Rasmussen: the Georgian policy of NATO has not changed

The General Secretary of NATO Andres Fog Rasmussen met with the Georgian president Mikhail Saakashvili in Brussels on March 25. The relations between the parties were discussed in the meeting. In the statement given after the discussion Rasmussen emphasized that the Georgian policy of NATO didn't change and they supported the efforts of the official Tiflis to integrate to the Euro-Atlantic space. He also noted openness of the membership to the military block. In his statement the General Secretary stated their support of the territorial integrity of Georgia and called Russia comply with the terms of the cease-fire signed between two countries in 2008. Rasmussen also estimated positively the strategic program of Georgia concerning the occupied territories. He noted his hope on continuation of the democratic reforms of Georgia and emphasized an importance to continue this process in the constitutional and election issues. The General Secretary also noted especially the support of Georgia given to NATO in Afghanistan problem. In general, in the statements of Rasmussen the messages attract attention on the NATO-Georgian relations' being without problem.

But the statement of Saakashivili after the meeting have the point showing that the matter is not quite so, as it stated by Rasmussen. Thus, it appeared from his statements that the NATO membership of Georgia was still far possibility. Saakashivili avoided giving any exact date in regard to the NATO membership of Georgia and felt a need to stress that the territorial integrity problem or Russian occupation problem of Georgia didn't compose an obstacle for the NATO membership.

In general, the Georgian government cannot get fully the wished support from the Western, in particular from NATO since April 2008. To mention that yet that time NATO didn't allow the membership of Georgia advancing argument the reasons as the protests of Russia and

the territorial integrity. Then NATO didn't show proper activity during the military intervention of Russia into Georgia. Finally, NATO normalized the relation with Russia though the occupation problem of Georgia hadn't been solved. And all of these caused Georgia to make some correct the western directed political line. It can be considered the important signs of this process, as at the present the official Tiflis tries to improve the relations with Russia, Armenia and Iran. All of these show that the regional countries are driven into the corner more in front of "the dangerous neighbors", as the Western doesn't have unambiguous position in connection with the processes going in South Caucasus.