

Key Points on Azerbaijan

- The one and only thing the Congress can do to promote peace and stability in the South Caucasus is to refrain from taking any initiatives, funding or otherwise, in Appropriations bills that will tilt the balance of power or inhibit the peace process.
- We have a peace process in place known as the Minsk Process. It is fragile and the presence of the Russians is seldom helpful. But it is the only mechanism devoted to bringing peace to a region of Azerbaijan devastated by war. The Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders are engaging in negotiations directly. There are forces in Armenia, including its Defense Minister, who call for new war, encouraged by some in Russia. U.S. Congress should be careful to encourage peace and not inadvertently help to inflame tensions.
- The Armenian National Committee of America is leading a movement to designate a province of Azerbaijan, Nagorno Karabakh, as a separatist, self-declared quasi state renamed as "Artsakh." The same exact pattern has been used with separatists and annexed territories in Crimea, Ukraine, as well as in Georgia and Moldova. There is no legal or practical reason for arbitrarily designating an illegally occupied territory of another country and calling it a state. There is no support in any entity of our government, executive or legislative for such a plan. Further there is no support, internationally: no country, not even Armenia, has recognized "Nagorno Karabakh."
- There is absolutely no case to be made to invest US tax dollars in an illegally occupied territory protected by the Armenian and Russian militaries. If anything, there should be support for removing Russian troops from Armenia and indeed the entire South Caucasus region.
- Azerbaijan is a friend and security partner in, arguably the most strife-torn part of the world. It is a strong, reliable ally of Israel. It is a source of energy for Western Europe and an alternative to Russian exported natural gas.
- The US Congress should not support the expenditure of US tax dollars that serve no apparent US national security purpose and in fact, rather against U.S. national interests, undercut the ongoing Minsk Peace Process, as well as are friend and security partner, Azerbaijan.