

ON FREEZING THE CURRENT ARMENIA -TURKEY PROCESS


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 Vartan Oskanian, [Civilitas](#), 26 April 2010

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I am astonished by two things, however. First, the government is openly acknowledging that for one whole year they watched as Turkey placed preconditions before them, Turkey exploited the process for its own benefit, and they not only tolerated this, but continuously insisted that this is not happening and that this whole process is a big success and an unprecedented diplomatic victory.

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Second, if there were half a dozen possible exit strategies from this situation – from doing nothing to revoking Armenia's signature – the government has chosen the option least beneficial to us. Turkey no longer has an obligation to open the border before the Karabakh conflict is resolved which is what Turkey had wanted all along. The Armenian side did that which is most desirable for Turkey: neither ratified the protocols nor revoked them thus giving Turkey the opportunity to continue to remain actively engaged in the Karabakh process.

For a whole year, the authorities rejected the problems in the Armenia-Turkey process and responded to all criticism by insisting that all is well. Today, in fact, we see that they did understand that things were not proceeding as desired, yet they prolonged the process for more than a year, hoping that it would be possible to avoid accepting the truthfulness of the criticism.

Today, I want to invite attention to the fact that the same problems are inherent in the Karabakh process. In response to my criticism, they continue to insist that all is well, and there are no dangerous developments.

But this is no time to gloat. Nor is this about stubbornly insisting on the absolute truthfulness of one's own position. The facts cannot be ignored. The negotiations are proceeding unfavorably. The situation must be corrected, even if that requires making clear policy changes. The government must boldly assess the situation, and acknowledge its seriousness so that we will not find ourselves in the same situation regarding Karabakh.

But for that, there first must be acknowledgement and acceptance that there are in fact problems,

there must be an attempt to identify their root causes, and no longer resort to the tradition of negating reality.

I am also worried about another trend. For two years, various government representatives applauded the Armenia-Turkey process and ignored all the problems. They raised public expectations about a speedy normalization of relations and opening of the border. And when none of that happened for reasons that were obvious from the beginning, there is an opposite and equally extreme reaction. The same public relations machine is subsumed by anti-Turkish propaganda. Various government representatives have adopted extremist stereotypical positions. Incautious policies all-around have brought us to a dead-end in Armenia-Turkey relations and this new tendency can further deteriorate an already-delicate situation, and render impossible necessary future positive developments.

For Armenian version of the text [click here](#).

