

Other News (1-15 December 2013) - Turkey

AL-JAZEERA: TURKEY, BY HELP OF JEWISH LOBBY, HAS BROKEN PROCESSES CARRIED OUT FOR RECOGNITION OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE AT U.S.

/Dec 2/panorama.am/<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDtZgna814A>

Al-Jazeera has presented a movie dedicated to the Turkish-Israeli relations, which refers also to the Armenian Genocide, reports the Iranian - Armenian "hayeli.com" site.

According to the information recently, Al-Jazeera TV channel has presented a documentary movie entitled "Disagreements in Mediterranean" which touches upon the Turkish and Israeli relations.

The film starts with an introduction to the Turkish - Jewish historical relations, then it presents the existing problems between of two countries and it especially stresses the Israeli and Palestinian conflict, the development around Gaza, the incident that happened in Marmara sea, the fact on gas discovery in Mediterranean sea, trading ties between Israel and Cyprus, as well as Israeli-Azerbaijani strategic relations.

In the second part of the film they touch upon the Armenian Genocide where it presents how Turkey tries to use the Jewish lobby in breaking the recognition processes of the Armenian Genocide carried out in the U.S.

The film touches upon the issue of recognition of the Armenian Genocide in the Israeli Parliament, about which there is no decision made yet, and despite the pressure of the Armenian community the government doesn't want to worsen its relations with Turkey even more.

TURKEY WILL TAKE STEPS FOR RAPPROCHEMENT WITH ARMENIA IN 2014, EXPERT SAYS

/Dec 2/Public Radio of Armenia/Anna Nazaryan/

The Armenian Assembly of America initiated a roundtable discussion today on the situation in the neighboring countries and the regional developments. Speaking about the Turkish Foreign Minister's statements about the possible establishment of relations with Armenia, expert of Turkish studies Artak Shakaryan said "it's a show ahead of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide." He's confident, however, that Turkey will take certain steps for rapprochement with Armenia in 2014.

Elections are expected in Turkey next year, which could be decisive for Erdogan's government. "Whatever happens in Turkey during the coming months will be connected with Prime Minister Erdogan's interests to ensure his victory in the forthcoming elections," Shakaryan said.

Anzhela Elibegova, an expert in South Caucasian geopolitical issues, spoke about the situation in Azerbaijan. She said nothing in that country surprises her and denounced the dissemination of hatred towards Armenians. She said even the Azerbaijani tales introduce Armenians as monsters.

ANALYST: AZERBAIJAN TURNING TURKEY INTO DIPLOMATIC HOSTAGE

/Dec 4/PanARMENIAN.Net/

Director of the Caucasus Strategic Studies Center slammed Azeri government for abusing Turkey's attitude and preventing Ankara-Yerevan rapprochement, Haqqin.az reported.

As Dr. Hasan Oktay stated at an Istanbul-hosted symposium, Azeri government's policy line stands in the way of the peace process in the Caucasus. The analyst further criticized Baku for turning Turkey into its diplomatic hostage where the Nagorno Karabakh issue is concerned.

"Recently, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu's visit to Yerevan was sabotaged over an unverified media report, suggesting Armenia was offered to cede two Karabakh-adjacent regions in exchange for normalization of ties with Ankara. It's quite probable the report was fed to Turkish media by

Baku," he said, characterizing the move as disastrous to Turkey's Caucasus-related policy.

The analyst characterized the Karabakh issue as the only stumbling block in Ankara-Yerevan relations, with another Turkish analyst Nesrin Sariahmetoglu agreeing.

The Turkish analysts' stance caused an "emotional outburst" and "extreme discontent" among Azerbaijani delegation members, Haqqin.az said.

LE PARLEMENT EUROPEEN RAPPELLE LA TURQUIE A L'ORDRE CONCERNANT LA LIBERTE DE LA PRESSE

/Dec 4/armenews

Le Parlement européen devrait adresser un rappel à l'ordre à la Turquie, en lui rappelant qu'une presse indépendante est vitale pour la démocratie, illustrant l'inquiétude des Européens concernant la situation des médias turcs, qui se livrent à une auto-censure systématique pour échapper aux foudres du gouvernement islamo-conservateur. Le projet de rapport du Parlement européen, dont s'est fait l'écho Today's Zaman, souligne que la liberté d'expression et le pluralisme des médias sont au cœur des valeurs européennes et réitère les inquiétudes des législateurs européens concernant la situation de monopole de médias turcs tenus par des groupes d'intérêt politiques et économiques, créant un climat propice à la censure.

L'insistance avec laquelle le rapport annuel revient sur ce point montre que la scène politique turque n'a toujours pas intégré la culture du consensus et est en proie à une polarisation toujours plus nette. Le rapport, qui a été préparé par le député néerlandais chrétien démocrate Ria Oomen-Ruijten, exprime aussi la préoccupation des Européens concernant la trop faible couverture médiatique du mouvement de protestation du parc Gezi d'Istanbul en mai-juin et le licenciement des journalistes qui avaient eu l'audace de dénoncer la répression exercée par le pouvoir. Il attire aussi l'attention sur le grand nombre de journalistes actuellement placés en détention préventive en Turquie pour le seul tort d'avoir exercé leur métier.

