

DIFFERENCES IN THE PERCEPTION OF AZERBAIJANI AND ARMENIAN INDEPENDENCE

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History of Truth

The modern period of the history of the South Caucasus is inseparable from the history of the region as a whole.

In the discourse on the processes taking place in our region, we must note the lack of intra-regional integration and unity of vision for the future development of the South Caucasus. The region is identified specifically in the geographical sense. Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia have chosen a specific development paradigm, in which, on closer examination, you can see dramatic differences in the perception of the fundamental principles in the approach to statehood.

Factors affecting this perception, of course, are based on the economic potential, geographical location, historical memory and internal consolidation of the societies.

Restoration of independence in the countries of the region took place in parallel with the processes of economic collapse, international conflicts, occupation of territories and ethnic cleansing. All three countries reached the start of the process of nation-building in almost identical terms. Regional forces, historically and strategically having interests in the region, are eager to see the region as a space or object of opposition or in the orbit of their own sphere of influence. And here the role to be played in the region depends on the countries themselves and societies. Will the state be a subject of the process or an object

and silent performer of others' will?

The Republic of Azerbaijan under the leadership of national leader Heydar Aliyev and President Ilham Aliyev was guided and continues to be guided by the principle voiced by the national leader: "Independence of Azerbaijan is eternal and unshakable ". Ongoing economic, energy, transport and other projects, policy initiatives of the country, the strengthening army and the consolidation of the society are the idea of real independence. President Ilham Aliyev has repeatedly stressed that independence for the Azerbaijanis is the greatest value.

It can be said that the independence in our region is a symbiosis of projects that strengthen the national independence, coupled with the ability to always say "no" to any project of the regional centres of power, the elements of which are detrimental or are threats to national interests of Azerbaijan. Dozens of examples can be given over the past two decades.

Along with the strengthening of its independence, Azerbaijan contributes to neighbouring Georgia - as a strategic partner and ally, sharing the same values, independence and equal cooperation. Only under a real independence, the state can formulate national interests, which are determined by the natural interests of the state. If you ignore the natural interests, the state is doomed to constant conflicts within society and with its neighbours.

In Armenia, the process is going completely in a different way. The lack of statehood for centuries, as well as the permanent presentation of its services as an outpost, has made the Armenian independence similar to a simple existence. That is, the emergence and existence of the state of Armenia is the ultimate dream and ultimate goal. The way in which the Armenian statehood in the political and economic sense is today does not matter. The main thing for Armenia is to exist, even in conditions of isolation and lack of hope for economic prosperity.

The swift agreement of Armenia on the entry into the Customs Union, and before that, the same active flirtation with the EU and other donors should be considered in the context of an attempt to continue solely the existence, not strengthening and development of the state. The historical memory of Armenians does not allow them to make a different choice but to continue to be a "stranger within".

It is no coincidence that none of the three presidents of Armenia has ever come with slogans about the steadfastness of the state independence of Armenia. For Armenians, it is absolutely incomprehensible substance, which led to a situation where nothing depends on the Armenians and the loss of sovereign rights of the state is the main topic of discussion in the domestic political space.

Thus, we are witnessing the multi-vector development of the region. Incompatibility of perception of state independence is one of the main obstacles in the context of the settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. By continuing the occupation of Azerbaijani territories, Armenia deepens its isolation from the region and it is losing the

last opportunity to achieve real independence.

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