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Haarlem Model United Nations

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Issue:
The question of Nagorno-Karabakh

Forum:
European Council (EuCO)





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Position:	President Chair

Introduction

The occupied territories of Azerbaijan surrounding the Nagorno-Karabakh region have been the cause of numerous conflicts since in the 20th century and more than 40,000 people have lost their lives because of these conflicts. This territorial dispute was the result of a decision to make the Armenian populated region of Nagorno-Karabakh an administrative division of the Soviet Union with right of self-government. The Armenian residents of Nagorno-Karabakh later voted to unify this region with Armenia and succeeded only in deepening the ethnic divide between Azeri's and Armenians living in the area and causing turmoil throughout the country. Many armed conflicts followed and eventually lead up to a war in 1988. Despite previous efforts including a ceasefire in 1994 conflicts between the two nations continue and the issue of the occupied territories in Azerbaijan has yet to be solved. People from both nationalities are in danger from sporadic border conflicts and skirmishes. That is why immediate action needs to be taken by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in order to find a permanent solution.

Definition of Key Terms

Soviet Socialist Republic:

A Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) was a federal entity within the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) such as the Azerbaijan SSR and the Armenian SSR. These administrative sub-units of the Soviet Union later declared their independence as Azerbaijan and Armenia as the USSR collapsed. Soviet Socialist Republics had a status higher than oblasts meaning their political autonomy was more than that of an oblast.

Autonomous Oblast:

An autonomous oblast was a lower status administrative sub-unit of the former Soviet Union. They were meant for smaller nations or regions and given a limited autonomy. Nagorno-Karabakh was an autonomous oblast within the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.

Autonomy:

Autonomy is a country's right of self-government. Levels of autonomy often vary depending on certain countries or regions. Such country or regions are referred to as

autonomous. As previously mentioned Nagorno-Karabakh during the Soviet area was a region with a limited level of “autonomy” and was not free to make important decisions independently from the USSR.

Sporadic:

Sporadic means scattered and random. Sporadic attacks occur at irregular intervals or only in a few places and are hard to predict. In this case the irregular and unorganized skirmishes and conflicts taking place in the aftermath of the war at the border of Nagorno-Karabakh would be considered as sporadic.

Constituent:

A constituent state is another name for an oblast. It refers to “agent” states which have minimal governmental power on their own yet are part of a bigger body.

Artsakh:

A synonym for Nagorno-Karabakh. Historically Artsakh refers to a province under the rule of the Kingdom of Armenia from 190 BC to 390 AD later falling under Arab control between the 7th and 8th centuries. At present the Republic of Artsakh refers to the area of ongoing territorial dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

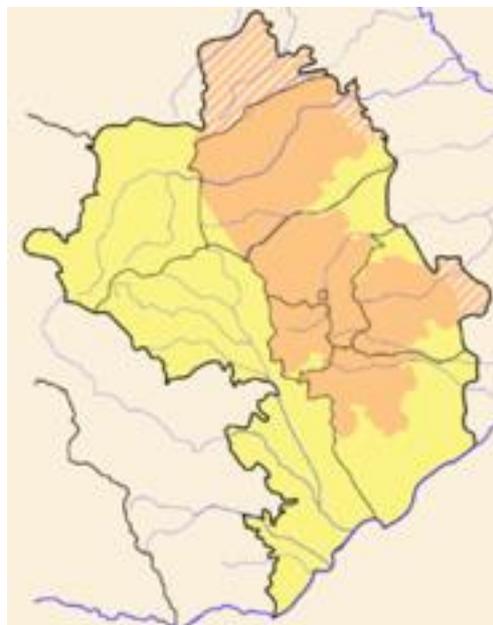
General Overview

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is a territorial and ethnic conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region and the seven surrounding districts of Kalbajar, Lachin, Qubadli, Jabrayil, Zangilan, Agdam, and Fuzuli.

The Nagorno-Karabakh region was made an autonomous oblast in Soviet Azerbaijan but once the Soviet Union began to lose its power the Armenian population voted to unify this region with Armenia. The referendum was boycotted by Azeri's and this caused some of the first conflicts in that region.

Once Azerbaijan declared its independence from the USSR it removed the powers held by the Nagorno-Karabakh sub-unit. Armenia gained its independence as well following the collapse of the Soviet Union and proclaimed the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh. The independent state of Nagorno-Karabakh within Azerbaijan resulted in escalating conflicts between the two countries and in 1993 Armenian forces captured the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Armenian forces also occupied the surrounding areas threatening involvement from other countries and had full control of Nagorno-Karabakh as well as 9% percent of Azerbaijan's territory outside of the region in question by 1994.