Oomen-Ruijten, qui est aussi le rapporteur de l'UE sur la Turquie, appelle l'UE et Ankara à prendre des mesures pour crédibiliser le processus d'adhésion de la Turquie.

Depuis sa candidature officielle en 2005, la Turquie n'a été en mesure de clore qu'un seul des chapitres de l'acte d'adhésion. Près de la moitié des 35 chapitres sont bloqués, du fait de Chypre et de la France, constate le rapport. Ce rapport est le dernier rédigé de la main de Mme Oomen-Ruijten, celle-ci ne devant pas présenter sa candidature pour un nouveau mandat aux élections européennes de mai.

Ses conclusions rejoignent celles du rapport de la Commission sur Les Progrès de l'UE, dans la mesure où l'un et l'autre n'épargnent pas leurs critiques au gouvernement turc, tout en saluant les progrès effectués. Le rapport sera soumis aux débats des parlementaires européens à Strasbourg à partir de la semaine prochaine, le vote final en assemblée plénière devant avoir lieu à la fin février 2014. .

Turquie : naguère florissante, l'économie à l'heure de l'incertitude

/Dec 8/armenews.com/

Après des années de croissance débridée et le coup de frein de la crise mondiale, l'avenir de l'économie turque s'annonce perturbé en 2014, sous la pression des marchés mondiaux et d'un niveau de déficit et de dette inquiétant en année électorale.

La Turquie a enregistré récemment des performances économiques spectaculaires, qui ont hissé ce pays de 75 millions d'habitants dans le peloton de tête des puissances émergentes.

C'était le temps où, fier de ses taux de croissance de plus de 8% en 2010 et 2011, le Premier ministre islamo-conservateur Recep Tayyip Erdogan, au

pouvoir depuis onze ans, vantait aux investisseurs le `havre de stabilité` turc.

Mais la crise mondiale a sonné le glas de ces années `chinoises`. Après les 2,2% enregistrés en 2012, le gouvernement table sur une progression de `seulement` 3,6% de son produit intérieur brut (PIB) cette année et n'anticipe pas plus de 4% pour 2014.

`L'économie turque est devenue très vulnérable à cause du climat international. Et je pense que la politique restrictive de la Fed et les incertitudes qui en découlent vont augmenter sa vulnérabilité`, estime Deniz Cicek, économiste à la Finansbank d'Istanbul.

Comme celles de l'Inde ou du Brésil, la monnaie turque a dégringolé l'été dernier à cause de la fin annoncée de la politique monétaire accommodante de la Banque centrale américaine (Fed) qui a fait fuir les investisseurs étrangers des économies émergentes.

TURKISH HISTORY BODY 'PROFILING' SCHOLARS WORKING ON ARMENIAN ISSUE: REPORT

/Dec 13/Journal of Turkish Weekly/

The Turkish Historical Society (TTK) has been "profiling" scholars and students working on the Armenian issue, weekly Agos has reported.

According to the report, the TTK demanded the names, contact information and area of study of PhD and master's degree students from the Higher Education Board (YOK).

TTK chief Metin Hulagu denied that the body had been "profiling" scholars, but admitted that they gathered information on academic work.

"This fabricated story is an urban legend. They don't use the real meaning of 'profiling.' As the TTK we never profile, we are an academic institution. Profiling is a hot topic these days and somebody wants us to be a part of it," Hulagu told the Hurriyet Daily News.

"As the TTK, we carry out these works in cooperation with universities and we release some researchers' books," he said, adding that the work of his society was to focus on all kinds of subjects, including the Armenian issue.

However, two academics, who spoke to the Daily News on condition of anonymity, said they were not surprised that their information had been sought by official bodies, but added that the TTK's involvement was surprising.

"As university researchers, we already knew that YOK was doing profiling about those of us who were doing research on the Armenian issue, but we are really surprised to hear that TTK was also involved," said one Turkish historian.

He added that in recent years many young Turkish historians had been conducting research on the Armenian issue, but had concerns about their future career in Turkey because of their chosen research topic.

"The young generation of Turkish historians wants to break the 'Armenian taboo' [in Turkey]," he said, urging Turkey to face "the reality" and leave behind "100 years of denial politics."

Another historian, a 35-year-old currently completing his doctorate degree in the Netherlands, said he had moved out of Turkey because of such concerns.

"I couldn't continue researching in an atmosphere like that," he said.

Vercihan Ziflioglu from the Istanbul office contributed to this report

Ankara learned lessons from Armenian-Turkish reconciliation process in 2009- turkologist

/Dec 14/news.am/

YEREVAN. - With his visit to Armenia, Turkey's FM Ahmet Davutoglu got what he wanted, Armenian turkologist Artak Shakaryan said at a press conference on Saturday.

