

Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Resolution: Role of Major Powers and Organizations

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Abstract

Two South Caucasian states Armenia and Azerbaijan have ethnic conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh region located in Azerbaijan but populated by Armenians. Since the early years of 20th century and during a full-fledged war of 1994 it faced massacres and violations on small and large scales. Even after passing more than two decades, the conflict is still unresolved and human rights are violating. This research briefs that the area is important strategically due to which major powers and international organizations are also active in this conflict. The study focuses on interests and roles, which major powers are playing in conflict resolution along with the role of organizations in making efforts for its resolution. It also analyses the factors, which are creating obstacles in peaceful resolution of the conflict. It concludes with certain options as how the conflict can be resolved not only in theoretical terms but also with practical implementations of strategies.

Keywords: South-Caucasus Region, Nagorno-Karabakh, Major Powers, International organizations, Conflict Resolution, Practical Implementation.

Introduction

Centuries ago, Karabakh remained under different dynasties of Mongolians, Safavids, and Turks¹. Until 20th century, most of the time it ruled by Russia². The conflict could make its path towards unending clash mainly in last decade of 20th century³. Caucasus has strategic value to nearby powers like Russia, Turkey and Iran⁴. Nagorno-Karabakh conflict keeps on rising day by day though it was part of Azerbaijan at that time but claimed by Armenia. Troops from both sides engaged in continuous fighting which resulted in massacres and large scaled violence⁵. Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is a matter of interest for many regional and international organizations based on varying reasons⁶. Whole conflict resolution phenomenon depicted the direction and intensity of conflict management and conflict resolution. This article explains that U.S.A, Iran, Turkey and Russia are the main states having their influence on South Caucasian region and deep concerns over Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and all these played their roles to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The research, along with the role of major powers also analysis the roles and efforts made by Organizations. The study also elaborates why the conflict could not be resolved even after making bunch of efforts and how can this issue be resolved.

¹Ercan Karakoc, A Brief Overview on Karabakh History from Past to Today. *International Journal of Human Sciences*, (2011).8(2), 1008-1010.

²John F. Baddeley, *the Russian Conquest of the Caucasus*, Longman, Green and Co., London 1908, 76.

³ Karakoc, Karabakh History, 1014.

⁴ Svante Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethno Political Conflict in Caucasus* (London: Routledge, 2005), 224.

⁵“Resettlement of Armenians on the Territory of Azerbaijan” In A Summary of Karabakh History, 63 Baku: SAM, 2014.

⁶ Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers*, 224-227.

Role of Major Powers in Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Resolution

The mutual and historical mistrust between the Armenians and the Azeris and the atmosphere of the violence during the fighting have made both sides suspicious that it is the other side's people not its government that is the problem. Security matters and immigrants on both sides are obstacles. Azerbaijan is not safe while Armenians inhabit seven of its provinces, and Armenians feel extremely weak encircled by Azeris and Turks. The governments in both of the capitals remain highly doubtful of each other. Finally, the negotiating process itself is a hurdle, as one of the parties to the conflict most affected by the outcome, Nagorno-Karabakh, was not permitted a place at the negotiating table because of Azeri oppositions⁷. The southern Caucasus constitute former Soviet republics, independent since the fall of the Soviet Union. Armenia is Christian majority. Azerbaijan comprised of Shiite. The czars set the boundaries of these countries first and then the Soviet reset these several times. It seems that the fighting was predesigned while seeing the borders. This is a section where memories are long and tempers are short. Each country's claim has a degree of legality. The land constitutes dry grasslands and snowy elevations, where battles go on for a very long time because the landscape makes it very difficult for any war to reach an end a place. Therefore, this is the case with the three conflicting states and the gathered tribes living there⁸.

Early negotiation initiatives between the two belligerent parties were endeavored by Russia, Iran, Turkey, and France. However, cease-fire agreements were regularly broken within minutes of their signing. When both Armenia and Azerbaijan joined the then Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, now the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, or OSCE) in 1992, the mediation rod was passed to that group, which continues to play the important role in mediation struggles. A subdivision of CSCE members, labeled the "Minsk Group" of countries, so-called after the location of its first assembling, established to join the negotiation talks. (The participants of the Minsk Group are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Turkey, and the United States.) Russia, the United States, and France jointly lead the Minsk Group⁹.

