India-US: The “Maidgate” crisis rages on.

Indian government has recently decided to delay the next round of the bilateral energy talks with the U.S. that was supposed to be held earlier this January. The diplomatic scandal that broke out a month ago is miles away from completion.

The political bomb detonated on December 12, 2013 when Indian vice-consul Devyani Khobragade was the arrested in the broad daylight in New York. She was treated rather harshly by the U.S police officers, on top of all she was subjected to the humiliating nude search. The woman is accused of visa fraud since she allegedly underpaid her maid. Devyani Khobragade was released on bail, but should the U.S. authorities have put her on felon's dock, she could have faced 10 years in prison.

This incident sparked protests and severe irritation in India on both the official and public levels, since such treatment of a person that enjoys diplomatic immunity was perceived as unacceptable. The situation is heated by the fact that according to the Indian traditions one can only arrest and handcuff an educated woman like Devyani Khobragade in the utmost cases, which means that she should have committed a serious felon. The country saw mass protests, people were burning American flags, calling for a boycott of American goods and restaurants, some of the latter were trashed. Because of this point of discord a number of Indian politicians, including the speaker of the Indian Parliament, refused to meet with their American counterparts.

The Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs urged the United States to stop prosecution of the Indian vice-consul and warned the U.S. side there would be a number of serious steps to follow. The U.S. diplomats in India lost a number of privileges they enjoyed due to their status.

India said that the recreational enterprise on the territory of the U.S. embassy in the heart of Delhi, with its restaurants and shops is to be closed to any non-diplomatic resident or visitor and that it should cease all "commercial activities" by January 16. For decades the U.S. citizens employed in India, and the guests of the American mission enjoyed this club.

The reaction of the Indian authorities to the incident was supported by Pakistan, Pakistani ambassador to New Delhi said, referring to the Vienna Convention, that this kind of treatment of diplomatic representatives to foreign countries is unacceptable.

In the midst of anti-American campaign, the Indian press remembered how in 2010 two senior Indian diplomats faced an equally disrespectful treatment in the U.S. airports: they were searched and forced to remove their turbans.

Some media sources believe that the current crisis in India, that goes after the name of “Made-gate” is the most serious discord between the two countries since 1998. Last time around Washington reacted rather critically to the nuclear explosions carried out by Delhi.

Many observers believe that Washington has buried its own geopolitical interests in the region, that is believed of great strategical importance to the U.S. The reasons are a plenty but the foremost is the opposition to China, along
with preserving political influence in Pakistan and Kabul, particularly in the context of the forthcoming withdrawal of the U.S. troops from Afghanistan.

Others believe that the two countries have accumulated a number of long-standing problems in the political, economic and other areas that are blocking the way of peaceful cooperation. Last year, for example, saw the growing tension between the two countries in the domains of bilateral trade, intellectual property protection and visa issuance for the Indian information technology workers.

Therefore, the incident with the vice-consul of India wasn't disregarded and caused a long train of consequences.

According to Foreign Ministry spokesman Syed Akbaruddin, the U.S. demanded India to withdraw Devyani Khobragade's immunity, so she left the United States on January 9. Simultaneously, the Indian side demanded one of the American diplomats to India to pack up and go home.

Speaking about the international repercussions of the December incident, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs of India Kamal Nath, noted that the kind of behavior showed by the United States should be taken seriously by all countries, for tomorrow a similar story could happen to any of them.

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