
Today's Rates Of China And India Development Are Evidence Of The Fact That They Will Occupy The Leading Positions In The World Economy In The Near Future

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Interview of deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia Armen Bayburdyan with ArmInfo Agency

By international experts' calculations, China and India will become the dominating countries in the world in 20-25 years. In this context, what spheres of economy, from your viewpoint, are the most perspective in the development of trade-economic cooperation with these states?

First of all, I would like to expressed gratitude to ArmInfo Agency for the initiative of. Today's rates of China and India development are an evidence of the fact that they will occupy the leading positions in the world economy in the near future and the countries which do not accept this factor in an orderly fashion, are doomed to lose their positions. From this point of view, Armenia has an advantage of not only the traditionally formed durable relations with India and China are significant but also today's relations with both states. Incidentally, striving to wider and deeper cooperation is of a mutual nature. China and India observe Armenia as an equal partner in the whole specter of mutual relations for today as well as for the future.

In this context the priority directions in the trade and economic aspect are the information, communication and high technologies in general. Industrial technologies and know-how, the joint scientific research and cooperation in the sphere of education, directed to economy and having a long-term strategic prospect, are also important. One should specially mention the prospective spheres of cooperation in agriculture, healthcare, chemical, food and processing industry, energy, transport and communication projects and tourism, etc.

What are these relations hindered by - transport, remoteness? What is the state of the normative-legal base in relations with these countries? Are there any problems in this field?

The normative-legal base with these countries has been properly formed, however, it requires a permanent flexible response for adaptation to the fast-growing scales of cooperation.

"The problem of transport and remoteness really exists, however, its value should not be exaggerated. In the present age of global need in improvement of the transport-communication lines, the transportation will be continuously improved based on the economic factors of more global nature.

At the same time, the analysis of dynamics of the goods turnover of Armenia with China and India indicates that event now, the goods turnover of Armenia with these geographically comparatively remote countries is at the same level or even exceeds the volume of Armenia's goods turnover with some partner-countries, say nothing of the economic potential of these countries in prospect. One should not forget that

the past active participation of the Armenian people in the trade globalization process passed in parallel with the development of India and China in 17-18 centuries, when the Armenian trade-financial capital created a trade- commercial network, extending from Guangzhou, Calcutta, Madras and Bombay to Marseilles and Amsterdam. Together with our key policy of European integration, Armenia has to pay a permanent long-term attention to stable deepening of interaction with these two world super-states. I would like to draw the attention to the key problem, occurred prior to the process of Armenia's entry to the markets of the Asian and Pacific Rim (APR). The activity in the markets of APR countries requires deep specialized knowledge, in particular, knowledge of languages and traditions of the partner-countries. Other skills are required for the efficient work with the enterprises and companies from China and India , which differ from those required for cooperation with partners from Russia, Europe and USA. "Experienced specialists, acquainted with the state of affairs in these countries' markets, are necessary. For example, the Armenian companies' level of attraction of specialists, with work experience in the Chinese market, to the work is relatively low. Starting from 1994, about 20 qualified specialists in the area of international relations, trade, economy, law and medicine with knowledge of the English language studied and worked in China by the programme of exchange in education. In addition, about 15 of them keep on studying in China. However, Armenia needs these staff in our country, first of all.

Until recently, the relations of Armenia with China were of humanitarian nature mainly, when the People's Republic of China provided Armenia with mini-tractors and other agricultural equipment. What are the prospects of cooperation at the level of subjects and separate enterprises? Can the "Grand Sun" enterprise become the first robin? Are there any data about the fortune of the "Nairi-2" JV in China? How do the Armenian apricots grow in the People's Republic of China?

The relations of Armenia with China are developed at the interstate level.

Since the first days of Armenia's independence China is contributing to strengthening of Armenian statehood. China has always assisted Armenia and the Government of People's Republic of China has been implementing various technical assistance programs in Armenia since 1997. At the moment, the Chinese Government implements programs aimed at development of the Armenian agricultural sector and training of some 60 Armenian specialists of different state and public institutions. The trade and economic representation of the Chinese Embassy in Armenia in coordination with the Foreign Ministry and other structures of Armenia is implementing the programs. At the same time, the relations of Armenia and China cannot be called 'just humanitarian'. The friendly cooperation of our countries, bilateral and international, develops on the basis of equality of rights, mutual respect and support in the direct sense of these words. Political dialogue contains bilateral topics, information exchange on regional problems and world development. There is a mechanism of permanent foreign political consultations between Armenia and China, an intergovernmental commission for trade, economy, culture, education and agriculture that meets twice a year in Yerevan and Beijing by rotation. The last joint meeting of the commission took place in April 2007. 'We have a unique experience on establishment of Shansi-Nairit JV of synthetic rubbers in the town of Datong, Shansi province. It is the only project wherein Armenia invests its technologies and know-how in abroad. At the moment, there is an intensive construction of a plant that must be ready in 2008. The scientific and technical exchange of