U.S.A as a hegemon witnessed a bunch of conflict and peace incidents as part of state's existence. Like most other conflicts, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict also remained its matter of concern along with its ties with Armenia and Azerbaijan. Diplomatic relations flourished as a sequence of events between Armenia and America and Armenia and Azerbaijan in early years of independence of Armenia and Azerbaijan in the last decades of 20th century¹⁰. U.S.A's tilt towards Armenia and Azerbaijan kept on fluctuating in the years coming afterwards. Somewhere fulfilling the financial, technical and security needs of Armenia and getting in return their influence over the region to counter the spread of Islam¹¹. Moreover, somewhere funding Azerbaijan is for the realization of economic programs to reach the Caspian oil reserves. After 2001 America's main interest was counterterrorism in south Caucasus region¹².

In the initial years of independence, U.S.A's foreign policy provided a framework to enlist the categories of interests of America in South Caucasus region. The focus of the whole interests based on policy, process and geopolitics based on different arenas in the very first phase after Soviet fall. Policy formulation was to bring democratic reforms, conflict management and security concerns. Process evolution was to figure out statehood and sovereignty. Geopolitical agenda was to provide alternative transit routes for oil and gas transport to lesser down the Russia's influence¹³. Under Bush administration, there came shift in policy, which previously had focus on exclusion of Iran and Russia from Caspian oil reserves export now altered towards counterterrorism moves. South Caucasus offered US to act against terrorism in nearer Iran.

⁷ Shavarsh Kocharyan, "Why Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict is Still not Resolved." 323, no. 1(2016): 19, 20. Yerevan: MIA Publishers.

⁸ Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers*, 2, 3.

⁹ Levon Zourabian, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Settlement Revisited: Is Peace Achievable?* (Washington DC: Heldref Publications 2006). 254, 255.

¹⁰ Pashayeva, G. & Blank, S. "The US Foreign Policy towards the Resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict." no.16. (Dec 2016): 13-20. Baku: Centre for Strategic Studies.

¹¹ Adalian, 1995.

¹² Tiffany G Petros, "Evolution of Armenia's Foreign Policy. Armenian International Policy Research Group." 3 no. 13(Jan 2003): 3.

¹³ Richard Giragosian, "Role and Interests of Global and Regional Players. In South Caucasus 20 Years of Independence." (Bonn: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung 2012).242-243.

