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CENTER FOR EURASIAN STUDIES

‘NEMESIS' MONUMENT DISRUPTS TURKISH–ARMENIAN NORMALIZATION - THE JAMESTOWN FOUNDATION - 14.06.2023

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Blog No: 35
15.06.2023

The Jamestown Foundation (14 June 2023)

Eurasia Daily Monitor, Volume: 20, Issue: 96

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On May 3, Turkey suddenly closed its airspace to Armenian aircraft. Later, former Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu announced that Ankara had indeed closed its airspace due to the opening of the so-called Nemesis Monument in Yerevan (Ntv.com.tr, May 3). On April 25, with the participation of Deputy Mayor of Yerevan Tigran Avinyan, who is a member of the ruling party, and other officials, the unveiling ceremony of the monument took place in the Armenian capital (Armenpress, April 25). The memorial itself was unveiled during a period of steady normalization between Turkey and Armenia as well as peace talks between Baku and Yerevan. However, in response, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry and the Turkish Foreign Ministry, successively, strongly condemned the unveiling of an homage to the memory of Operation Nemesis. In both statements, it was made clear that the monument is a provocative step that is incompatible with the spirit of normalization and will in no way contribute to the efforts for establishing sustainable peace and stability in the region (Mfa.gov.az; Mfa.gov.tr, April 26). For its part, Ankara also demanded the removal of the monument and declared it would take additional measures if that did not happen (Ntv.com.tr, May 3). While it is unclear what additional measures means in this context, it could have been in reference to the estimated tens of thousands of Armenian citizens who work illegally in Turkey, as tourism and trade is

carried out between the two countries via Georgia.

Yet, instead of taking steps to remove the monument, the Armenian authorities have attempted to avoid responsibility for the decision. Although Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan stated that the monument and its implementation may have been the wrong decision, he added that one of the shortcomings of democracy is that the authorities do not control everything and everyone (Armenpress, May 5). The Armenian Parliament Speaker Alen Simonyan, who was in Ankara for the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization meeting on the same day, argued that this decision was made by the local government and that he did not want the installation of the monument to be perceived as a display of Yerevans foreign policy or an unfriendly step against Turkey and Azerbaijan (Armenpress, May 5).

To read the rest of the article, please click: https://jamestown.org/program/nemesis-monument-disrupts-turkish-armenian-normalization/

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To cite this article: Cavid VELIYEV. 2026. " □□□□□□□ □ MONUMENT DISRUPTS TURKISH □□□□□□□□ NORMALIZATION - THE JAMESTOWN FOUNDATION - 14.06.2023." Center For Eurasian Studies (AVİM), Blog No.2023 / 35. June 15. Accessed November 20, 2026. https://avimbulten.org/public/Blog/NEMESIS-MONUMENT-DISRUPTS-TURKISH-ARMENIAN-NORMALIZATION-THE-JAMESTOWN-FOUNDATION-14-06-2023

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