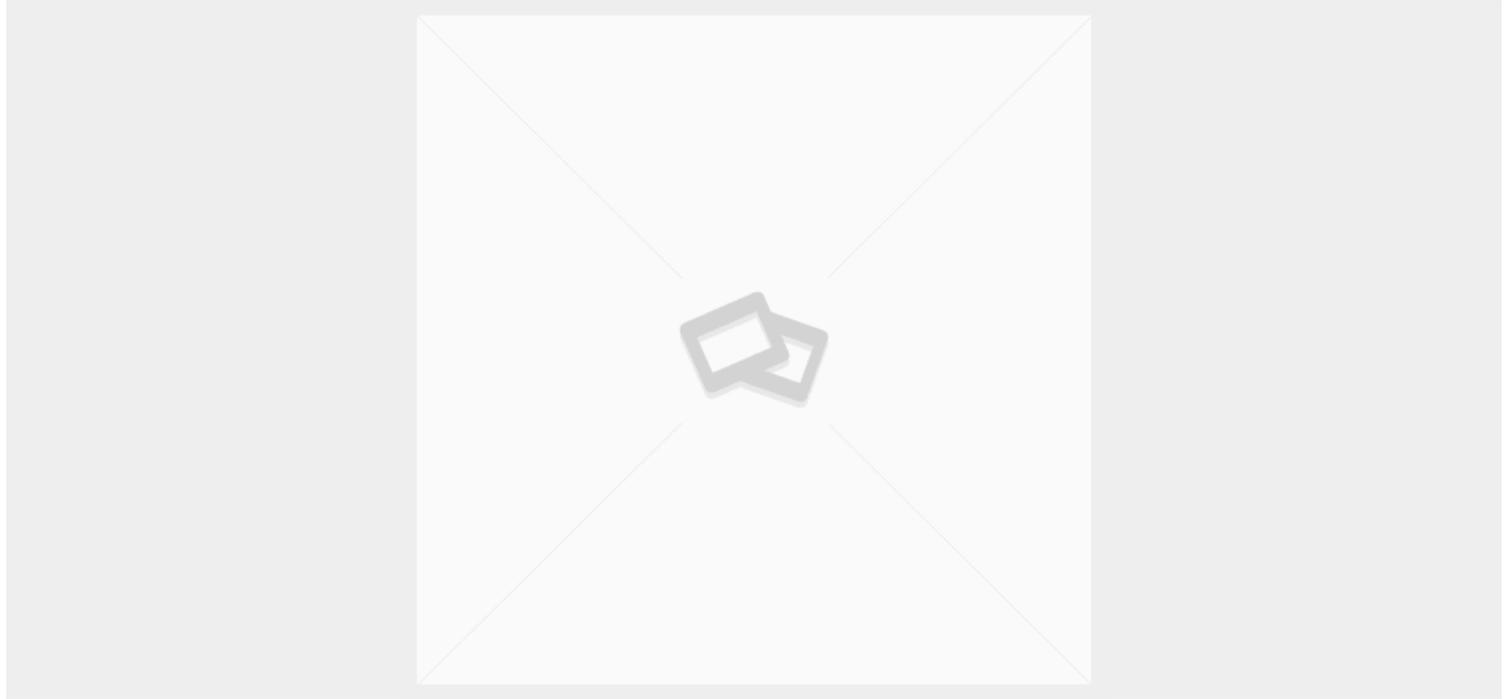


DECLARATION OF ARF BUREAU ON GEORGIA, SOUTH CAUCASUS CONFLICT

Posted on December 28, 2008 by Keghart



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Yerevan, 15 August 2008

The events of the past week in the South Caucasus--the de facto state of war that has come into being with all its tragic consequences, the international tension these developments have fostered, and the implications of these events for the future--reflect new realities in our region that are of direct concern to Armenia and for all Armenians.

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The events in our immediate neighborhood have created new political and economic challenges. Our first reaction, of course, is that of sympathy for the thousands of human lives lost and harmed and damaged destinies on all sides of this conflict.

The most pressing issue today is preventing similar situations from developing in the future. The era of resolving inter-ethnic issues through the use of force, as seen in the 1990's, has passed, and the recent events have once again proven, unnecessarily, that such conduct has no prospect and is cause for tragedy.

On the one hand, it should be acknowledged that Georgia is our immediate neighbor whose stability and development is of the utmost importance to us, while Russia is our strategic partner and has a role in the Caucasus. On the other hand, clearly, escalation of

EU-Russia-USA relations to a confrontational level cannot be beneficial for the region.

In spite of assurances by Armenian officials that there are no problems with the transport of goods to Armenia, we remain concerned regarding this matter and expect that during this difficult situation, a friendly Georgia will not take any steps to hinder such transport.

For the ARF, this situation is extremely important in three regards. First is the issue of reinforcing the right of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) to determine their own destiny through their expression of their right to self-determination. Recent events have clearly demonstrated, that Azerbaijan's saber-rattling--that it wants to resolve the issue through the use of force--not only has no prospect, but also that such threats will only lead the region into destructive and ultimately unforeseeable troubles.

Artsakh cannot be

part of Azerbaijan. During the negotiation process, we are compelled to defend our national interests with greater clarity and in an even more comprehensive manner by demanding that all parties first of all sign a legally binding document undertaking that they will not use force as a means of settling the conflict.

The second issue regards the Georgian-Armenians and specifically the Armenian-populated Javakhk (Samtskhe-Javakheti) region. The issue is in defending their security and rights as a national minority, and of its autonomy. In this case we cannot be indifferent and express our hope and expectation that Georgia will act with utmost responsibility and in accordance with the overriding principles of international law.

The final issue is the full awareness of the necessity for national unity regarding Armenia's stability and the fundamental intra-state and intra-national matters. This represents an issue of responsibility for all Armenians in front of our people and our history.

We hope that following the impetuous reactions, both the conflicting parties and the international community will find ways to bring peace to the region and resolve all outstanding problems in a civilized manner. Armenia can and should contribute to these

efforts.

The ARF is confident and ready to do its part, so that the foundations are laid for full cooperation and development in the South Caucasus, so that all the peoples of this region will have the opportunity to live in harmony.

Armenian Revolutionary Federation Bureau

Yerevan, 15 August 2008

