



Nikol Pashinyan's proposal on monitoring along the line of contact

Although at first glance Nikol Pashinyan's proposal on full monitoring of the ceasefire line may seem a peaceful position, indeed it serves the purpose of rewarding militarism and occupation. Let's see this issue in more detail.

Such proposals are regularly brought to the agenda. Armenia wishes this especially on the current frontline (line of contact). Co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group also have expressed their opinion on this issue, supposedly with the purpose of protecting peace. However, there is no peace in reality. Such a proposal would seem meaningful at the early stage of the conflict, when it had not yet turned into a large-scale inter-state war, or after reaching a permanent peace agreement. However, the present-day contact line is not the initial line of conflict. As a result of the long-term use of force and harsh violation of the international law, this line was formed at the expense of crimes committed against humanity. With the help of external military support, one state occupied territories of the other state. It continues to violate the main principles of international law and does not fulfill the UN Security Council resolutions on immediate removal of the occupation. Now that the balance between opportunities is changing against Armenia, it proposes to strengthen the control over the line of contact.

Strengthening of the contact line means *de facto* prolonging the occupation and continuing to violate the international law. It means throwing into garbage all the relevant resolutions of international organizations. Of course, peace is vital. Of course, conflict is harmful. However, the principle of "peace at any price" is not accepted by any state in the world. Otherwise, no country would have a ministry of defense, an army or any security force in general. Peace is meaningful only when it is in line with the international law and principles of justice. If Armenia wants peace in reality, it shall fulfill its obligations before the

international law, shall leave the occupied territories, and shall not carry on provocations on the frontline. In that case, there will be no need for monitoring.

So, the steps taken for the resolution of this conflict should be within this framework. Fortunately, owing to our military, diplomatic, economic and other resources, it is not possible to compel Azerbaijan to any humiliating peace. Moreover, international history shows that any unjust “peace” lays the basis for even larger-scale military conflicts.

If there’s necessarily a need for surveillance, 15 years ago I suggested that such a monitoring group can be assigned to the borderline between the two countries – not only to the borders under our control, but also to our borders that are out of our control. Let such a monitoring group be stationed along the entire border between the two countries and regularly carry out full-fledge monitoring. In this case, everybody will see what is going on along our borders that are out of our control and what military activities take place there.

Otherwise, establishment of such monitoring just along the ceasefire line will only contribute to legalization of the occupation.