
Armenia's De Facto Borders

By Bagrat Nazarian

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A COMMENT BY OUR CORRESPONDENT TO THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE

This is encouraging and promising, even though it's happening nearly 15 years after the event! Showing the non-existent borders (at least since 1994!) of the NKAO (Nagorno Karabagh Autonomous Oblast) by Armenian HiTV, Meteo or any other TV, or the HAAF's (Hayastan All Armenia Fund) calendars and maps or any other official or semi official Armenian Republic or Diaspora publication, in my view, must be considered outright treason. How else can one define deliberate propagation of false information so consistently regarding such a strategic and vitally important issue as one's own borders?!

The problem has been raised for several years with HAAF who every year publishes in their wall calendar the same irresponsible and non-existent NKAO territory next to the Armenian Republic. Even strong protests coupled with threats that substantial and generous donations will be withheld from HAAF unless this unacceptable and irresponsible mistake is corrected and the proper DE FACTO borders are shown in their maps lead to no result and the same false map is published once again. And now we hear that something as basic as national geography school textbooks have not been changed for nearly a decade therefore no effort has been made to educate our younger generation simple facts of our geographical borders feeding them out of date and false information as fact!

Why has this been tolerated for so long?

So rather than talk about 'liberated territories' or 'occupied territories' or 'buffer zone' or 'security zone', all of which may well be valid definitions in their specific fields of discourse, as professor Valesyan has correctly pointed out international law has a simple solution in cases like this. And that is the concept of DE FACTO BORDERS. Any other term is not just false which propagates confusion and non truth but is simply wrong and inappropriate and unpractical. It follows that any map produced must, MUST, be based on existing realities - i.e. de facto borders which as a matter of fact are backed by NKR's constitution, the OSCE sponsored Ceasefire Agreement of May 1994, and far more importantly the joint Army and Armed

Forces of NKR and the Republic of Armenia and therefore their laws! If Armenia for whatever reason is still unable or unwilling to come to terms with this glaring reality to call a spade a spade and define its borders scientifically and accurately then it is not just betraying our national interest but is being party to spreading confusion in national and international circles, something which is quite unprecedented anywhere in the world! Finally let me end by stating that this failure to properly define one's own de facto borders has serious negative practical consequences for Artsakh in that it prevents various international humanitarian agencies (such as Oxfam for example), amongst others, from coming to Artsakh.

This is because in situations like this (no war no peace as in Artsakh) these organizations need to know the de facto borders of a given country backed and protected by law and order (administration backed by armed forces) of the territory concerned. It certainly does not help when various

agencies of the given de facto territory issue irrelevant, out of date, false and confusing information regarding their own national (DE FACTO) borders!

Bagrat Nazarian, Contributing Correspondent (London),
ARARAT Center for Strategic Research