(*Armenian controlled Azerbaijan territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh are shown in yellow. The territory of the Nagorno-Karabakh region considered to be part of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic which is also under the control of Armenia is shown in brown.)



The Nagorno-Karabakh War (1988-94)

The Nagorno-Karabakh war also referred to as the “Artsakh Liberation War” by the Armenians was the result of the ongoing tension between Azerbaijan and Armenia, especially after the independence of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. It was fought between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the ethnic majority of Armenians in the region who had the backing of the Armenian Republic.

Following a referendum to unify Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia peaceful negotiations escalated into full-scale war. Lasting six years this war reached its peak in 1992 and caused more than 40,000 casualties in total. As many as 230,000 Armenians and 800,000 Azeri’s were displaced. The UN did not intervene and only managed to adopt 4 resolutions during and 1 after the war . All of which were very similar in content and not taken seriously by the Armenian Republic. The ceasefire managed to lessen the major violence and even though fighting continued after it was signed by both nations 1994 is considered the end of the Nagorno-Karabakh war.

Post-War

Despite the ceasefire agreement and the efforts of the OSCE violence in the Nagorno-Karabakh region escalated once more. Following events include

numerous skirmishes, border clashes a military helicopter being shot down and an estimated total of more than 500 casualties. Losses of civilians and troops were high on both sides.

These events did not result in any territorial differences until recently in 2016 when Azerbaijan managed to claim back a small part of its land. Armenia still has full control over the Nagorno-Karabakh region and the majority of surrounding districts.

Major Parties Involved

Azerbaijan:

Azerbaijan has declared the Armenian occupation illegal and defends the fact that Nagorno-Karabakh is a part of Azerbaijan as it is inside the sovereign territory of Azerbaijan's borders. Azerbaijan has the support of member state Pakistan which confirms the illegitimacy of Armenia's occupation and is also the only country that does not recognize Armenia. Azerbaijan was supported with a series of UN resolutions especially 62/243 in which Armenian troops were requested to withdraw from the region but refused.

Armenia:

Armenia claims based upon the ethnic situation of the region and the previous referendum in which the majority voted to unify Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia that their occupation is legitimate. They have full control over Nagorno-Karabakh itself as they support the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic despite not officially recognizing it. Aside from the region in question, Armenia maintains its occupation of areas surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh which are legally part of Azerbaijan. Armenia has denied multiple requests of withdrawal by the UN. The last related resolution adopted (62/243) specifically requests for : "continued respect and support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity" of Azerbaijan "within its internationally recognized borders", demanding the "immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of all Armenian forces from all occupied territories of Azerbaijan," emphasizing that "no state shall render aid or assistance" to maintain the occupation of Azerbaijani territories. There have been no sanctions applied by UN in relation to Armenia's actions, while the member state continues to defend its right on the region.

The Nagorno-Karabakh republic:

It declared its independence in 1991 and consists of a staggering Armenian majority. The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, also known as the Republic of Artsakh is not officially recognized by any member state including Armenia even though it relies on Armenia as a semi-presidential democracy. It lies in the Nagorno-Karabakh region in the south Caucasus and "controls" the remains of the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous oblast, including some of the surrounding areas.

USSR:

The Russian Empire established control over the region in the 19th century but it was not until the Soviet Union was formed that the ethnically problematic region of territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh were reorganized under the Azerbaijan SSR. USSR created the basis for this conflict by making Nagorno-Karabakh an autonomous oblast. This disputable region was fought over after the collapse of the USSR in the absence of a governing power because both nations wanted to claim it as their own.

