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## **“In All Cases Russia Will Have An Influence On Azerbaijan. Along With Nagorno Karabakh Conflict, There Are Other Tools Of Influence”**

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Day.Az interview with Sergey Markedonov, famous Russian political scientist and chief of department of problems of international relations under the Institute of Political and Military Analysis.

- What can you say about the free supply of armament of a total of \$800,000,000 by Russia to Armenia? Why did the Kremlin take the step, which will undoubtedly cause escalation of tensions in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict?

- I think it is incorrect to state this fact this way. The Defense Ministry has rebutted the fact of supply of armament to Armenia. It is too early to make final conclusions. Anyway, Azerbaijan's external policy is focused on Armenia. Therefore, any information about support or assistance to Armenia either by Russia or any other country causes a painful reaction of Azerbaijan. This is quite clear. I think that it would have been expedient not to conceal this information and to provide explanation to public. The Defense Ministry has stated that it has nothing to do with the armament supply. The Defense Ministry could have made a more serious statement.

- The response of the Russian Defense Ministry did not satisfy the Azerbaijani side. On the one hand Moscow after Georgian events tends to position itself as a peacekeeper, initiating the adoption of the Moscow declaration and on the other hand it supplies arms to one of the conflict parties. How can it be explained?

- It is necessary to learn the details and moments of the fact of the free armament supply, as the scandal becomes an object of speculations by different sides. Public explanation is needed. The position of the Russian Defense Ministry satisfied someone and does not satisfy others. The resolution of the Karabakh conflict does not depend on the free delivery of arms to Armenia. There are deeper factors.

- Is it possible in this case to establish a special commission to investigate this fact?

- It is difficult to comment on the Kremlin's position as Moscow does not like to justify itself in anything.

- Is the free supply of armament to Armenia possible in the CSTO framework?

- It is difficult to say this as I am a political scientist not a military expert. I can only give a political assessment to this fact.

- Answering the questions of the Day.Az agency during the previous interviews you noted that the resolution of the Karabakh conflict does not depend on the Kremlin, saying that only Azerbaijan and Armenia can settle this issue. Yet the transfer of the Russian armament to Armenia proves once again that Russia has never taken so modest positions in this issue and only it can settle this conflict...

- Let's imagine that the fact of armament supply is confirmed. If there have not been the supply, do you seriously believe that there is any political formula which contains the future of the conflict solution? If

the armament supply is real, Baku will state that "you see, we have been ready for the conflict resolution but Moscow hindered it". We can also ask why Baku creates the military-industrial complex, why the head of the Azerbaijani state in his interview to Italian mass medias does not rule out armed solution of the conflict, though the Moscow declaration fixes the political resolution of this conflict. Here, arguments can be used in different ways. In the reality the parties are unable to get a compromised solution and if Armenia does not get military support from Moscow, it will search it from other countries, like Azerbaijan will. The matter is that the conflict parties are not ready for compromise. Washington, Moscow and NATO are complex things. Russia have definite Azerbaijani lobby groups, mostly connected with the fuel and energy complex and it has an influential Armenian lobby. The Kremlin's position on Armenia and Azerbaijan is hesitatory. However, it is inclined to support the Armenian side. The Russian factor, despite its presence, is secondary, not key one. Most things are defined by the unreadiness of the parties for a compromise.

- It becomes clear that today Russia is not interested in the resolution of the Karabakh conflict, as the frozen conflict allows it to put pressure on Armenia and Azerbaijan. If the conflict is settled, in this case Russia will lose the whole South Caucasus, without the levers of influence it has created...

- Armenia and Azerbaijan are not Germany or EU. These are small countries, which can not be self-sufficient and they will be imposed to pressure in the framework or beyond the Karabakh conflict. This is a myth, like if there is Nabucco, Ukraine will become a democratic and a self-sufficient country. Russia will have an influence on Azerbaijan in all cases, at least in the issue of split people in Dagestan. It is latent, but still it exists. The problem is now settled in the Baku-Makhachkala framework. There always are tools of influence along with the Karabakh conflict.

- Do you think Moscow is on Armenian or Azerbaijani side in the Karabakh issue?

- Moscow adheres to pro-Russian position which implies the preservation of the quo status. Russia is against the military resolution of the Karabakh conflict by Azerbaijan.

- In this case, why does the quo status and existence of the frozen conflict meet the Kremlin's interests?

- Because there are no other figures, which could replace the quo status. For example, you throw out an old sofa to get a new one. Well, it is clear that old one is bad but you can sleep on. It is unclear whether the new one will also be good. It can even break as masters are not too qualified and can not agree which sofa to produce. There is no stable and reliable construction which could be legitimate both in Yerevan and Baku. If not, why should we defreeze a conflict. If we change a situation, we must benefit from it and not just to change for changing it.

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