
What Was Said In Petersburg Was The Last Drop For Aliyev

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Interview of the First Deputy Chairman of the Russian State Duma ommittee for CIS Affairs and Relations with Compatriots, Director of the Institute of CIS Countries Konstantin Zatulin with ArmInfo News Agency

Mr Zatulin, did the Petersburg meeting and the statement by American, Russian and French presidents during G8 summit in Canada change the situation in the Karabakh settlement?

I think the Petersburg meeting and the statement by the presidents of Russia, USA and France during G8 Summit in Canada promoted the change of the situation in the Karabakh settlement, therefore the situation is not static. I think that just the statement by the presidents of OSCE MG cochair-countries but not the trilateral meeting in Petersburg with all its pluses and minuses and not even the deplorable fact of the Azerbaijani subversive action has become the primary event of late. This statement is very important even because the presidents of OSCE MG cochair countries have chosen just the topic of Nagorno Karabakh for their statement, against the background of the presently existing conflicts and wars in the world. I consider it very important in the context of the current aggravation of the situation in the region, as well as the propogandistic and militaristic statements by Azerbaijan which have recently become very frequent.

Did Baku take note of it?

I think that a serious concern appeared in Baku in view of the Armenian-Turkish relations, and, having developed a propogandistic advance on Turkey and having achieved actual failure of the Armenian-Turkish process, Azerbaijan had a bellbit in a sense and decided that it can incline the world community to the good of its version of settlement of the Karabakh conflict through development of this topic. However, since Baku is not sure of this, the military rhetoric is going on. In this context, the statement by the three presidents is important as it emphasizes that their attention is locked on the region, and Russia, the USA and France will not encourage the attempt of military solution of the Karabakh problem.

Moreover, despite the fact that the cochair-countries' stances do not fully coincide with the official stance of the Armenian party, they are nevertheless much closer to the Armenian party's stance than to Azerbaijan's one. I say so as the cochairmen very clearly separate the issues of territories and Nagorno Karabakh, separately mention the problem of a corridor between the NKR and Armenia and, finally, they mention holding of a referendum with participation of refugees not in whole Azerbaijan but specifically in Nagorno Karabakh.

Does this statement stem from the Armenian party's interests?

The statement by the presidents of Russia, USA and France on Karabakh made within the frames of the G8 summit in Canada is really important and favorable for Armenia. Undoubtedly it makes Azerbaijan nervous even if to suppose that the scenario offered by the co-chairs automatically supposes ceding of territories and giving status to Karabakh. If the co-chair states take guarantees and say strictly that the referendum will be held in the fixed terms, but not delayed to endless, it would almost meet the interests

of the Armenian party. As in fact it would mean the bargain - status for territories, which is rather realistic, although emotional and other narrow-mindedness of the Armenian as well as the Azerbaijani party are on its way. I think that the option when the NKR gets independence and Armenia a corridor which connects it to Karabakh, giving in exchange the territories around Karabakh is rather acceptable for Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh. The point is, in that case how necessary it will be to bring the peace-keeping contingent in the region. I think it will depend on the level of trust between the parties.

The last Azeri sabotage will hardly give rise to such a confidence...

Unfortunately, today I am less optimistic when viewing Azerbaijan's stance. I see that they in Baku are not ready for a dialogue and there are several proofs of this: the last military incident, the nervous response to the involvement of observers in the last elections in Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. I have observed lots of elections but it was for the first time I saw such a reaction. Thereby, Azerbaijan is escalating the tensions. For example, in Northern Cyprus the Turkish and Greek communities have no communication problems with one another.

Aliyev's escape from St.Petersburg received a negative response.

What horrible could be said to Aliyev in Petersburg?

Much was said about Aliyev's escape from Petersburg, but I think that over the trilateral talks they already touched on Kelbajar, which was the last drop for Aliyev which he could not bear. That is to say, they touched not only on the NKR status but also on the necessity of the corridor between Armenia and the NKR. By the way, it was repeated by the presidents of the USA, Russia and France in Canada already after the Petersburg meeting. That is to say, despite all its demarches and diversion Azerbaijan should take this point of view into account.

What part in uncompromising attitude of Azerbaijan is played by Turkey which found itself far from the Karabakh settlement after suspension of the Armenian-Turkish process?

Undoubtedly Azerbaijan hopes that Turkey will support it in everything regarding Karabakh, especially that Turkey occupied such position having sacrificed its image in Europe, its European plans and its good relations with all the sponsors of the Armenian-Turkish settlement.

For this reason, Azerbaijani hopes are not groundless though many people do not imagine how Turkey despite the above mentioned plans and interests may help Azerbaijan in this matter.

Robert Gates has recently visited Baku, and Hillary Clinton will visit the region in early July. What is the reason of such an increasing interest in us?

I think the outcome of the Armenian-Turkish normalization process has made an extremely unfavorable impression on all the participants in the Minsk Group. Moreover, it is extremely important that Turkey has disrupted the talks, having actually done Azerbaijan's bidding. It is simply inadmissible to put aside what seemed so important for both Americans and Europeans. In addition, I think that for the United States the Armenian-Turkish normalization was also extremely significant in the context that it gave Barack Obama an opportunity to evade his pre-electoral promises and recognition of the Armenian genocide. He could keep on saying without any remorse that in conditions of establishment of a dialogue between Armenia

and Turkey, it is simply inexpedient to recognize the Armenian Genocide. And now, having blocked the Armenian-Turkish process, Turkey took away such a trump card from his hands.

Does it mean that Obama will be unable to speak Armenian next April 24?

Sure it does. Therefore, I think that the West is objectively irritated with Turkey's stance and strives to undo the Nagorno-Karabakh knot. There is some irritation in Russia as well, since to develop relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan peace is needed between your countries, because development of Russia's relations with Armenia is quite jealously perceived in Azerbaijan.

I think this is quite a pragmatic expression which is called to chill some emotions in Azerbaijan. By the way, Azerbaijan is important for the USA not only as a transport corridor, as a way to the resources of Central Asia, but like a resource base. Central Asia and Azerbaijan are watched by the West in one package like an opportunity to revise the situation in EurAsia. For this reason, Azerbaijan continues remaining necessary to the West.

Does the visit by Hillary Clinton to the region have other reasons?

Hillary Clinton is one of those politicians which are the authors of the Armenian-Turkish process and placed stake on it and commented on it many times. At present after the statement by the presidents of the co-chair states on Karabakh such a trip to the region is quite logical although it was planned before the statement. Moreover, Clinton is striving to feel how much the Armenian-Turkish and the Karabakh issues may be resolved. How much acceptable are Washington's positions on Karabakh settlement for Armenia and Azerbaijan. Moreover, the problem of relations of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan with Iran will be also discussed, as American administration is still concerned about the Iranian issue. By the way, Azerbaijan is also important for the USA like a corridor in case of worsening of relations with Iran especially in the context of availability of the many-million Azerbaijani community in Iran.
