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The Stalemate of Peace Negotiation: Status Ambiguity of Karabakh

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Abstract:

The political emergence of modernity was based on specific concepts. The concept of Status was one of them. From the modern political and legal perspective status was grounded on national principles. National principles were constructed to guarantee the legitimation of modern sovereignty. In the case of Azerbaijan, modernist institutions, and concepts came through colonialism. So, the modern political establishment of the South Caucasus was defined by Gulustan and Turkmenchay treaties respectively in 1813 and 1828. Moreover, colonialism laid the foundations of status problems among the nations of the region.

During the Soviet time, Russian presence in the region evolved and was institutionalized, and the political status of Karabakh was defined by Soviet Moscow. And then, Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) emerged as the Soviet-created administrative division political establishment within Azerbaijan territory intended to facilitate the Soviet authority in Azerbaijan. During the Soviet period, Armenians were given status within the context of NK by Moscow.

On the eve of the dissolution of the USSR NK administrative division would become the core of the long-lasting conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. NK administrative division which guaranteed status for Armenians would not work after the USSR. And the status request of Armenians became the main point of the conflict. From that perspective war between the two countries was inevitable.

After the 44-Day War, the political establishment of Karabakh which was founded during the Soviet period as NK changed. It can be said that NK administrative division will not come back. However, due to the ongoing negotiation process, the status issue became one of the problematic points of the peace negotiations. Furthermore, in this sense, it can be said that due to the colonialism traces in both peoples' memory and long-lasting conflict/war signing the treaty will not be effortless. And the respective peace treaty will be significant to the region's political establishment in the 21st century. So again, to get a solution both sides will have to understand that to define the status of Karabakh will have to be based and referenced on the 44-Day War reality. Since, after the 44-Day War Karabakh became the internal issue of Azerbaijan. This paper aims to justify that for a peace treaty both sides should accept a new political reality on the ground.

Keywords: Karabakh, Status, 44-Days War, Peace Treaty