



Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan

FACT SHEET ON DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO NAGORNO KARABAKH

Nagorno Karabakh – Nagorno Karabakh is a western region within Azerbaijan. Nagorno Karabakh is recognized as part of the sovereign territory of Azerbaijan by international law and the following:

The United States
The United Nations
The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

Background – In 1988, Armenian separatists in Nagorno Karabakh unilaterally declared their independence, and a war broke out between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Armenian forces launched a series of offensives beginning in 1993 that resulted in the Armenian occupation of 20 percent of Azerbaijan (including Nagorno Karabakh), the destruction of hundreds of villages, the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians and the creation of about a million refugees.

Ceasefire – A ceasefire has been in effect for about three years, but all efforts by the OSCE, the United States and others to mediate a settlement have been unsuccessful.

U.S. Assistance to Azerbaijan – In 1992, at the request of the Armenian lobby, Congress passed a ban on direct assistance (including humanitarian aid) to Azerbaijan, commonly referred to as Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act. Thus, all U.S. humanitarian assistance to the million refugees must go through non-governmental organizations (NGO's). Assistance for democracy building, market economy reforms, and economic trade is prohibited.

What is the Issue? – Extremist separatist elements within Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh are seeking a Greater Armenia, which they hope to accomplish through independence or annexation of Nagorno Karabakh. They believe that if Congress provides direct assistance to Nagorno Karabakh, it will be recognizing that region as a separate entity from Azerbaijan, thus furthering the goal of independence or annexation.

What is Azerbaijan's Position? – Azerbaijan will ensure that direct U.S. assistance goes to all needy citizens, including those of Nagorno Karabakh, if Section 907 is repealed. If proponents of direct assistance to Nagorno Karabakh were serious, they would support repeal of Section 907. Thus, the issue is not humanitarian assistance but territorial integrity, and the desire of Armenian separatists to create a Greater Armenia through independence or annexation of Nagorno Karabakh.

The Future of Nagorno Karabakh – Azerbaijan has pledged highest level of autonomy for Nagorno Karabakh under any negotiated settlement of the conflict, but independence or annexation of its sovereign territory is unacceptable. Even before the conflict, ethnic Armenians living in Nagorno Karabakh had their own schools, language and churches. Azerbaijan has pledged to protect the civil rights of all citizens, including those in Nagorno Karabakh.

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Amendment's Affect on U.S.-Azerbaijani Relations -- Like Section 907, any amendment which infringes on the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan would do great harm to U.S.-Azerbaijan relations because it would imply U.S. recognition of separate status for Nagorno Karabakh. This would come at a time of increasing cooperation between the United States and Azerbaijan, including the participation of American oil companies in an \$12 billion energy development project in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is a secular Muslim country, and the only former Soviet Republic with no foreign troops on its soil. Good relations with the United States is important in maintaining Azerbaijan's independence.

\$1 Billion in Illegal Arms Shipments to Armenia -- The Defense Committee of the Russian Duma and the Russian Defense Ministry have revealed that between 1993-96 some \$1 billion in illegal arms shipments were made from Russia to Armenia. This included 84 battle tanks, 50 armored personnel carriers, rockets and ammunition. Much of that equipment was used in the Armenian offensives that "ethnically cleansed" Nagorno Karabakh and the 20 percent of Azerbaijan currently occupied by Armenian forces. Russian President Boris Yeltsin has ordered an investigation of these illegal arms shipments.

True Intentions of Armenian Separatists -- The true objective of the Armenian extremists could be seen in the recent Lisbon summit of the OSCE. Armenia was the only country among 54 that refused to back a statement affirming the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Hopes for a negotiated settlement were dealt another blow when the Republic of Armenia appointed Robert Kocharyan, the so-called "president" of separatist forces in Nagorno Karabakh, as prime minister. His only qualification is that he was leader of the "pro-war" separatists within Nagorno Karabakh.