As long as there appears change in security, policies of U.S.A, Bush administration strengthened its ties with Azerbaijan and the military and security assistance was increased¹⁴. After Bush, Obama came into power and the relations between America and Azerbaijan framed by international happenings and events, which proved stressed. Statements made by U.S earlier on human rights negated during Obama administration by referring all those as interference in Azerbaijan's sovereignty¹⁵. U.S.A very often played significant roles in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution between Armenia and Azerbaijan. U.S.A always supported and worked in collaboration with CSCE Minsk Group's tasks. Along with this, when UNSC adopted different resolutions in this cause, U.S.A gave it strength and support. However, during Clinton and Bush administrations role of U.S.A was mostly limited as the participant of OSCE Minsk Group. In 1992, United Nations and CSCE sent their missions to Baku, Yerevan and Nagorno-Karabakh to observe the situation of conflict. James Baker (U.S secretary of state) gave Baker Rules so Armenia and Azerbaijan were the parties to the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh territory. After Khojaly massacre of 25th and 26th February, CSCE and UN sent their delegations to the region in March 1992. U.S Ambassador John J. Maresca headed the CSCE while U.S secretary of state Cyrus Vance headed the UN¹⁶. Later on in 1994, John Maresca gave a proposal named "Proposal for settlement of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh" to the U.S Institute of Peace, which was based on associated statehood and self-government. It proved to be quite helpful for other researchers. According to this proposal, Nagorno-Karabakh should given the status of a self-governing legal entity as Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh under republic of Azerbaijan. Its territorial borders would be those of NKAO of 1988. It can have offensive military capability. It can keep security forces and self-defense forces. Armenia and Azerbaijan need to sign its clause on treaty of Mutual Rights of Transit and access. Azerbaijan will have equal access to Lachin corridor and other trade routes as that of Armenia, latterly will monitored internationally. Donor conference was for estimating financial requirements for whole framework of reconstruction between the two. U.S has to appoint special person for all the clauses of the proposal. UNSC, CSCE and Minsk Group can implement it¹⁷. U.S.A supported 822 resolution of April 30, 1993 of UNSC. U.S.A also valued articles 853, 874 and 884 of 1993 by UNSC, which were about territorial integrity, and sovereignty of republic of Azerbaijan and unconditional removal of forces along with return of displaced persons¹⁸. After the ceasefire 1994 between Armenia and Azerbaijan, U.S.A played its role on joining OSCE Minsk Group efforts. In 2001, Minsk Group co-chairs brought Armenian and Azerbaijani President on series of peace talks in Key West Florida to reach an end of resolution but the meeting remained unsuccessful in achieving its goals¹⁹. In 1995, Joseph Presel as special Ambassador for Nagorno-Karabakh held special delicate talks with Armenian presidential advisor and Azerbaijani counterpart. They use to discuss the status of Nagorno-Karabakh and point of differences on Lachin and Shusha²⁰. From 1997 to 1998, U.S.A's proposals for settlement were for resolving all the disputes between Armenia and Azerbaijan and alienation of status to Nagorno-Karabakh. First was rejected by Nagorno-Karabakh although given due place by Armenia and Azerbaijan. Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents agreed on 1997's stage by stage solution. Its first stage demanded with-drawl of Armenia from six occupied districts, restoration of peace talks and returning the displaced persons. Second stage would address the status of Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenians living in Azerbaijan rejected the proposal as evacuating the districts they will lose the benefits of trade from south and direct access to Iran. Ter-petrosyan resigned and new Armenian President Robert Kocharyan declined the whole proposal.

Third proposal was to build a common state between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh to make the both coexist. Azerbaijan rejected it. U.S.A also arranged bilateral meetings for peace talks between Heydar Aliyev and Robert Kocharyan in 1999²¹. 2001's era was the era of policy shift for U.S.A affecting almost the whole world. Counterterrorism became the front line challenge. U.S.A held peace talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Key West Florida over Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Rovshan Ibrahimov, "Baku's Discontent with Obama Administration in US Azerbaijan Relations: A view from Baku." no. 17 (Washington DC: Rethink Institute Oct 2014).

¹⁶ Pashayeva, U.S Foreign Policy towards N.K conflict Resolution, 17.

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Fiona Hill, Kemal Kirisci & Abbot Low Moffatt, "Retracing the Caucasian Circle: Considerations and Constraints for U.S, E.U and Turkish Engagement in the South Caucasus." (Washington DC: CUSE at Brookings July 2015).

²⁰ Pashayeva, op, cit.

²¹ ibid

Under this effort, most of the issues on an estimate of 80-90 percent reach an agreement²². After September 2001 terrorist attacks, U.S.A focused on strong security policy around the globe including south Caucasus states. Azerbaijan supported U.S.A's war against terrorism. Official visits exchanged in 2003, 2006 and 2008 but mediation process became passive in these years although Madrid principles also presented but they were just theoretical²³. Therefore, in these years America made least number of efforts in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution. From 2009 to 2016, special ambassadors served for mediation efforts in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as OSCE co-chairs. They made efforts through track 2 diplomacy²⁴. These were the minor efforts made during Obama administration although Obama's tilt always remained towards Azerbaijan, which is a biased approach.