In his words, the conditions for the normalization of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations were discussed yet again.

`Davutoglu clearly demonstrated: Ankara has learned lessons from the Armenian-Turkish reconciliation process in 2009, and, in Armenian-Turkish relations, they are discussing their steps with Azerbaijan, in advance. `Turkish diplomacy is not aimed at the final result; the Yerevan visit was a mere small ring in the large chain,' Shakaryan maintained. Reflecting on the steps taken by the Armenian side, the turkologist stated: `We absolutely were not preparing to open the Armenian-Turkish border. Nothing has changed four years after the signing of the Armenian-Turkish Protocols.'

In his words, It would have been right if Thursday's meeting, which was held between the Armenian and the Turkish FMs, were to be held with the participation of the media.

`For the most part, we [i.e., Armenia] are not proactive in our policy; we need to have our own scenario on how to respond to a given move,' Artak Shakaryan argued.

To note, Turkish FM Ahmet Davutoglu participated, under protests, in Thursday's meeting of the Council of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. The event was held in Armenian capital city Yerevan. Subsequently, Davutoglu met with Armenian FM Edward Nalbandian.

Turkey's White Russians concerned for churches' fate

/Dec 14/Hürriyet Daily News/

There are three Russian churches in Istanbul, including the Hagia Andrea, which is seen in this picture. DAILY NEWS photo, Emrah GÃ`REL

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Only months after reopening their churches after decades closed, Turkey's Russian community says the Fener Greek Patriarchate has asked them to hand back the keys.

Russians have three churches in Istanbul ` Hagia Andrea, Hagia Pantalameon and Hagia Elia ` which were recently reopened for their first rituals in 41 years.

The properties belong to the Russian Monastery at the Ayanaroz Monastery Complex in Greece, and the Fener Greek Patriarchate in Istanbul is in charge of the churches.

Turkey's Russian community is largely made up of White Russians who settled in Turkey after fleeing the Bolshevik government in 1921. While many moved on to various Western countries, a considerable number stayed in Istanbul. According to data by the PAE Fukaraperver Association, which represents the Russian émigrés, the total number of Russians in Turkey is approximately 100,000.

The latest plans for the Galataport project in the Karaköy neighborhood of Istanbul have stirred the city's Russian community to take legal action to preserve the historical Hagia Elia church, which is at risk of being demolished as part of the project.

PAE Fukaraperver Association Deputy President Kazmir Pamir spoke to the Hürriyet Daily News, and said they were very concerned about their churches' future.

`The Fener Greek Patriarchate said they wanted the keys back because restoration will start in the church, but if we give back the keys, it means that we will lose our churches forever,' Pamir said.

`We would like to restore our church to suit Russian church traditions. We found sponsors for the restoration, but we want to take back the property rights,' he added.

The Patriarchate did not respond to the Daily News' questions, saying there was no spokesman available.

Pamir said a group from the PAE Fukaraperver Association would go to the Ayanaroz Monastery to request the properties' rights from the Patriarchate.

`We would like to establish a Russian Church Foundation here in Istanbul. We would like to gather our churches under the one roof,' he added.

ANKARA SIGNE UN ACCORD SUR L'IMMIGRATION, PREMIER PAS VERS LA FIN DES VISAS

/Dec 14/AFP/

ANKARA - La Turquie a signé lundi à Ankara avec l'Union européenne (UE) un accord de réadmission des migrants clandestins qui doit permettre, à l'horizon 2017, la levée de l'obligation de visa imposée par Bruxelles à ses ressortissants.

Le gouvernement turc avait paraphé cet accord en 2012 mais avait suspendu sa signature formelle à un engagement de l'UE à étendre la libre circulation sur son territoire aux citoyens de nationalité turque.

Cet accord, salué comme "historique" lundi par le chef de la diplomatie turque Ahmet Davutoglu, a été signé en présence du Premier ministre Recep Tayyip Erdogan par le ministre turc de l'Intérieur, Muammer Güler, et la commissaire européenne aux Affaires intérieures, Cecilia Malmström.

En contrepartie, l'UE s'est engagée à garantir une circulation sans visa aux Turcs dans un délai de trois ans et demi. "La porte de l'Europe sans visa va désormais être ouverte", s'est félicité M. Erdogan, assurant que "la Turquie remplira sans faille tous les engagements qui lui incombent à propos de l'accord de réadmission".

La Turquie a toujours refusé de signer l'un sans l'autre. Associée à l'Europe depuis 1963, membre de l'union douanière depuis 1995, candidate à l'UE depuis 1999, elle considère comme un droit légitime la libre circulation de ses citoyens dans les 26 Etats de l'espace Schengen.

Selon l'accord, la Turquie, aux portes de l'Irak, l'Iran et la Syrie et l'un des principaux points de passage des immigrants candidats à l'Europe, va désormais accepter le "retour" des migrants clandestins expulsés qui avaient rejoint l'UE depuis son territoire.