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The solution of the Karabakh problem in the South Caucasus and the establishment of stability and peace in the region pass through a holistic strategy. The recent aggressive attitude of Armenia towards Azerbaijan and the conflicts that followed show this clearly once again. The occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh and 7 regions gives Yerevan the courage to resort to all sorts of arrangements.

The Minsk Group: A Dead End

Is there any chance for the Minsk Group, which holds the responsibility to solve this problem, to accomplish this seemingly impossible task? Previous years have made it clear that the Minsk process will not yield any results. There was no doubt about this among those who have observed the process closely. Therefore, ensuring the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and sustaining peace and stability in the South Caucasus can no longer be left to the Minsk Group.

The Astana Model for the Karabakh Problem

This of course means that some other mechanism will be required to facilitate this process. The success of Syria in the Astana process is an example especially of a solution for the conflicts in the region, and the Karabakh Problem. Turkey, Russia, and Iran are much more concerned with the Karabakh Problem than Western countries in terms of geography, geopolitics, and history. Regional problems can be solved much more comfortably and justly when western states are held back and the countries of the region take the leadership.

It would be more useful to talk about the answer to the question of whether or not there is a solid basis for the Astana process to take action in the Nagorno-Karabakh Problem and other issues in the South Caucasus.

Axis Shift in Armenia

The largest US embassy in Eastern Europe is located in Armenia. As a result of this, a serious network of American agents and their influences have taken over the country. They have also gained serious ground within the state and various NGOs (Aydinlik, 2018). The activities of Soros Foundations are also substantial. In his statement recently, Ilham Aliyev stated that the Sorosists took over the legislative-executive-judiciary arms of the Armenian state, and stated that the Pashinyan government has followed Soros instructions.

This network has played an important role in bringing Nikol Pashinyan to power. Pashinyan showed his loyalty to the forces that brought him to power. His political alliance advocated Armenias resignation from the customs union and military alliance with Russia. Everyone has now begun to accept that Armenias axis has shifted.

In parallel with this, there has been a recent process in which supporters of greater cooperation with Russia (such as Robert Kocharyan) were arrested and deposed. This purge was also reflected in the business world. Russia has clearly expressed its discomfort in this regard.

Honoring the Fascist Collaborators

Yerevan adopted actions that glorify and honor Nazi collaborators in World War II in a way similar to certain former Soviet republics such as Ukraine and the Baltic states. A statue of the Dashnak leader Garegin Nzhdeh, who openly worked for fascist Germany, was erected in the center of the capital, and many high-ranking state officials attended the opening.

Such actions are among the most typical signs of standing against Russia and entering the Atlantic front. For this reason, this may be seen not just as a simple historical attribution, but also as a strategic choice, since such activities symbolize liberation from Russian hegemony and consolidates anti-Russian position in the public opinion.

Genocide Allegations Against Moscow

It is possible to see similar actions when evaluating the incidents that took place between 1915-23. Soviet Russia has also been alleged to be among the co-partners and cooperators of the so-called Armenian Genocide in many pro-West groups in Armenia, many of which are led by figures such as Pashinyan. According to these groups, the pro-Turkey Bolshevik Moscow partitioned the territory of Armenia with Ankara, and played a large role in the genocide by cooperating.

Yerevans Plans

Armenia naturally became more isolated in the region while standing by the Atlantic front and shifting away from Russia. It would be impossible for Yerevan to be not disturbed in this isolation, alongside the economic and political crises throughout the country.

Let us just quickly remind our readers here that Armenia is a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which consists of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

This is one of the plans of the now isolated Yerevan. While strengthening its place in the Western camp on one hand, it will have the support of Russia and the CSTO countries against Azerbaijan, on the other. But any conflict in the occupation zone will not be counted as the joint defense of the CSTO.

Covering Up The Internal Problems

The economic problems and the political tensions inside the country will also be covered up this way. The governments complete failure with the fight against the Coronavirus has remained as an important topic of the countrys public agenda, but this has been overshadowed by the conflict.

Turkey Is Also a Target

This conflict, which was provoked by Armenia, will also encourage the Turkish Army, which had implicitly gone against the Atlantic bloc in Syria, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Libya, to open up a new front and thin out the Turkish military power. It is clear that Azerbaijan is not the only target, and that Armenia is not the only perpetrator.

Moreover, this maneuver is not just an action to provoke Moscow against Azerbaijan. This will also pave the way for the Turkish-Russian conflict, which has been the most crucial mission of the West in the region throughout history.

These conflicts can cause Baku to look weak, and get embroiled in turmoil, and the orange movements in Azerbaijan, which the West has failed to strengthen previously, could put the Aliyev government in a tough spot.

No Support for Armenia From the CSTO

But this plan was impossible to go well. First of all, Armenia was not the defender in this conflict, but the aggressor. Turkish-Russian and Azerbaijani-Russian relations have made it possible for Moscow to target Baku and Ankara. And the other members of the CSTO, would not take an aggressive action against Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Armenia has also come up with the lies that some jihadists from Syria are fighting on the Azerbaijani side just to provoke Russia.

Harsh Reaction From Moscow to Yerevan

In addition to all of this, Yerevan has faced some unexpected reactions. Even Margarita Simonian, an Armenian-Russian who is in charge of Russia Today and Sputnik media groups and does not favor Turkey, has two months ago responded harshly to Yerevan asking for help. According to Simonian, the Armenian government has acted aggressively against Russia repeatedly and has basically slapped Russia in the face.

