

Dlaczego Turcja kupuje od Rosji S-400? Czemu wojna w Gruzji była przewidywalna? Prof. Mustafa Aydin ze Stambułu o grze sił w regionie

ostatnia aktualizacja: 11.04.2018 16:02

Why does Turkey buy S-400 from Russia? Why was the war in Georgia predictable? Professor Mustafa Aydin from Istanbul about the game of strength in the region?

Since 2007, many experts have predicted the course of events in Georgia - We saw Russia pushing Georgia to the wall, waiting for a mistake; what surprised us was the lack of reaction from the West, said **Prof. Mustafa Aydin** to the PolskieRadio.pl. Now Russia might escalate the conflict in Ukraine, he thinks. The expert also explained why Ankara is negotiating for the purchase of anti-missile systems.

The situation in Ukraine is not stable, there are still some kind of tension, friction, and exacerbation. This may at some point lead to the birth of a further conflict, said **Professor Mustafa Aydin from the Kadir Has University** in Istanbul, from the Department of International Relations, in conversation with the portal PolskieRadio.pl.

It seems Russia is not satisfied enough there, it has not achieved what it wanted, and if they see the opportunity, it will use it, he said.

The analyst also explained why Turkey, a member of NATO, is buying rocket systems from Russia and how the relations between Turkey and Russia will develop.

**

Agnieszka Marcela Kamińska, PolskieRadio.pl: *We are talking at a conference on the situation in the Southern Caucasus and the role of big players in this region is one of the issues in which you specialize. What are your predictions about the movements of Russia in the South Caucasus, as well as in other regions during the coming term of Vladimir Putin? What can we expect from him?*

Professor Mustafa Aydin from the Kadir Has University in Istanbul, International Relations Department: For the next six years - unless there is an important geopolitical change, Russia could remain satisfied with the status quo and the scope of influence it has in the South Caucasus. Following the war with Georgia in 2008, Moscow has been quite well established in South Ossetia and Abkhazia; it has quite a lot of influence in Armenia, having bought anything that has economic value there. Russia also controls the region through manipulation of various conflicts. If everything stays as it is today, Russia probably will not initiate new actions, being content with what it has currently. If however

Moscow feels challenged by the countries of the region or the West, then it may become aggressive, as it was 2008 or 2014.

Looking at what was happening in Georgia - and then in the Crimea, Ukraine - was it really surprising for you? Did it surprise you?

As for Georgia, in 2008 most experts, and I was among them, expected such a conflict. We expected it from 2007.

So, you were not surprised, and you expected or even predicted it.

Yes, we experts had predicted a conflict a year earlier. Many people expected it. Because Russia's behaviour was provocative towards Georgia, the Russians forced Georgians to the extremes, hoping that they would make a mistake and Moscow would be able to interfere. And it finally happened. The Russians pressed on Georgia, pushing it against the wall; then when it reacted, Russia stroke. Therefore, we expected what the developments around Georgia would be.

However, when this happened, things went extremely fast.

Yes; and what surprised us was the reaction of Western countries. Or rather, one should say - the lack of reaction from the West - the USA and the other Western countries.

What happened in 2008 - it actually led to the events of 2014.

Sure; Of course, we did not expect Russia to annex Crimea so suddenly. It was quite surprising. But it was the consequence of the lack of proper response in the matter of Georgia; inaction of NATO and the Western countries in the Georgian case emboldened Russia to do a bit more - and we have seen that in Ukraine.

So; I did not anticipate that there would be an attack on exactly Crimea, but I expected a re-use of military force again by Russia.

Now, do you see any region that we should pay attention to?

Today the situation is more or less stable in the Caucasus and in the Black Sea region, where the Russians have what they wanted. It could be assumed that if there are no new developments, problems or new challenges, then the status quo may remain.

However, the situation in Ukraine is not stable - there are still tension, friction, and very much excitement. This may at some point lead to the birth of further conflicts.

It also seems that Russia is not satisfied enough there; in other words, it has not achieved exactly what it wanted and if they see an opportunity, they will use it.

In Georgia, we have a matter of borders - that is, shifting borders.

In Georgia, I do not anticipate a conflict. The Russians want to make Georgia unable to bring about significant changes (in a geopolitical sense). The situation will remain as it is for the time being.

How do you see Russia's actions in Syria, what do they need it for, what can you expect from it?

Russia saw an opportunity for action in Syria and used it. The Americans did not want to engage militarily in Syria and send their ground soldiers there. So, they left the area in a rather uncoordinated manner. And that allowed Russians to come to Syria in 2015.

The Russians currently are deeply involved in the situation, mainly in cooperation with the regime, but also through the tripartite cooperation between Russia, Turkey and Iran. They are very active in the region in this sense. Russia also created and launched the so-called Astana process or the Sochi process, aimed at finding a solution.

A lot of attention has been devoted recently to the relations between Russia and Turkey. Here the situation is very dynamic. Can you expect more cooperation here?

Relations between Russia and Turkey are diversifying. There is an economic component, and military cooperation in the field of weapons development. There is a cooperation in the field of energy - natural gas, pipelines, and now a nuclear power plant is to be built in Turkey by Russia.

I expect that this cooperation will continue. Of course, there was a problem three years ago. This was a very serious conflict situation when Turkey shot down a Russian plane for violation of its airspace. However, I think that both countries learned from this experience. Now Russia is more careful when it is near Turkish borders and Turkey is carefully considering answers to this kind of situation.

There is also military cooperation. And Turkey is one of the most important allies in NATO.

S-400 is a type of emergency purchase. That's what the government says. Turkey is negotiating the purchase of a comprehensive air defence system with several countries, including the US, but also with a consortium of companies from Italy and France. Turkey is conducting talks with them for the construction of its air defence system.

These negotiations and then the creation of the system, however, would take at least few years. In the meantime, Turkey needs to feel the gap in its air defence. And the government favours the Russian system for that, which - as the Russians say - is now the cheapest, and the Russians are eager to finance it through loans.

Of course, this is a problematic issue, because as we know, the S-400s will not be compatible with NATO system. They will be able to stand next to them; thus, they will only be useful in relation to a small region, to defend a small area for a short period, until Turkey builds its proper anti-missile system.

However, the negotiations are still ongoing. It is true that the government stated that everything was agreed and signed; but as far as I know, the Russians currently do not have enough missiles to sell them and do not have enough money to give Turkey as a loan to buy these missiles. So, we'll see what's going to happen.

Agnieszka Marcela Kamińska, PolskieRadio.pl; The conversation was held on the occasion of the conference at the Natolin European Center, March 28.