

## Encircling Russia, Threatening Iran: Azerbaijan to be admitted to NATO

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*News.Az interviews political scientist **Vafa Guluzade***

What can you say about reports that the Pentagon-assigned package of military aid to Azerbaijan will be some \$10m to go for improvement of the opportunities of marine forces on war on terror?

It is yet another proof that the United States views Azerbaijan as a very important state with which it is developing a geostrategic partnership in the region. Development of US-Azerbaijani relations meets the interest of both states. And the assignment of \$10m to Azerbaijan by the Pentagon testifies to the US interest in deepening military cooperation with our country. The logical outcome of this cooperation will be Azerbaijan's admission to NATO.

Could you specify terms of the announced admission of Azerbaijan to NATO?

I don't want to specify terms but I would say that it is about a middle term perspective. The matter is that at the current stage the United States and their allies in NATO are facing the fast of the overthrow of Bashad Assad's regime in Syria after which they will set about Iran and then the CIS countries including Russia. For this reason. the strengthening of ties with countries neighboring Iran and Russia meets the US interests.

In this case, can the military aid to Azerbaijan by the United States raise concerns in Iran?

Undoubtedly, it can. But it will not affect the US plans, based on their own interests, rather than the interests of Iran or any other country. Openly speaking, Iran is well aware of the US plans to conduct a military operation against it and it is preparing to resist this military operation. As for Azerbaijan, we merely cannot stay aside from US plans related to Iran.

Do the US plans envisage shift of powers in Armenia?

There are no doubts that they do. The United States is planning to reduce Armenia's dependence on Russia and Iran for which they seek to bring their protégé to power in Armenia. The issue is about who it will be and which events will promote implementation of

the US plans. Russia is unable to resist these US plans regarding Armenia, since it has no serious resources in terms of army or economics. Additionally, Russia will face the issue of resisting the plans of the United States and their allies in NATO, while in these conditions, Russia will have no time for Armenia.

How would that scenario, you are speaking of, influence the resolution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno Karabakh?

The impact will be a most positive one. The Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno Karabakh will be settled in case the indicated US plans come true. The main obstacle on the way to its settlement is Russia...

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