Timeline of Key Events

Date (Day/Month/Year)	Event
1923	Nagorno-Karabakh is made an Autonomous Oblast by decision of the Soviet Union
1988	The start of the Nagorno-Karabakh war
24 October 1992	US Freedom Support Act is effective and the United States of America officially cuts their support to Azerbaijan.
1993	The Armenian forces are in control of Lachin, Fuzuli, Jebrayil, Qubadli, Zangilan and establish control over the Nagorno-Karabakh region.
30 April 1993	Security Council Resolution 822 passes, which highlights the importance of an action and recognizes the need for a solution formally.
November 12, 1993	Resolution 853 demands that both parties immediately cease all hostilities and calls for the withdrawal of Armenian troops while reaffirming UN Resolution 822

October 14, 1993	Resolution 874 is adopted calling for the preservation of the ceasefire and once again the immediate withdrawal of Armenian troops
November 12, 1993	The last UN resolution adopted during the war, No. 884 condemns recent violations of the cease-fire. Also calls upon the Armenian government to use its influence to achieve compliance by the Armenians of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani Republic while repeating the requests made in the previous resolutions.
1994	A ceasefire agreement between the two nations is signed
2008	The Mardakert skirmishes begin
14 March 2008	General Assembly Resolution 62/243 is adopted demanding the immediate withdrawal of all Armenian forces from the occupied territories. The resolution adds the issue to the UN agenda.
2011-2013	10-year-old Azeri boy is killed by an Armenian sniper. More than 100 soldiers killed on both sides since 2008.
2014	Border clashes continue while a Nagorno-Karabakh military helicopter is shot down.
2015	Over 40 Armenians and 60 Azerbaijanis are killed due to sporadic border conflicts.
2017	Clashes throughout the year continue and after 350 casualties in 2016 the violence has not stopped.
2020	The Nagorno-Karabakh issue remains unsolved.

Previous attempts to resolve the issue

A ceasefire agreement was reached between the two countries of Azerbaijan and Armenia in 1994 which marks the end of the Nagorno-Karabakh war. This agreement however did not resolve the issue and territorial conflicts still continued.

The OSCE (The Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) also tried to bring an end to the conflict with peace talks but was unsuccessful.

The UN Security Council Resolution 822 was passed in an effort to bring this issue to the attention of nations. This is the resolution which formally recognizes the issue and the need for a solution, but the resolution lacks decisive actions and is quite ineffective in terms of direct actions or indirect persuasive, incentive-based encouraging actions.

Each resolution after UNSC 822, is also ineffective and vague in terms of direct ways of implementing the solutions. Each UN resolution recognizes the need for a solution rather than coming up with a solution. No decisive solution was implemented through history and that is why this issue remains a “frozen conflict” up until today.

Below are all five resolutions adopted by the UN regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the first four of which were passed during the war in 1993 and the 5th in 2008.

822 (April 30, 1993):

<http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/822>

853 (July 29, 1993):

<http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/853>

874 (October 14, 1993):

<http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/874>

884 (November 12, 1993) :

<http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/884>

62/243 (14 March 2008):

<https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/62/243>

Possible Solutions

The given issue could have various solutions from different perspectives. But in each case, a couple of base elements should be considered. Each solution should respect both parties and take into consideration that if either of the parties is highly

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hurt in terms of their policy, territory, economy or status; the conflict could get larger. Also, the solutions shouldn't disregard the request of either party and try to focus on a sustainable solution rather than a short-term solution. Despite claims by Azerbaijan of the illegitimacy of Armenia's occupation both nations insist that they have a right to this piece of land. Keeping these in mind, the issue could be solved by numerous ways.

The reason for both countries wanting the region could be detected and a solution could be written to supply these needs and share resources or human capital of the region between the two countries. While doing so, the official ruler of the country could be chosen by the UN or by the two countries, internally.

Another solution could leave the issue in the hands of the Nagorno-Karabakh region itself. The people could choose a leader and a ruling system on their own, or choose either of the related parties to rule the region. The method of this detection should be precise and there should be an incentive for both parties to agree but it would have to result in the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic being recognized as an independent state and therefore is questionable.

Varied other solutions, which involve other member states of Non-Governmental Organizations, could be implemented. An ideal resolution also, shouldn't disregard the humanitarian needs of the people living in the region and should find a short-term and a long-term solution to supply the basic humanitarian needs.

Appendix/Appendices

Global Conflict Tracker: Quick facts and further info on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

<https://www.cfr.org/interactive/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/nagorno-karabakh-conflict>

Crisis Group: Details regarding the peace process between the two parties

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/caucasus/nagorno-karabakh-azerbaijan>

GPF: A Brief History of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

<https://geopoliticalfutures.com/brief-history-nagorno-karabakh-conflict/>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia: Armenia's point of view on the issue

<https://www.mfa.am/en/nagorno-karabakh-issue>

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Resolution 853, unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/853.

Resolution 874, unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/874.

Resolution 884, unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/884.

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"United Nations Official Document." United Nations, United Nations, www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/62/243.