



In Astana it was reaffirmed that the approaches of the international community are in line with the approaches of Armenia. The interview of the Foreign Affairs Minister Edward Nalbandian to *Armenpress* news agency

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Question: Mr. Minister, the OSCE Summit concluded its work yesterday in Astana, which was attentively followed in Armenia in the context of eventual developments in the Nagorno-Karabakh negotiation process. How would you assess it?

Answer: The OSCE Summit held in Astana was an important stage in terms of registering the recent developments in the Nagorno-Karabakh settlement process.

In the framework of the OSCE Summit, the joint statement of the Presidents of the Republic of Armenia, Russian Federation and Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister of France and the Secretary of State of the USA, made evident that the settlement of the issue should be reached through peaceful means, through negotiations.

Almost all the leaders of the OSCE member states, present in Astana, emphasized the total unacceptability of the use or threat of use of force. It was particularly underlined by the President of Russia in his speech.

I believe it was a serious warning to the leadership of Azerbaijan.

Question: Recently the Azerbaijani leadership has regularly voiced the view that there is no need to waste time on agreeing upon the basic principles, Baku also continues its selective approach to those principles and comments them in a biased manner.

Answer: The three mediating countries urged the sides to concentrate their efforts to summarize the basic principles of the settlement. This was a clear answer to the attempts of Baku in escaping to agree upon the basic principles.

The statement of Astana gives importance to the 2008 November 2nd Moscow declaration by the Presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation, and to the Astrakhan statement of October 27, 2010, and underlines that the final settlement of the issue must be based upon the principles and norms of international law; the United Nations Charter; the Helsinki Final Act; the statements of the Presidents of the USA, the Russian Federation and the French Republic at L'Aquila on July 10, 2009, and at Muskoka on June 26, 2010.

Another important point is that the Secretary of State of the USA in her speech emphasized, on behalf of the Co-Chair countries, that the proposed principles and elements were conceived as an integrated whole and any attempt to select some elements over others would make it impossible to achieve a balanced solution.

The Prime Minister of France in his turn underlined the wholeness and indivisibility of the proposed elements.

The same approach was reflected in the joint statement in July 2010 in Almaty during the OSCE Foreign Ministers Meeting by the Heads of Delegation of Co-Chair countries, the Foreign Affairs Ministers of Russia and France, and the Deputy Secretary of State of the USA. That approach has obviously caused discontent in Baku. While we in Armenia stated that we share that viewpoint.

In addition to the five-sided joint statement, all the OSCE 56 countries adopted the Summit declaration which stated that increased efforts should be made to resolve existing in a peaceful and negotiated manner, within agreed formats, fully respecting the norms and principles of international law enshrined in the United Nations Charter, as well as the Helsinki Final Act. I would like to reiterate the phrase “within agreed formats”, which is an answer to the continuous efforts of Baku to shift the conflict settlement to other international formats.

To the above mentioned we should add the approaches of the international community to the Nagorno-Karabakh settlement, which are also reflected also in the statements adopted during the OSCE 56 member states ministerial meetings in Helsinki, in December 2008; in Athens, in December 2009 and in Almaty, in July 2010.

All those approaches of the international community are in line with the approaches of Armenia, which we have expressed several times.

A question may rise: why do the approaches of the international community coincide with ours? Surely this is not due to the international community’s biased attitude vis-à-vis Azerbaijan, but to the simple reason, that we, as well as the international community wish the continuation of the negotiation process and the peaceful settlement of the issue based on the above mentioned principles proposed by the internationally mandated mediators.

Question: A peculiar tradition has emerged that during important international forums Azerbaijan is attracting attention with its destructive approach. The Astana Summit was no exception in this respect.

Answer: You are right, the same unconstructiveness was shown by Azerbaijan also during the OSCE ministerial conferences in Helsinki, in December 2008; in Athens, in December 2009 and in Almaty, in July 2010; and more apparently in Astana. By obstructing the settlement of the issue, continuously rejecting the proposals of the mediators, including those versions proposed in June, October, and November of this year, Azerbaijan is, in essence, attempting to use the negotiations as a veil in order to prepare new adventures. The President of the Republic of Armenia pointed this out in his speech during the OSCE Summit. For months in a row, 24 hours a day, the Azerbaijani authorities are talking about their patience and do not want realize that the patience of the international community is expiring to tolerate Azerbaijan’s provocative destructiveness.

Question: Yesterday already in the statements by the Azerbaijani high ranking officials there was an attempt to present the five-sided joint statement in Astana in a distorted manner.

Answer: You know, it has become a tradition of Azerbaijani propaganda to create its smoke and mirrors and try to cling to them.

Armenia, as before, will continue its efforts for the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue based on the mediators’ proposals.