agricultural technologies is one of the most successful directions of cooperation. Starting from 1997, Armenian apricot, grapes and cherry testing gardens have been planted in 4 various climate regions in China. At the National Research Institute of Farming of Armenia the sorts of drought-resistant grains from China are tested. 'As I know the Chinese party is satisfied with the testing of Armenian apricot in China. A monument of Armenian-Chinese Friendship was opened at the Institute of Pomology of Shansi Province devoted to this project. Armenian specialists have been constantly visiting China to conduct joint research and relevant consultations with their Chinese colleagues. I have no information about the plans of the "Grand Sun" Company for cooperation with the Chinese partners, however, I would like to note that the bilateral legal basis, additionality of economies and favorable atmosphere characteristic to the Armenian and Chinese relations boosts the Armenian-Chinese trade-economic cooperation, including mutual investments, joint ventures, trade and exchange of experience. Our country is preparing for participation in 2008 Olympic Games in Peking, as well as the World exhibition Expo 2010 in Shanghai. These two events are a unique opportunity to present the social, economic and cultural development of our country at the world level.

Naturally, the whole world and the Chinese society, first of all, will attentively watch the participation and success of the countries in these important events.

Project of construction of Armenia-Iran railway, by which Armenia can directly enter the Chinese market through the Iranian territory, exists. Was it proposed to the Chinese party to take part in this project? On the other hand, the railway will allow to enter the Persian Gulf and India. Is India's participation in this project possible?

Armenia-Iran railway construction project is at the initial stage.

Discussion of the project fulfillment is open for all the interested parties, and China and India will be offered to observe the possibility of their participation. To note, India is a member-founder of the North-South transport project, in which Armenia is also taking part.

Holding of the Days of Armenia in China has been scheduled for the near future. What events will be carried out within the frames of the Days and in which towns? Is it scheduled to hold the similar Days of China in Armenia?

At what stage is the process of opening of the Confucius Institute in Yerevan?

Within the frames of the Days, a gala-concert is scheduled in Beijing as well as concerts in Shenyang and an art exhibition. The NKR Embassy in Armenia supported preparing the event. I would like to express special gratitude to the NKR ambassador to Armenia for this as the cultural diplomacy is of great significance in modern international relations.

Culture exchange between our countries is taking place according to the programme on cultural cooperation which is renovated once in two years. This year the tour of Chinese Puppet Theatre was held in Yerevan and other towns of Armenia. 'The theatre performances were held within the frames of International Festival of Puppet Theatres in Armenia. Not only young Armenian spectators were admired by the virtuous performing of Chinese actors but also the adults. As for the Days of the Culture of China in Armenia, RA Ministry of Culture has already sent such an

invitation to China. The project of opening a Confucius Institute in Yerevan is one of the priorities of cooperation at the moment since, as I have already said, training of the Chinese language and culture specialists is becoming significant in Armenia. The project is implemented by the Yerevan State Linguistic University after V.Brusov and the International Chinese Language Agency. Preparations for signing of a relevant agreement are under way.

Many students from India study in the Armenian Higher Educational Establishments. Are there people among the Armenian youth who wish to study in the Indian HEEs? In particular, last year, the Indian party expressed readiness to provide places for the Armenian servicemen in its military educational establishments. What the continuation of this initiative?

Cooperation with India in the sphere of education and science is one of the priority directions in the interrelations of our countries in the humanitarian sphere. The relevant regulatory and legal framework of the sphere of the two-way exchange is constantly being improved. The exchange also implies exchange of educational staff and information as well as joint scientific elaborations. Within the frames of the program, since 1993 40-60 places have been annually provided by the Indian Government for the preparation and advanced training of the Armenian specialists in the sphere of economy, agriculture, various spheres of science and engineering, management, small and medium entrepreneurship, information technologies and diplomacy. I must state that these courses are high quality. As for Armenian students' studying in Indian higher educational institutions, A. Bayburdyan said that given the progressive educational institutions in India, which correspond to high international standards, it is necessary to properly present the educational programs and conditions in these HEIs in our country. As for study of the Armenian servicemen in India's military educational establishments, the parties are refining the relevant provisions of a bilateral agreement in this sphere, which is envisaged by the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in this direction. The defense ministries of the two countries will send their servicemen for study according to this document, if necessary.

In general, how do you evaluate the current level of cooperation with both countries in the economic and humanitarian directions?

The level of cooperation is rather high, however, it should enhance continuously with such dynamically developing countries as China and India, and not only in the economic and humanitarian area but the social-political one as well. The Mass Media should play an active role in promotion and broadcasting of Armenia's cooperation with both China and India, as well as with other countries of the Asian and Pacific Rim.

Thank you for your questions.
