
Interview: Hrant Kachatrian

Armenia must not be the puppet of empires

The interview excerpted below was granted by Member of the Armenian Parliament and chairman of the Association of Armenian Constitutional Law, Hrant Kachatrian, to EIR News Agency of Wiesbaden, Germany:

EIR: Can you describe the most important events that happened in the last six months in Armenia, which led to the forming of this parliament?

Kachatrian: There are several internal problems in Armenia, but all the national forces in the parliament and the Republic have the same aim, namely to get independence for Armenia. Because we realize that we can be one equal family in our country if we will be able to do everything by ourselves and make our national policy. Armenia has now many problems, because the Soviet Union continues its imperial policy, and we reject it and want independence. We know that there is a process not only in Armenia or the Caucasus, a process of change throughout the world. Different imperial forces want Armenia under their control. If Armenians agreed to such a policy, we would be marionettes and we would not become really independent. These imperial forces would use Armenian forces for aggression, and we refuse such a development.

EIR: Two days ago we had the chance to hear from refugees about the horrible events which forced them out of two towns by the force applied by Soviet and Azerbaijani troops—burning down the houses, killing people, and so forth. As one old man told us, this was a town in which they had lived for 1,600 years. How do you view the conflict with the Azeris in Nagorno-Karabakh? How do you see Moscow's role, and where do you see a solution?

Kachatrian: On Dec. 1, 1990, the National Council of Armenia of Karabakh decided to unify with Armenia. The Soviet Union began the policy of state terrorism and aggression against unified Armenia. This policy was joined by the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan. After the last invasions, the Soviet authorities want to frighten Armenians and are pushing them to give up part of their country. Azerbaijanis have played a major part in this war. Their intention was to take the western part of Armenia (Nakhichevan), and in the course of 1991 to annex the Nagorno-Karabakh region (in-

habited by Armenians) to Azerbaijan. The intentions of Azerbaijan and the Soviet Union are the same. They wanted to fulfill their intention up to the end.

In this war Gorbachov is also counting on Turkey. Already once, in 1921, the Soviet Union and Turkey banded together, and at that time Soviet and Turkish forces destroyed the young Armenian republic. On March 12, 1991 there was a meeting between Gorbachov and [Turkish President] Özal where they came to an agreement. Concerning the solutions, there is nothing left for a unified Armenia. Its territorial integrity has become a football of international interests.

EIR: In light of the worsening of the situation between two nations—Armenia and Azerbaijan—how do you judge the economic situation from 1989 to the present?

Kachatrian: During the last three years, blockades and economic sanctions have made it worse. There is limited foreign support, besides attacks by Azerbaijanis and Soviet Army troops on the Armenian border which prevent agricultural work.

Armenia is within the economic system of the Soviet Union, and this prevents Armenia from privatizing its economy. In the agricultural economy, the first step in this direction was taken on March 1, and now the peasants do not want to work on the collective farms. They work with great pleasure with their families on their own land. The Armenian fields have become unrecognizable, because the standard of the fields changed and enthusiasm has increased. With respect to mechanization, a very difficult situation remains, but the people do everything they can in order to get enough food for the population, even in such a situation.

EIR: Our last question concerns the upcoming Sept. 21 referendum. What are your activities toward this referendum, and what do you expect from the Western world?

Kachatrian: The laws of the Soviet Union are in contrast to the international laws which are signed by the Soviet Union. This relates for example to the right to self-determination. The mechanisms of application are not in accord with international law. The latest decision of the Soviet Union is to hold a referendum in every republic about whether to secede from the Soviet Union. In accordance with international law, any republic of the Soviet Union, any Supreme Soviet, or any Supreme Council of any republic can declare its independence and can address the United Nations to recognize its independence. But international law can be guaranteed only by the members of the United Nations. The Soviet Union suppresses these guarantees, and the referendum has to be carried out by the laws of the Soviet Union. Several organizations don't agree with it. We demand that international law be upheld. But the referendum is signed, and our organizations, with all the conditions, support this action. We want the Armenian people and the people of Karabakh to leave the Soviet Union.