The Real Solution -- The only real solution lies in a negotiated settlement based on the statement of principles supported by 53 nations at Lisbon: (1) support for the territorial integrity of Armenia and Azerbaijan; (2) highest degree of self rule for Nagorno Karabakh within Azerbaijan; and (3) guaranteed security for Nagorno Karabakh and its entire population.

U.S. Interests are at Stake -- Despite Section 907, the Azerbaijani Government has maintained friendly relations with the United States. It has instituted democratic and market reforms, and maintains close ties to Israel. It has rejected calls for creation of an Islamic republic. It has welcomed U.S. businesses into the country. The U.S. should continue to encourage these developments.

DID YOU KNOW...

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The conflict in Nagorno-Karabagh would be on its way to serious negotiations if Armenia had joined 53 other countries, including Azerbaijan, at the December 1996 OSCE summit in Lisbon on a statement of principles. These principles would have affirmed Armenia's and Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, proposed the highest degree of self-rule for Nagorno Karabagh, and guaranteed the security of the entire population of Nagorno Karabagh.

Turkish leaders have repeatedly stated that a mere agreement on the statement of principles would pave way for the opening of the border between Turkey and Armenia.

DID YOU KNOW...

Armenia has three Russian military bases and may accept more Russian troops in the future.

Azerbaijan has no foreign troops or bases on its territory.

DID YOU KNOW...

Armenia has illegally received from unofficial sources over \$1 billion in Russian arms, many of which may have gone into the Nagorno-Karabagh region of Azerbaijan. These included 84 T-72 battle tanks, 72 heavy howitzers, 24 Scud missiles with eight launchers, 50 armored personnel carriers and millions of rounds of ammunition. President Yeltsin has ordered an investigation of the illegal arms shipment.

DID YOU KNOW...

The self-styled "president" of Nagorno Karabagh Robert Kocharian is now the Prime Minister of Armenia. Karabagh officials travel on Armenian diplomatic passports, and the Karabagh economy runs on Armenian currency.

Prior to becoming Prime Minister, Kocharian indicated his intention to prevent Azerbaijan from exporting its Caspian oil by stating that "not one drop of Azeri oil will flow from the Caspian to international markets."

DID YOU KNOW...

"...evidence gathered by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki establishes the involvement of the Armenian army as part of its assigned duties in the conflict, especially since December 1993." (Seven Years of Conflict in Nagorno-Karabagh, a Human Rights Watch Helsinki Report, December 1994)

DID YOU KNOW...

Armenia has a security pact with Syria and extensive growing trade and energy links with Iran.

Azerbaijan has had a very pro-Israel and pro-western foreign policy. High level Iranian officials have criticized Azerbaijan for these positions.

DID YOU KNOW...

The Chairman of the Armenian Parliament, Babken Ararktsian, declared recently in Moscow "The best indicators of Armenia's position on NATO's enlargement is the presence of Russian military bases in Armenia." (Noyan-Tapan, April 17, 1997)

Azerbaijan does not oppose the expansion of the NATO Alliance.

DID YOU KNOW...

The Armenian National Committee of America itself, along with the State Department, the OSCE and other western organizations, criticized the Armenian government's manipulation of its parliamentary elections last year.

DID YOU KNOW...

The UN Security Council in 1993 condemned the aggression of ethnic Armenian forces in Azerbaijan in several resolutions.

DID YOU KNOW...

Armenia receives the second highest per capita U.S. assistance.

DID YOU KNOW...

A Human Rights Watch/Helsinki official stated that Armenia made a "clear retreat from its previous enthusiastic commitment to human rights." This includes "a vicious crackdown on religious minorities."

DID YOU KNOW...

Nagorno Karabagh is a region of Azerbaijan and is recognized as such by the UN, the OSCE, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the US, and international Law. No nation recognizes Nagorno Karabagh as an independent country or entity. There is no such thing as the "Republic of Nagorno Karabagh."