateral relations is a priority not only for Armenia, but also for the Iranian side, for which I express my gratitude," stated President R. Kocharyan at the end of his speech.

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