
KARABAKH CONFLICT DISCUSSION AT NATO SUMMIT MAY CONTRIBUTE TO PROGRESS IN SETTLEMENT

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11.07.2016

8 July 2016

By Elena Kosolapova - Trend

Discussion of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the sidelines of the NATO summit in Warsaw may contribute to progress in its settlement, Alexander Rahr, a famous German political scientist, told Trend July 8.

One shouldnt miss such an opportunity to settle the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Rahr said. Any dialogue, especially with the support of the European public, is the correct one.

The conflict between the two South Caucasus countries began in 1988 when Armenia made territorial claims against Azerbaijan. As a result of the ensuing war, in 1992 Armenian armed forces occupied 20 percent of Azerbaijan, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven surrounding districts. The 1994 ceasefire agreement was followed by peace negotiations. Armenia has not yet implemented four UN Security Council resolutions on withdrawal of its armed forces from the Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding districts.

At the same time, Rahr believes that the OSCE should become the main force for settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and not NATO, because NATO has no relation to the South Caucasus region.

But if the leaders of the NATO countries come together, and if at the same time they are the leaders of the OSCE countries, there is nothing wrong with that, the expert said.

He added that after the escalation of the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh in April, the international community understands that its necessary to pay more attention to the settlement of this conflict.

On the night of April 2, 2016, all the frontier positions of Azerbaijan were subjected to heavy fire from the Armenian side, which used large-caliber weapons, mortars and grenade launchers. The armed clashes resulted in deaths and injuries among the Azerbaijani population. Azerbaijan responded with a counter-attack, which led to liberation of several strategic heights and settlements.

At the same time, Rahr said that, unfortunately, currently the process of settlement of the conflict is in a phase with no concrete progress.

There is an international position that all the occupied territories of Nagorno-Karabakh should be returned to Azerbaijan, the political scientist said. There are no problems with it. The only issue is trust, which, apparently, lacks here.

The expert expressed hope that some new idea can be offered at the NATO summit with the assistance of the OSCE leaders on how to restart the process of the conflicts settlement. He added that strengthening of the OSCE Minsk Group, inclusion of new states in it and improvement of its status may help to restart this process.

Rahr said that the transformation of the OSCE Minsk Group into the Minsk process, like it was in Ukraine, may help the Nagorno-Karabakh conflicts settlement. The expert said that in such case, the mediator countries are not just observers, but are involved in the settlement of this conflict and ensure that this process will go until the end.

If there were states which entered this process with their diplomatic tools, diplomats and missions, it would have reached another level, Rahr said. No one wants the territorial conflicts remaining unresolved for already a quarter of the century to continue existing in Europe.

Kaynak/Source: