
Relations Between Ankara And Tehran Are Becoming Red-Hot

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The verdict of "not guilty" of Turkey's Constitutional Court against the claim to ban the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) brought no peace to Turkey's home policy. The party of Gul and Erdogan survived by a miracle, but there is no guarantee that quiet times will set in Turkey. Just on the contrary, appointment of General *Ä°lker BaÅ~bug* on the post of Chief of the General Staff can only precipitate the onset of crisis in the country.

/PanARMENIAN.Net/ *BaÅ~bug* is a staunch supporter of cooperation with NATO and Israel. Besides, as many observers claim, like his predecessor he will conduct a brutal policy towards the moderate Islamists of the AKP. Two years ago the General declared political Islam to be a threat to the secular Turkish Republic. *BaÅ~bug* himself has not once been attacked by Turkish Islamists. The "Vakit" newspaper published *BaÅ~bug*'s photos in Jerusalem at the Wailing Wall, noting that he might be "a bit too close to the Jews". Besides, some sources declare that *Ä°lker BaÅ~bug* tried to influence the verdict of the Constitutional Court.

Turkey faces problems in its foreign policy too. Not so long ago there were hopes of Turkey's mediation in the settlement of the Iranian nuclear problem and restoration of relations between Israel and Syria. However, judging by lots of indications, relations between Ankara and Tehran are becoming red-hot, on the initiative of Iran though. Even theoretically Turkey could not overlook the situation, when the Iranian side declared that in case of attack Iran would strike a blow "on the 32 U.S. air bases in the region and on the heart of Israel". Among these 32 bases is the Turkish-American Air Base "Incirlik", located not far from the Baku-Jeihan pipeline.

A particular role in the Iranian-Turkish relations, to be more exact in their tenseness, may play Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's visit to Turkey, due on August 14. Ahmadinejad did not wish to visit the Mausoleum of Ataturk in Ankara, so the Turkish Government found a way-out: format of the visit was changed, so that the Iranian President would arrive in Istanbul, bypassing Ankara. However, this move may cost dear to President Gul and Prime-Minister Erdogan, after all often has Iran tried to put the Turkish Islamists under her protection, and at least twice Iranian diplomats have been accused in Turkey of being *personas non grata*, after they took part in the religious-political rallies.

As for mediation between Israel and Syria, negotiations were broken off as soon as they started. Naturally, Israel is reluctant to leave the Golan Heights, which means failure of any kind of negotiations with any Arab country, except for Egypt. But there is also the Achilles' heel of Turkey - the Armenian-Turkish relations. Some analysts consider that in response to the support of the AKP the European Council will demand opening of the Armenian-Turkish border and re-establishment of relations between the two countries. All this makes one believe that the period of stagnation in the Armenian-Turkish relations is a past story.

Another proof of development in the Armenian-Turkish relations is the fact

of opening an Armenian Language and Literature Department in one of the Universities of Nevşehir Province, Trend Azeri news agency reports. After getting official permission from the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Education of Turkey opened in the University of Nevşehir a Faculty of the Armenian Language and Literature. According to professor of the University Mehmet Metin Hulagu the Faculty will serve as a bridge in the relations between the two countries. Taking into consideration the lack of Armenian specialists in Turkey, the possibility of inviting teachers from Armenia is not excluded. However, on the whole Turkey's attitude towards Armenia has not changed. As Turkish Daily News reports, "The main demand of Turkey is omission of the term "Western Armenia" from the Declaration of Independence of Armenia, adopted on August 23, 1990 and recognition of the current Turkish borders. The second demand is withdrawal of the Armenian troops from Nagorno-Karabakh, and, finally, the third claim is refusal of international recognition of the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire in the years of the World War I", declared Kasim, Associate Professor and Writer at the International Strategic Research Center (USAK). He also noted that the "football diplomacy" cannot be compared with what the U.S.A. undertook in 1971 by organizing a "diplomatic" match of table tennis with China. "It became a turning-point in the "cold war" and led to a compromise between the two powerful states, a fact which cannot be observed in the relations between Ankara and Yerevan", the Turkish expert said.
