
Power Distribution Is Expected Afresh In The Caucasus Region

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Leaders and regional countries, which are trying to solve their problems at the expense of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, have lately demonstrated great "enthusiasm" in the process of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict regulation. The USA, France and Russia (co-chair countries) are solving their problems too, just on a global scale. The US Administration is presently in a rush: in a few months President Bush's office term comes to an end, and after seven years of failure he needs at least a minor diplomatic victory.

/PanARMENIAN.Net/ The regional visits of Mathew Bryza, US representative of the OSCE Minsk Group, prove the above-mentioned statement. In order to influence the conflicting parties, US applies to "the stick and the carrot" policy. However, it is unclear what is being offered to each of the conflicting sides. If in the case of Armenia "the stick" is the assistance offered for the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border, it would more easily pass under "the carrot". Things are quite clear with Azerbaijan - oil, oil and once again oil. As usual, Nagorno-Karabakh, which has been enthusiastically declaring about its right over its own fate, has been overlooked in the "market", which is, by the way, untimely and out of place. After all, this conflict is not between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan. And the "peacemakers" should take it into consideration.

As President of the European Union, France is determined to register itself in the body of regulation of the seventeen-year-old conflict. However, everyone is eager to settle the conflict based on the reality that can be traced back 20 years, before the USSR breakdown. The regional map has considerably changed ever since, but the mediators still harp on the same old story.

As usual Russia's activities directly oppose to the US interests. The question of "who-whom" has never been so seriously shaped in the South Caucasus region. The reckless move of the Georgian President in South Ossetia proved to be gainful to Russia and tripped up the USA and EU. The situation was so beneficial to Baku that it decided not to speed up the proceedings. Strange as it may seem, there came an end even to Ilham Aliyev's statements about the "the Azeri patience that might give out one day." Moreover, after his meeting with RF President Dmitry Medvedev Ilham Aliyev declared that in spite of all the difficulties, there exist good prerequisites for the conflict regulation. "In case the conflict is settled in the near future, new perspectives would open for cooperation. We are neighbours and neither of us is determined to leave the region. So, we should search for mechanisms of efficient cooperation," Aliyev said. Meanwhile some well-informed sources claim that in the conversation of the two presidents Russia expressed the idea of refusing to support Armenia and affirmed its determination to sell weapons to Baku at current prices. It is not difficult to guess what it could mean for Armenia: all the petrodollars will go to Russia's Treasury. In exchange for it Azerbaijan will offer its oil and gas pipelines for the Russian hydrocarbon.

The idea that "anyway, Armenia will stick to Russia" still dominates in the

RF. "Armenia has no other ally in the region. In case we recognize Nagorno-Karabakh we'll have to break up relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict should be settled through long-term negotiations in the presence of the Armenian, Azerbaijani, Turkish and Russian sides," declared Alexander Sotnichenko, senior lecturer at St. Petersburg State University.

With such turn of events the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will never be settled. The more "peacemakers", the longer the process will last. The OSCE Minsk Group still keeps the conflict regulation from further discussions but its resources are almost exhausted. In all probability this was the reason that Turkey and Iran decided to break into the regulation process and show the world who the real power-holder is.

"The Caucasus region has important points for convergence but developments during the past month caused many problems for the region," Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki declared in a joint press conference with his Armenian counterpart, Edward Nalbandian, in Tehran. Mottaki noted that Iran, as a neighbor to the Caucasus region, made a proposal on consultation among regional countries with the aim of drawing up strategies for cooperation.

The minister added that the current visit by the Armenian foreign minister to Tehran was a good opportunity to complete a phase of negotiations on the Iranian proposal. "Iran and Armenia share common interests and stances on regional developments," Mottaki said. He also expressed Iran's readiness to mediate between neighboring Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Karabakh issue.

Thus, Turkey's position is already known to us. It is determined to join the OSCE Minsk Group. And the reflection of Turkey's initiative on Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh is quite clear too. Apparently, fresh power distribution should be expected in the region.