Russian public opinion has been increasingly subjected to arguments favoring the view that it is Armenia who needs a military base in Gyumri, and not Russia. The US military biological laboratories in Armenia have resulted in a serious sense of threat in Russia.

As a result, Moscow did not show any support to Yerevan two months ago and in the current conflict. We can even say this: Azerbaijan's military success has also initiated the overthrow of Pashinyan. Aliyev, and not only in own country and Turkey, even though he will be a hero in Russia.

The Period of Keeping the Status Quo is Now Over

Therefore, Russia is deeply concerned by the pro-Western policies of the Pashinyan government. This situation offers great opportunities in favor of Turkey and Azerbaijan in redistributing the balances of power, and reshaping the alliances in the South Caucasus. It is possible to see the signs for it from the Kremlin.

Moscow has favored the protection of the status quo as it did before in the Karabakh

Conflict. The concern that a conflict reaching beyond its relations with Yerevan could lead to a Western intervention in the region has played an important role in this attitude. The possibility of Western powers deploying in the region, with the excuse of the Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict, has been the decisive point in Russias policy of maintaining the status quo.

However, a new process started in which these policies have begun to change. As we mentioned above, Armenias Westward axis shift was among the leading reasons behind the strengthening of Moscow-Baku relations in political and economic areas. On such solid ground, relations with Baku have been getting more important for Moscow than relations with Yerevan. This being said, Russia still has certain commitments towards Yerevan within the framework of the CSTO.

The Lavrov Plan is in Effect

In addition, the Azerbaijani Army has accumulated considerable power over the last 10 years, and has moved to a more advantageous position compared to the Armenian Army (this advantage has proven itself the April War in 2016). Five years ago, relying on this advantageous situation, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev told the Russian President Vladimir Putin that the Karabakh Conflict must be resolved, even by force if necessary. Then, Putin promised his Azerbaijani counterpart that the issue would be resolved peacefully.

Russia began to work on a new plan, following Putins promise. According to this plan, which would later be referred to as the Lavrov Plan, it was provisioned that the immediate evacuation of five occupied rayons would take place first, and then be returned to Azerbaijan. This plan was put in front of the former Armenian Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan. In the end, both parties agreed upon the Plan.

The Pashinyan Obstacle

However, after the overthrow of Sargsyan with the orange revolution movements, Pashinyan came and declared that he rejects the Lavrov Plan. As a result, this step toward a resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict after many years was blocked.

Subsequently, Moscow-Yerevan relations have faced another major crisis. While Putins promises to Aliyev remain valid, Azerbaijans strict response to the provocations could also be evaluated as a reminder of the Russian promises in some ways.

All these cases indicate that a new mechanism with greater possibilities must be initiated.

It Has Been Solved Before, and Can Be Solved Again

The efforts of the Ankara-Moscow-Tehran triangle (also known as the Astana process)

acting on the Karabakh issue are vital to bear positive results.

In history, this mechanism has put an end to the Armenian Issue. The Dashnak government, a pro-British collaborative government whom Mustafa Kemal called the Caucasus Barrier during the War of Independence, was destroyed by the Turkish-Soviet military cooperation, and peace and stability were provided in the South Caucasus. The imperialist-backed occupied territories were also liberated.

The Holistic strategy of the Ankara government has not only paved the way for the liberation of the South Caucasus, but also saved Izmir. The same thing is needed today. The Astana mechanism, which would be in effect for the South Caucasus, will also be key to overcoming important problems such as Syria, the Eastern Mediterranean and Libya.

Competition in Natural Gas Projects is not Essential

It is necessary to say that although there seems to be a competition between TurkStream and TANAP □□□□□ delivers Azerbaijani gas to Europe and Russian gas projects with the same goals □ such projects do not essentially affect the gas providing parties. Europes gas demands are large enough to meet the supply of both projects. In addition, TurkStream was designed later on, and has taken TANAP into account as well.

TANAP is not considered as a competitor among the Russian public.

In fact, the TANAP, TurkStream and NordStream projects share common interests against the EastMed project of the Atlantic front in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Things to Avoid

On the other hand, it is important to maintain the advantageous position supported by UN resolutions and the full justification of the international law. It is important to avoid actions such as claiming territory on Iran even before the liberation of Karabakh or attempts such as recognizing the Yerevan government in exile. The liberation of the occupied lands should be the primary focus. All of Turkeys attention, energy and power should be directed at this.

Any speeches that might lead to the loss of Turkeys potential allies, and any attempts that could discredit Turkey in the international community will also disrupt the Nagorno-Karabakh cause and should therefore be avoided.

The Key to Peace in the South Caucasus and West Asia

From the point of view of Russia, Turkey and Azerbaijan, have started to take their places alongside Eurasia with their military, economic and strategic power on one side, while Armenia, which has significantly weakened, has fallen under the influence of the West on

the other side. It is clear who the ideal partners are.

As a result, Turkish-Azerbaijani union and Turkish-Russian-Iranian cooperation will disrupt US plans and bring peace in the region, just as they did in history, as we mentioned above, in the South Caucasus. Of course, this is not just in the South Caucasus, but all over West Asia.

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