History is full of such literature that depicts the calculated opportunist behavior of states towards one another. Their survival depends on dependence on the other states as well as providing them the best from the available resources. So is the case of relation of Iran towards Armenia, Azerbaijan and vice versa. Relations between Armenia and Iran are only need based. As in past Armenia had multi-facet foreign policy to fulfill its purposes related to trade and Western objectives. On the other hand, Azerbaijan and Iran have religious similarities. Both are Shiite majority states. Both are democracies. The economic conditions are on same fronts also. Even after sharing a vast portion of similarities and being, the neighbors both could not have best kind of ties. Armenia is shaping its actions with Iran's guidance but Azerbaijan is independent in all courses of actions. Besides having enough commonalities both Azerbaijan and Armenia had become quite contrary to each other in different ways. Azerbaijan was secular while Iran was religious. Former is expanding militarily while later is stagnating economically. Azerbaijan is exporting natural resources while Iran is unable to get any reserves due to sanctions²⁵. Iran is the second state beside Russia to share its longest borders with South Caucasus Azerbaijan. It expected to be most influential in the region due to its peak interests. Oil and gas resources in Caspian Sea are reason of interest for Iran even after having the second largest gas reserves, as it is unable to export. Iran's differences with Azerbaijan were prominent. The greatest among those is Iran good relations with Azerbaijan's foe that is Armenia and another one is Baku's smoothening ties with Israel that is on confrontation with Iran. Armenia has only one open border to trade with that is Iran. Therefore, Iran can play its role further expanding towards Georgia and abroad²⁶. In January 2016, Iran's foreign minister called Baku and Yerevan to dissolve the differences over Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Iran was ready for mediation. Previously Iran had cooperation with Armenia on trade and energy fronts but with Azerbaijan, it had distinctions²⁷. However even after having energy and trade, interests in South Caucasus, Iran could not play any effective role in conflict resolution between Armenia and Azerbaijan and its main reason was weak economic and political resources to take part.

Not always, the great power influence or vicinity of states works for each other's betterment. Such cases may be sometimes least concerned or interest based only. Throughout the history, Turkey's relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan remained in a condition of flux. There seems ups and downs however in order to maintain its status as a good state, Turkey very often tries to have normal relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan and other neighboring states. After Soviet fall in 1991, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict became a threat for Turkey in domestic and foreign policy making. Turkish policies towards Azerbaijan in initial years were including support for independence of Azerbaijan and its sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh along with other interests. This happened with change in policy due to Khojaly massacre, as previously its stance was neutral. It changed dramatically due to public pressure, opposition and parliamentarians who opposed government's neutral stance and favored Azerbaijan. Tensions rise between Turkey and Armenia in 1992 when their troops occupied Shusha and kept on increasing. However keeping the differences aside, Turkey tried to smooth its relations with Armenia and after U.S, it was second country to recognize Armenia in 1991²⁸.

²² Gallia Lindenstrauss, "Nagorno-Karabakh: The Frozen Conflict Awakens" April 2015.18 no.1, 97- 105.

²³ Pashayeva, op.cit.

²⁴ ibid

²⁵ Aaron Misera, "To Each Their Own: The Southern Caucasus and Iranian Influence." (Belgium: European Union 5 Mar, 2013):7-12.

²⁶ William G Boonstra, "the South Caucasus and its Wider Neighborhood in Cascade Exploring the Security- Democracy Nexus in the Caucasus." (Paris: FMSH Dec 2015): 20, 21.

²⁷ International Crisis Group Report, "Karabakh: New Opening or More Peril" 4 July2016. 239 no.1, 2-8.

²⁸ Shamkhal Abilov, "the Discourse -One Nation Two States: The Position of Turkey in Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict." *Journal of Caspian Affairs*. 2015. 1, no.2, 31-33.

