WHY RATIFY THE PROTOCOLS? LET AZERBAIJAN AND TURKEY END THEIR SELF-INFLICTED BLOCKADES WITHOUT ARMENIA'S CAPITULATION

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By Appo Jabarian, Executive Publisher / Managing Editor, USA Armenian Life Magazine, 18 September 2009

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The unjust demands by Turkey on Armenia (de facto Eastern Armenia) for the recognition of the current Armenian-Turkish borders causing Armenia to lose forever its land claims in Western Armenia; for giving up on Artsakh's independence and for surrendering it to Azerbaijan; and for relinquishing demands from Turkey for land and reparations as a result of the 1915-1923 Genocide, have sent shockwaves deep into the social fabric of Armenians worldwide.

All this is imposed in return for the re-opening of the Armenian-Turkish and Armenian-Azeri borders? Both Azerbaijan and Turkey imposed their respective blockades against Armenia. So lifting of blockades shall take place without any preconditions on Armenia. Why Armenia should capitulate when in fact it emerged triumphant from the Artsakh liberation war at great human and economic sacrifice, and handily overcame the Turkish-Azeri blockades? Armenia survived the many years of the Azeri and Turkish blockades.

Back in 1993, at the height of the Liberation war between Artsakh Armenians and Azerbaijan, Turkey closed its border with Armenia joining Azerbaijan's 1989 anti-Armenia blockade. In the summer of 1989, Azerbaijan SSR imposed an illegal railway and air blockade against Armenia, effectively crippling Armenia's economy, as 85% of the cargo and goods arrived through rail traffic.

The Turkish blockade of Armenia from the west and the Azeri blockade from the east initially proved to be devastating. However, as the years went by, Armenia/Artsakh overcame the daily difficulties. The quality of life somewhat improved for a sizeable segment of the Armenian population, and by

mid-2000, Armenia began to register modest economic growth, in certain cases, surpassing several CIS countries.

Thanks to their people's indomitable spirit, endurance, creativity, worldwide Diasporan ties, and tech-savvy, both Armenia and Artsakh prospered. Armenia successfully formed a north-south economic corridor, an energy bridge and technological super-highway linking northern Caucasus countries of Russia, Georgia, Ukraine and other Black sea countries with Iran in the southern tip of the Caucasus, other Western Asian and Gulf countries. Armenia even secured a historic opportunity to make the highest and best use of the Iranian port Bander-Abbas on the Gulf coast opening a wide range of economic possibilities.

Armenia should remain unwavering in its original position regarding the unconditional normalization of relations with Turkey. It should neither be lured by economic carrots "offered" by the European Union, nor shall be intimidated by its political sticks.

EU must cease and desist from its Nabucco energy project-related anti-Armenia push-pull. On September 15, even though Andris Piebalgs, Commissioner for Energy, European Commission, stated at the beginning of the Gas Infrastructure World Caspian-2009 conference in Baku, "Armenia was not a participant in the Nabucco project," other officials contradicted him by stating that "Armenia was a prospective participant" in the energy project. They preconditioned Armenia's "participation" with Armenia and Turkey reaching an agreement on the Protocols. So which countries are in dire need of energy: EU or Armenia? Besides being an indispensable energy and commerce corridor, Armenia is an important electric power producing centre.

It's ridiculous that EU thinks that Armenia has to be sacrificed for its energy objectives. Let EU rein in Ankara and Baku on its own terms and not at Armenia's expense. After all, it is Turkey and Azerbaijan that imposed the illegal anti-Armenia blockades that has turned against them. So, let Azerbaijan and Turkey end their self-inflicted blockades without Armenia's capitulation.