
« Georgia Is Not The Country For Which Azerbaijan Should Argue With Russia »

Sergey Markedonov
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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.

- How will the world change following the next Caucasus war? Is it possible to say that it has become bipolar?

- It is absolutely not like this. The world will be neither homopolar nor bipolar. The terms of the cold war are completely inappropriate in this situation.

Cold war requires ideological counteraction. The point is the protection of Russian interests in the Caucasus, though, I think, the Kremlin's rhetoric was aimed at curbing NATO, that is at more global ideas. I think, not merely global interests, but protection of the North-Caucasus borders of Russia is important. Considering that the latter thesis is not global, Russian leaders apply larger rhetorics, pointing that we have averted the third world war.

Everything is just more simple. We did not want to settle the situation, connected with the South Ossetia conflict, surrender our positions in the North Caucasus and lose prestige.

- Some experts state that the events in South Ossetia were a premeditated provocation of Moscow...

- The events in South Ossetia should not be regarded as events of August 8.

They have a gap of four years. Georgia has initiated the conflict defreezing since 2004. There are quotes, speeches, actions of Mikhail Saakashvili. The first armed clashes occurred four years ago. The South Ossetian conflict has had a positive dynamics, unlike Nagorno-Karabakh and Abkhaz conflict. South Ossetia maintained contracts with Georgia, it had joint markets, Georgian settlements, transport communication and so on. Accelerated execution of the program for Georgia's reintegration started in 2004, when Saakashvili's came to power.

In the result of the South-Ossetian conflict Mikhail Saakashvili lost South Ossetia and Abkhazia completely. Let's imagine that some Russian hawks were interested in such a script, which makes punishment of the Georgian leader possible. But it does not mean that Saakashvili started to move towards Tkhinvali by the instruction of the Russian special services. I think such a version is absurd.

- Don't Moscow's actions show that it intends to annex South Ossetia to its territory by all means?

- Russia's official approach on the South Ossetian conflict is represented in Dmitri Medvedev's six points, pointing at the wide international discussion of the South Ossetian and Abkhazian state. For the first time the Russian leader challenged the territorial integrity of Georgia, which had never been made before. The final form of the resolution of the South Ossetian and Abkhaz problem, whether it will be an annexation or something else", has

never been voiced so far. In this case, the implied are the statements of officials-the President, Prime Minister, state duma and others. Alexander Dugin even speaks of assault against Tbilisi. We will not speak about Moscow's position on Dugin's statements. The first step on the rejection to recognize the territorial integrity of Georgia has already been made.

- How will the further events in Georgia proceed?

- The optimal variant is the non-increase of the number of the potential participants of the conflict. Most depends on Russia's actions-whether we will move in the Tbilisi direction or no. I think Georgian issue should not be interfered with. The tasks on South Ossetia and Abkhazia have been fulfilled and there is no sense of moving forward. Russian public does not approve Russia's presence in Georgia and it will hardly be possible to replace Saakashvili with another one. It would be better to leave him one-on-one with the Georgian people. He has destroyed many positive things, that have been left since the moment of the revolution of roses, with his adventures. Saakashvili made the wrong step towards refugees. Georgians lived in normal conditions in South Ossetia. He used it as a live shield. They have become refugees.

Now let the Georgian people ask Saakashvili about the support of the USA which was to come to Georgia already on the second day. Until Russian forces are in Georgia, people will not demand explanations from Saakashvili.

- Why do you think Azerbaijan has not made a stake on the forced resolution of Nagorno karabakh conflict, though it has economic and military advantages as compared to Georgia?

- This is because the Azerbaijani leadership is wiser than Georgia's. War is a great policy. In this sense, Saakashvili has stronger media positions than Azerbaijan. If Georgia was supported by the United States and West in the South-Ossetian and Abkhaz conflicts, in case of Nagorno Karabakh, Azerbaijan will get the pro-Armenian position of the West. Therefore, the concepts of economic and military resources should be considered through the prism of the 18th century. A prince invaded the neighbor kingdom and everyone accepted it. But we live in a completely different world today.

In case war is initiated, Azerbaijan will face serious isolation. If for Russia isolation is bearable enough, it will become critical for Azerbaijan and Azerbaijani leadership is aware of it.

I think Baku's reaction on the recent events in the region was adequate.

The first reaction was: "we support the territorial integrity of Georgia".

And then, realizing that Georgia was unable to win in the South-Ossetian conflict, Baku took the position of silence.

Georgia is not the country for which Azerbaijan should argue with Russia, not speaking of the West and the United States. The third world war will not start because of Georgia, while Georgian government overestimated its capacities. Unlike Mikhail Saakashvili, Ilham Aliyev is able to assess his capacities correctly.
