

Baku demonstrates solidarity to Beijing

ARVAK Center comment, 18.01.2024

On January 14, 2024, the AzR Foreign Ministry issued a statement condemning the presidential elections held in Taiwan. The statement notes that Baku supports the “*one-China policy*” and has rejected the idea of separating the island: “*Azerbaijan was opposed to interference in the internal affairs of China*”. The statement by official Baku was made immediately after the data about the third victory in the Taiwan elections of the candidate from the ruling party, Lai Qingde, who is called in China “*the instigator of the dangerous war in the Taiwan Strait*”.

Since its foundation, AzR has always been cautious regarding the “Taiwan issue”, taking into account, on the one hand, the presence of the Karabakh issue, and on the other hand, the need, if possible, not to go beyond the policy of Western patrons, who, although they have not formally recognized and still do not recognize Taiwan’s sovereignty, fully support the existing *status quo* in practical terms.

The current statement of AzR is distinguished by its categorical nature and clearly defined accents, which indicates a fundamental shift in Baku’s position. Perhaps the underlined curtsy towards Beijing was made considering the tendencies felt by Baku by the collective West to revise its position on the Karabakh issue and Azerbaijani policy in general. Amid the deterioration in relations with Paris, as well as recent statements by Republican candidates for the US presidential elections in 2024, stating the need to revive the Karabakh agenda and, particularly, the assurances of Democrat candidate Robert Kennedy Jr. of his intentions, if elected, to restore the “*sovereign Republic of Artsakh*”, Baku's fears perhaps are not groundless. In any case, the Aliyev regime has a feeling that the circulating narrative that “*Karabakh issue has been resolved*”, does not reflect the true realities and has not yet found the desired response and confirmation in the West.

Perhaps, amid uncertainty of its own prospects, the demonstration of absolute solidarity with the People's Republic of China on the issue of protecting the principle of territorial integrity with the hope of payback from Beijing seems to Ilham Aliyev as one of the necessary steps to curb the pressure on the Karabakh issue by the West.