
Armenia-NATO

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Cooperation Becoming Broader

Ambassador Robert Simmons, Special Representative of NATO Secretary General in the South Caucasus region arrived in Armenia on a three-day visit yesterday.

In a press conference held on that occasion, Foreign Minister Vardan Oskanyan considered the frequency of such visits an evidence of Armenia's close and effective cooperation with the North Atlantic structure. "The Armenia-NATO relations are really rather comprehensive at present. Some people have a specific guideline, i.e. the Individual Action Plan which has been implemented for two years now. Recently there was the annual evaluation of the program and it was positive. The letter and soul of this document is carried into effect in all directions and the results are already obvious. Positive developments are visible. We are sure that Armenia-NATO cooperation will continue to develop and become deeper."

The Foreign Minister also informed that they had discussed not only the bilateral relations with the Regional Special Representative, but also the current developments in the region, "Today, there are various developments around the security issues of South Caucasus and Mr.

Simmons's analyses and interpretation in that regards was very useful.

There were, naturally, discussions on the NKR conflict, the most recent meeting between the Armenian and Azeri Presidents' St. Petersburg meeting and the potential developments.

Robert Simmons added that during the meeting with Prime Minister Serge Sargsyan there had been discussions particularly on the implementation of the Armenia-NATO Individual Partnership Program. "We decided to continue the cooperation in the same spirit not only in the sphere of defense, because there were only positive developments recorded in the past stages.

We expressed our gratitude for the participation in the peacekeeping missions from Armenia and especially for accomplishing their mission in Kosovo in such hard period of time.

With satisfaction we underscored the achievements gained through the elections as well as the repetition of a similar democratic progress during the upcoming elections. We also discussed NATO's potential participation in the developments of the South Caucasus region with the Prime Minister" R. Simmons also commented on their attitudes towards the Energy Programs of Iran. NATO has no fear with regard to the fact that many countries purchase power-generating substances from Iran. The only concern is the Iranian Nuclear Program.

In response to the questions of the journalist, Vardan Oskanyan introduced the existing situation after the St. Petersburg meeting between the Armenian and Azeri Presidents. "Armenia has its clear-cut and firm stance with on this problem. We have mentioned many times that we are ready to proceed with the talks. However, before the last meeting the preliminary signs displayed by Azeri party made it obvious that they would step back from the arrangements reached in advance. By making statements on the talks having reached a deadlock, Azerbaijan is just trying be the first to attack and find someone

or something guilty of its failures." The Foreign Minister emphasized that there were new concerns developing in the context defense and security issues in connection with the re-operation of the Gabala radar-set station situated in the territory of Azerbaijan. "We will pursue our activities to find out how the operation of this station may impact on the political and security balances. We have discussed this issue with Robert Simmons as well. NATO will publish a particular evaluation on this issue in the near future, and then the required conclusions will be drawn.
