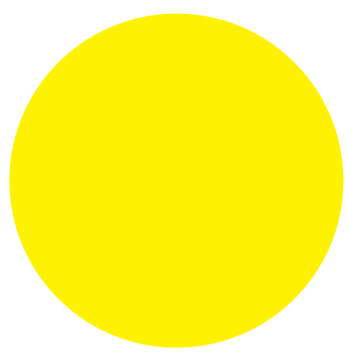


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Redrawing of borders 'red line': *Iran*

By Ebrahim Beheshti
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OPINION

The Iranian foreign minister has emphasized that "any threat from North, South, East, or West to the territorial integrity of our neighbors or any redrawing of boundaries is totally unacceptable and a red line for Iran." The warning issued by Abbas Araghchi appears to be a direct response to recent reports of Russia's insistence on establishing the Zangezur Corridor along Iran's northern borders, which Tehran has vehemently and repeatedly opposed.

Due to longstanding disputes between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, which have resulted in multiple wars, Azerbaijan seeks to create a transportation corridor linking its mainland to the Nakhchivan region. Following the recent conflict between Yerevan and Baku, the Nakhchivan region was ceded to Azerbaijan. As this region lies within Armenian territory, Baku aims to establish the Zangezur Corridor to directly connect these two parts of its territory.

Serving as a key transportation route, the Zangezur Corridor would connect Azerbaijan to Russia and Turkey through Armenia, facilitating connections between Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. It would also enable Azerbaijan to access the Armenian province of Syunik, which borders Iran, without having to pass through Armenian checkpoints. However, the critical issue for Tehran is that constructing this corridor would sever the land connection between Iran and Armenia and divert the transit route from Turkey to Baku away from Iranian territory.

In late July 2022, during a trilateral meeting between Iran, Russia, and Turkey regarding developments in Syria, the presidents of Russia and Turkey met with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution in Tehran. Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei reminded them of Iran's explicit and unwavering position on the Zangezur Corridor and border changes.

In his meeting with Vladimir Putin, the Leader emphasized, "The Islamic Republic will never tolerate policies and plans that would lead to the closure of the Iran-Armenia border." He further reinforced this stance in his meeting with Recep Tayyip Erdogan, stating that if there is a policy to block the Iran-Armenia border, the Islamic Republic will oppose it because this border represents a multi-millennial connection.

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