
Manvel Sarkisyan: "Mass Migration From Armenia Is No Accident"

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Interview by David Stepanyan, Yerevan. Exclusively to Vestnik Kavkaza

The head of the Armenian Center of National and Strategic Studies, Manvel Sarkisyan, told Vestnik Kavkaza about new opportunities for the authorities in the context of the degradation of political processes and opposition parties in Armenia.

- The results of the parliamentary and presidential elections cast a gloom over the Armenian society. What are challenges does this mental condition contain?

- People feel depressed because the situation is not adequate to the capacity of the society. The Armenian society trusted various politicians, and every failure of another promise to change Armenia caused a new shock. The current situation is a greater strategic problem than integration projects which are being discussed actively and even than security issues. The reasons are in impunity and irresponsibility of the authorities in Armenia. Not only in power, but also in the society I cannot see a person who would like to find out what has happened and try to overcome the situation. Thus, mass migration is not accidental. People try to escape, as they feel huge mental pressure and feel useless in their own state. We shouldn't blame the conflict between the West and Russia for everything; these views are outdated. New processes are taking place in the Armenian society; and interested people could try to realize them. However, the political leadership prevents any changes, new opinions and responsibility. Today we live in the open world, continuing living in the alien world, playing by the rules of alien people.

- Speaking about integration projects, is the problem of contradictions between projects of European and Eurasian integration contrived for Armenia?

- For certain reasons, I treat prospects of the projects skeptically. I think European and Eurasian integration projects are topics, rather than a goal for establishing new relations in the region. My view is based on the absence of details about the scales of the projects of Association with Europe and the Eurasian Union. They are only about talking. However, real geopolitical relations will be based on these talks in the future. If Europe demands signing the association agreement, why does it require conditions which are too difficult to fulfill for Yerevan?

- If the civil society doesn't determine anything, how can you explain certain success in fighting against the authorities' despotism in the past two years?

- Recent years, including 2012, were years of unprecedented civil activity in the country. The fact had to lead to collapse of common things and appearance of new courses. It has happened in Armenia, and the current stagnation doesn't mean a thing. The main result of the civil activity wasn't settlement of the problems which civil activists planned to solve, even though the political aura which has been establishing in Armenia for decades was dispelled. We all have realized that everything that happened in the past was pointless.

Today people come to the streets, protest and shut off roads - it is the best expression of civil activeness. People don't allow a group of oligarchs to damage nature. And there are a lot of examples.

- Has society realized that people should fight for their rights by themselves, as politicians won't do it?

- Yes, it has. Political processes maintain, their forms change, and the society has realized it in the process of development of social movements. Party attacks at social movements are a unique phenomenon which confirms this. Why did our parties keep silence about social activists on Taksim in Turkey? The Turks showed their country, the whole world, and the Armenian demagogues what a social movement is. A struggle for Mashtotsa Park could lead to similar consequences as the struggle for Gezi Park, if there was no clan suppression, first of all by the so-called opposition parties. A struggle for one tree turns into a revolution under misunderstanding by the regime. People don't realize it in Armenia, while the Turks show it.

- Considering the absence of a reaction, it is well understood by the Armenian authorities...

- They understand clearly what a result can be; but they have already failed. They played people for fools for two years, trying to save their party life and gain profit. So, there is ideological frustration in Armenia. People in Armenia ask why the Turks and Brazilians manage to do it and we don't. They think in a different way; they eliminated stereotypes which are typical for us. And the new era, the new time will give an answer to this question.

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