
Azerbaijan Between The Kremlin And The White House Or How Can We Live In A TwoPolar World?

Day.Az - 19/9/2008

The world has changed after 8 August 2008

No matter what some Russian political analysts say, it has again become two-polar. The Kremlin, with its military aggression against Georgia, has made the entire world understand that the process of transformation of the USSR into a new state having the same big claims for supremacy in the world has finished. From now on, the entire world should proceed from the fact that Russia is a real counterbalance to the USA in its struggle for supremacy in the world. It is especially important for such small countries as Azerbaijan to understand it because the fight between the USA and Russia for influence in the South Caucasus is now entering into a new heated phase of development.

Washington's bloodless victory

Let us start from what we state: only one country the USA has won in Russia's military aggression against Georgia. Judge yourselves: the USA did not take part in the military operations in the area of the Russian-Georgian conflict. Consequently, there could not be any casualties on its side. In return, both Georgian and Russian armies sustained losses with injuries and deaths. I am not mentioning the fact that thousands of Georgians and Ossetians have become refugees as a result of this transient war.

Now let us speak about the diplomatic consequences of this war. For the time being Georgia has only obtained a chance to look like a small country which needs protection from Russian aggression in the eyes of the world community. Plus, it obtained a chance to make its admission to NATO much more realistic.

But has this country managed to return South Ossetia and Abkhazia under its jurisdiction? No. Has it managed to protect its towns, as well as its population, in safety? No. Is there a risk that the people of Georgia will find these casualties excessive? Of course, especially if the USA does not take real action to restore Georgia's territorial integrity, that is, Tbilisi's control over South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Such action will not take place. The USA does not have such plans. They [in the USA] are more accustomed to moving towards their targets at the expense of others' blood. In this particular case those targets have already been achieved. Now Russia has real chances to confront international condemnations of its action, becoming an outlaw country. It is highly likely that the process of condemning Russia will go on. Now Mr Rogozin, who tries to put a brave face on a sorry business, admits that the relations between NATO and Russia will change. Now the anti-missile defence system is being installed in Poland.

Who has lost from it? Of course, Russia. Who has won? Of course, the USA. The White House has managed to put Russia into a very unpleasant situation without a single shoot made and a single soldier lost. Can we say that the White House was not ready for the fact that Washington was not ready for Russia's using military force against Georgia? No, of course. It is ridiculous to say that the super power, which managed to enact the break-up of the USSR, did not have information about such an issue of near future. It was clear to everyone that the Kremlin was deprived of control over a big political and economic bloc following the end of the cold war and the military alliance NATO started to move towards its borders. It seemed that Russia would try to regain its sharply fallen status at the very first opportunity.

The USA understood very well that [Georgian President] Mikheil Saakashvili's attempt to resolve the problem with separatists in South Ossetia in a military way may lead to military aggression from Russia, which supports separatists in all the areas of the former USSR. This is not only because the Kremlin has never concealed its rejection of Saakashvili's Georgia and the Kremlin had a formal excuse under the cover of protection of "Russian citizens" to get involved in this conflict, but also because the US electronic intelligence eavesdrops on the entire modern system of satellite communication. Almost all the private and state information communicated by phone, fax or via e-mail is intercepted. In particular, the tasks of the US Agency for National Security, a gigantic centre watching the entire world, employing about 100,000 people and having a budget of 16 billion dollars, also include eavesdropping on phone conversations, faxes, e-mails and satellite signals that have the least of interest for the USA. It is at least inappropriate to say under these circumstances that Washington was not ready for Russia's military aggression against Georgia.

In these conditions a hypothesis is emerging that Georgia has simply been set up by the USA in its geopolitical war with Russia.

Another big question for me personally is that who has committed the biggest crime: Russia, which openly and impudently demonstrates its aggressive face of a super power or the USA, which acted delicately and stealthily to achieve its targets through the blood of small Georgia?

What are we for the USA and Russia?

I am convinced that we have witnessed only the first stage of confrontation between Russia, which has finally become strong, and the USA, for influence in the South Caucasus region. It logically comes from this fact that the confrontation between the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group will be strongly aggravated. Azerbaijan needs to take it into account and try to make sure that either Russia or the USA is out as the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group. This is because the differences between Washington and Moscow in the views on the future of the South Caucasus, as well as on the settlement of the Nagornyy Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, may lead to very unpleasant consequences for us.

Despite the big differences in the views on the future of the entire South Caucasus region between Moscow and Washington, we can not but admit that the attitude of both Russia and the USA to Azerbaijan is purely that of a consumer. For example, a private idea prevails in Russia that Azerbaijan is only a province of Russia, which broke off due to the weakness of the Russian state, while the USA views Azerbaijan as another oil filling station, which needs to be under its control in order not to move towards Russia.

It seems that the fight for our oil may be strongly aggravated and assume the most unexpected proportions. This fight is not just for our oil. It should be noted that the USA does not control only one of the five countries which have the biggest oil reserves in the world Iran. A couple of years ago such countries were only two, but they have already "liberated" Iraq. It leads to an idea that Washington will definitely try to bring Tehran under its control. It is natural that under the new conditions of a two-polar world, when Russia has demonstrated to the entire world its status of a reviving super state, Washington's "Iran plans" may encounter tough rejection by the Kremlin. Naturally, Azerbaijani will feel all the "beauty" of this confrontation.

What shall Azerbaijan do under these circumstances? It should try to benefit from the confrontation of super powers in our region. But we need to understand that both the USA and Russia are the countries which do not care

about international law and accept only one law that of force. So, we should become the strongest state in the South Caucasus in all the meanings of this word economically, democratically, diplomatically and intellectually. We need to secure solid and written guarantees of support from one of the two currently existing superpowers, on the issue of their military and political assistance in the restoration of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. As the developments in Georgia show, we must not believe simple promises of assistance as much as the statements of Moscow and Washington that they want to see Azerbaijan as an independent and developed nation. For them we are just a small country rich in oil, which has an unresolved territorial conflict. For them we are just another stage of confrontation for supremacy in the region and in the world. If this is the case, we will proceed from our own pragmatic interests, understanding that we will not be able to avoid confrontation between the two superpowers in a new two-polar world.
