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CENTER FOR EURASIAN STUDIES

AVİM Commentary • No: 2011 / 16 •

THE ARMENIAN QUESTION AFTER THE HOLIDAYS - I

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Static issues like the Armenian question or in other words issues in which rapid developments do not take place enter into some kind of a holiday during the summer. However, opposite to the years passing by, this year the Armenian question maintained its dynamism. Below we will address the main developments within the Armenian question during the holidays, i.e. from the end of June to the beginning of September.

The Future Armenian Generations, Seizing Western Armenia and Mount Ararat

In response to a question posed to Armenian President Serge Sarkisian during the 5th Olympiad of Armenian Language and Literature at the end of July in Yerevan, he implied that that Armenia could make territorial claims on Turkey.

The question posed to him by a student was whether it was possible or not for Western Armenia (Eastern Anatolia) and Mount Ararat to ever unite with Armenia. In his response, President Sarkisian said that everything depends on the young generation, that every generation has some goal to achieve and that the current generation defended and liberated a part of Armenian land (Karabakh) and if the future generation makes much effort then Armenia will be one of the best states in the world. Then, perhaps realizing that he went too far, the President added that the power of a state is not defined through its territory and the state should be modern, secure and prosperous if it wants to be a respected, powerful and reputed among the worlds nations.

Despite easing his statement with his last words, it could be seen that President Sarkisian has said that his generation liberated Karabakh and the future generations could liberate Eastern Anatolia including Mount Ararat, uniting them with Armenia. In short, although indirectly, Serge Sarkisians statement has put forth that Armenia has territorial claims on Turkey.

Reactions from Turkey have come very fast. On July 26, in a statement by the Foreign Ministry, President Sarkisians words were condemned strongly by stating that the primary duty of a statesman should be to prepare his society, in particular the youth, for a peaceful and prosperous future and that giving advice to the youth and the next generations with a quite opposite approach and in a way that will provoke an ideology of hostility and hatred among societies is an extremely irresponsible behavior. At a time when the quest of establishing peace has accelerated in the region, the statements of Mr.

Sarkisian indicate that he does not intend to work for peace. The statement said that everyone who has exerted to ensure peace and stability in the region will deduce the right conclusions from Sarkisians unfortunate and regrettable statements.

On the other hand, during his official visit to Azerbaijan, Prime Minister Erdoğan said that statesmen ought not to inculcate enmity and hatred in future generations and that Sarkisians behavior is incitement and an attempt to instill a sense of anger and hatred in young people which will lead Armenias youth into darkness and that their outlook would always be through dark glasses. He also expressed that what Sarkisian meant was to say `Now you got Karabakh from us. We will die and you will occupy Ararat` and that this means `Armenia could from now on enter a war against Turkey as it wants` and there can be no such diplomacy and that Sarkisian has made a serious mistake and must apologize for it.

This reaction of Turkey has caused concern in Armenia and while Deputy Foreign Minister Shavarsh Kocharyan has justified Sarkisians statement by saying that Turkey has reached conclusions without reading the complete answer and has accused a Turkish newspaper which conveyed Sarkisians words. On the other hand, a diaspora author has put forth a strange allegation that Prime Minister Erdoğan has publicized Armenias territorial claims from Turkey.

Even though there might have been a slip of the tongue, these statements of Sarkisian have negatively affected Turkey-Armenia relations which were essentially tense already.

Tomorrow we will address the issue of the Protocols being null and void.

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To cite this article: LÜTEM, Ömer Engin. 2026. "THE ARMENIAN QUESTION AFTER THE HOLIDAYS - I ." Center For Eurasian Studies (AVİM), Commentary No.2011 / 16. September 05. Accessed November 10, 2026. https://mail.avim.org.tr/en/Yorum/THE-ARMENIAN-QUESTION-AFTER-THE-HOLIDAYS-I

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