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**EXPERT: IF MOSCOW TURNS AWAY FROM ARMENIA, TEHRAN WON'T BE OF HELP**

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The Russian expert community has recently seen discussions of the relations between NATO and Armenia and, in general, Yerevan and the West.

In this regard, Rosbalt observer Irina Jorbenadze asks a direct question: "Is Yerevan ready to go West and how can it be punished for it by Russia and Iran?".

According to AZE.az, the reason for such reflections was the recent Yerevan visit of NATO Special Representative for the South Caucasus and Central Asia James Appathurai, who was received by President Serzh Sargsyan and Parliament Speaker Ara Babloyan.

It is noted that Appathurai's visit took place on the eve of signing an agreement on cooperation between Armenia and the EU.

"The Armenian philosophy of a 'caressing calf' has once failed, but, probably, they decided to take another chance," notes Jorbenadze.

By the way, in an interview with the Novosti-Armenia Newspaper, Appathurai assured that Armenia can simultaneously be a reliable partner of NATO and a full-fledged member of the CSTO. He did not specify the details of how one can combine the incompatible.

Has Armenia really turned its face to the West and how will Russia and Iran react to this?

In a conversation with haqqin.az, Russian expert in the field of domestic and foreign policy, defense and security, Grigory Trofimchuk noted that Armenia has never interrupted its contacts with the United States, the European Union and the West as a whole.

"A few years ago, when the issue of Ukraine and its relations with Moscow arose, Yerevan chose Eurasian, not European integration. It is important to keep in mind: Armenia expected that Russia would completely end all its problems, including the economic and the Karabakh problem.

"But in recent years it turned out that in all processes, and in these in particular, there are natural difficulties. Moreover, the Armenian side does not simply see and register them - through its politicians, experts, journalists, it directly addresses these issues to Russia. And the further, the more direct," said the analyst.

"Nevertheless, despite all the comparative disadvantages and advantages of Euro- and Eurasian integration, Yerevan understands that there are more advantages in the second case. At least for now. Therefore, it does not intend to take risks. However, if the situation worsens, we must keep in

mind any options, and first of all, strengthening of Armenia's contacts with the West. And there is nothing supernatural about this: as we know, the fish are looking for deeper, and the man for better", he said.

At the same time, according to Trofimchuk, the European Union, NATO and other Western structures, are not offended with Yerevan. They can wait, they have nowhere to hurry. Therefore, in their opinion, the optimal format of relations on the West-Armenia line at the moment is maintaining contacts. Or even actively maintaining contacts. Of course, Russia cannot prohibit such relations, for it is not the USSR.

According to the expert, the further behavior of Armenia will depend entirely on the geopolitical situation, and not only on the successes of the regional blocs with the participation of the Russian Federation. And this situation will, unfortunately, not improve, but worsen, it can be said fairly accurately and frankly.

"Iran's reaction to Armenia's activity towards the West is a secondary issue. For Russia, the reaction of Russia, not Tehran, is important. After all, if Moscow turns away from Armenia, Tehran (and even two of such "Tehrans") will not be of help anymore. Iran has never been excessively charitable in comparison with Moscow," the source said.

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Kaynak/Source: