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## **KARABAKH MAY BECOME MOST PROFITABLE REGION OF AZERBAIJAN - RUSSIAN ANALYST**

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Russian historian, political analyst, professor Oleg Kuznetsov spoke to Trend regarding the role of liberation of Azerbaijan's ancestral lands by the Azerbaijani army in the Second Karabakh war, which lasted 44 days.

Under the leadership of the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, President İlham Aliyev, Azerbaijan liberated its lands from Armenian occupation.

*- In your opinion, what is the significance of Azerbaijan's victory in the Second Karabakh War for the development of the country and expanding of its cooperation with other countries?*

- I think that the victory in the war with Armenia is primarily important for Azerbaijan as a powerful factor in civil mobilization. Today, hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis are ready to invest to restore their ancestral villages in the territories liberated from the occupation, to bring foreign investments to Azerbaijan in order to revive the lands previously seized and ravaged by the Armenians.

From November 18 to December 23, I had visited in Azerbaijan, went to Karabakh, and eye-witnessed all that abomination of desolation when entire cities were dismantled for building materials that were sold to Iran. I'm more than sure that half of the new buildings in the northern provinces of Iran are made of Azerbaijani-made sawn stone and provided with Azerbaijani-made windows, window sills, doors, pipes, water heaters and even furniture.

In Moscow and other cities of Russia, I often have to talk with Russian businessmen who are refugees from Aghdam, Fuzuli and other formerly occupied Azerbaijani districts, whose business has a multimillion turnover both in rubles and US dollars and all of them are ready to rebuild at least their parental home and entire villages, asking me to discuss possibility of realizing such plans with the Azerbaijani authorities. The victory over Armenia provoked the readiness of a significant inflow of foreign investments from the Azerbaijani diaspora and its business partners from all over the world.

The second most important result of the victory in the war with Armenia is the consolidation of civil society in your country. After November 10, 2020, it has become trendy to be a citizen of Azerbaijan, and not an Azerbaijani as such. The important is the spirit of personal political belonging to the victorious country rather than ethnic identification, and I'm more than sure that

most of those Azerbaijani citizens who planned to emigrate in search of a better socio-economic life now will decide to link their lives with their historical homeland in order to work for its development and prosperity.

The victory in the war will reduce the outflow of human resources and capital from Azerbaijan, since domestic investments will clearly be more attractive for the country's citizens than foreign ones, and this will be conditioned not only by the expectation of economic benefits, but also by the feelings of patriotism and citizenship, which are now very strong among the population of Azerbaijan.

*- What potential you think the liberated territories of Azerbaijan have?*

- Unfortunately, I'm not an economist, to professionally answer this question. I only get information about this from the media and personal communication with the residents of Karabakh who were forced to leave their homes 30 years ago. I'm aware of the high agricultural potential of Karabakh in the spheres of gardening, viticulture, plant growing, and animal husbandry. Agriculture is the sector of the economy that can be restored with a minimum of investment in the shortest possible time - from three to five years. It's said that through Karabakh, in 5 years Azerbaijan will be able to double and in 10 years - triple the export of agricultural products to Russia,.

I also know that Karabakh is rich in ore minerals - gold, cobalt, copper, manganese, which can become a raw material basis for the development of non-ferrous metallurgy and the production of microelectronics in Azerbaijan. Of course, the technological basis for the extraction of most of the minerals has been disrupted, which will require expensive reconstruction, but the investments will be justified because after the restoration of the mining industry, a chain of new industries - metallurgy, electricity, mechanical engineering will be formed.

I also heard about the presence of oil and gas fields in Karabakh, although not as large in volume as in the Caspian Sea, but quite sufficient to meet local needs. This factor will significantly reduce the production costs of the Karabakh products themselves and, consequently, their prime cost. Therefore Karabakh can become the most profitable region of Azerbaijan. The restoration of railway communication through Karabakh will allow developing the transport and logistics component of the economy of the entire South Caucasus, launching new mechanisms of international economic integration.

*- Multiculturalism in our country has deep historical roots. How do you think the policy of multiculturalism helps Azerbaijan in development of foreign policy relations?*

- Multiculturalism as the pivotal basis of the official state Azerbaijani ideology arose and formed in the conditions of an active military-political confrontation with Armenia, the state ideology of which is militant nationalism, mixed with the ideas and ideologems of the Nazi Garegin Nzhdeh. I'm personally well acquainted with the rector of the Azerbaijan University of Languages        Abdullayev, former state adviser on multiculturalism, who began to promote his ideology first into power and then into society in order to fill the vacuum that happened after the First Karabakh War. I did my best to help him in this matter, reporting on events and ideas in the world scientific life in this area, therefore I witnessed how the generally abstract theory of multiculturalism eventually

turned into the practice of the political life of Azerbaijan, organically fitting into it.

For the mentality of the Azerbaijani society, multiculturalism was not something artificially introduced from the outside and imposed through the systems of state propaganda. Its ideology fully met the spirit and historical tradition of the Azerbaijani people, which is why it 'took root so well on the 'Azerbaijani national soil.

After gaining independence, Azerbaijan experienced two powerful streams of cultural influence - the Turkic Islamic tradition and its traditional European influence through the Russian-speaking and English-speaking cultures. The peculiarity of the Azerbaijani, to be even more specifically, the Baku society was that since the oil boom in the mid-1800s and the construction of a railway to Iran through Azerbaijan, your country has been a crossroads of cultures and civilizations for nearly 200 years, for which multiculturalism is a natural state, an integral part of the national mentality, that opens up the widest possibilities for Azerbaijan's representation in the international arena.

We know very well that the Baku International Humanitarian Forum and the Forum of Culture Ministers of Christian and Muslim Countries are traditionally held in your country under the auspices of UNESCO and ISESCO, as a result of which Azerbaijan has a reputation with a democratic political regime in the system of international relations. Two weeks ago the US included Azerbaijan in the list of countries where freedom of conscience and religion is really present. So multiculturalism is a real instrument of your country's international politics.

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