Turkey was the first state to recognize Azerbaijan after its independence in 1991. Turkey was supposed to fill the power vacuum after Russia's exit from Azerbaijan due to its ethnic and linguistic commonalities in political and military spheres²⁹. Political order changed completely after world war two that effected Turkey also. Turkey was getting assistance from NATO and the West culturally and economically. As Turkey was supposed to get leadership in its community, it was feeling affinity with Azerbaijan based on ethnic and linguistic grounds so it assisted on economic, military and political fronts. Therefore, the Elchibey's government ended than Heydar Aliyev came who reshaped the whole policy towards stability and pragmatism. Relations with Iran and Russia were refined. Pro Turkish coordination ended. During this era, the strategic ties could not get strengthened. The focus of economic sphere included Baku Tbilisi Ceyhan pipeline. In 2003, Ilham Aliyev became the president who continued his father's policies. Bilateral relations further moved towards energy and security cooperation and efforts over Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In 2012, further mutual agreements made the terms stronger³⁰. Relations between Armenia and Turkey moved positively with start of trade and bilateral cooperation but could not flourish for long run and deteriorated in 1992. In the year 2008, Turkish Armenian relations started normalizing again. Turkey wanted to reopen closed border since 1993 for transport purposes and cooperation. A "road map" agreement signed between Turkey and Armenia on April 2009 to fulfill their aims. However, these good will gestures were flexible enough to wither away any time³¹. Twentieth century Turkish Paul Globe's peace plan based on territorial swap oriented. According to this plan, Armenian territory which connects Azerbaijan with Nakhichevan should be assigned to Azerbaijan while later should give part of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. However, both Armenia and Azerbaijan rejected the plan. Again, in 1999 peace talks held between Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan according to land swap but could not become fruitful³². In all OSCE Minsk Group meetings, Turkey held a strong stance on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution and removal of Armenian forces from Azerbaijan³³. Tayyip Erdogan presented a multifaceted diplomatic edge to promote peace, stability, and cooperation among the countries of South Caucasus, including Turkey and Russia³⁴.

Russian policies have always been prominent throughout the globe being inclined towards supremacy and hegemonic interests. Based on its varying interests, its foreign policy objectives and policies for nearer states keeps on fluctuating. In 1990's Russian Federation, was Western oriented, intending to democratize its neighboring republics. Soon after a decade passed, its policies became anti-west. It aimed at attaining hegemony on former Soviet territories³⁵. In 1990 and 1991, Kremlin's policy was more prone towards Azerbaijan that was favoring status quo while Armenia wanted independence. In 1992, there came a policy shift in Moscow, which led its betterment of relations with Iran and worsening with Baku. The point of interest is that during war both Armenia and Azerbaijan claim that they got assistance by Russia in economic and military ways. Resultantly Russian military intervention in Caucasus region is to continue its dominance in the region. However, it is unclear whether Russia is fulfilling its aim or not. In 1999 whole scenario changed as Russia find its confident alliance with Armenia while Azerbaijan's policies were anti Russia³⁶.

In 1991 onwards, Russia was in the process of attaining super power status against west due to which it was in dire need to re structure its foreign policy goals. It was trying to regain control over near abroad territories. Russia was facing identity crisis after soviet fall as well. In opposition to uni-polarity of US, Russia negated to be the regional great power and by playing role in international community, it intended to acquire great power status. For this purpose, it was necessary to be dominant over Armenia and Azerbaijan as neighboring states and make these states dependent upon Russia. South Caucasus is important for Russia since 17th century.

²⁹Kavus Abushov, "Russia's Strategic Interests in the South Caucasus Since 1991. Regional Level of Conflict Dynamics in the South Caucasus: Russia's Policies towards ethno-territorial conflicts" (1991-2008) (Doctoral thesis) 20 Aug 2010. Chap 3, 144-180.

³⁰Almula Efe, The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict and its Impact on the Relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey (Master's Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University) Sep 2012.

³¹Ruth Max Falkowski, "Turkey's Game for the Caucasus. OSW Commentary." Centre for Eastern Studies: Warsaw 5 Oct 2009). 1 no. 29: 1, 2.

³²Abilov, op.cit.

³³ibid

³⁴ICGR op.cit

³⁵Andrey Ryabov, "Russian Interests and Strategies in South Caucasus. 20 years of independence." (Bonn: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung).260.

³⁶Cornell, op.cit.

Turkey and Iran were its Muslim rivals so through expansion it made south Caucasian states as a shield. This kind of importance increased when oil reserves appeared in Baku. In 19th century, Russia used soft and hard power in Armenia and Azerbaijan to fulfill its aims. Even Russian language and literature used to preach there. It also has security concerns in the region as to establish peace in its vicinity. South Caucasus is important to get north Caucasus under control. Military bases are supposed to ensure physical presence and influence in the region and to negate that of U.S presence or control. Russia is only interested in maintaining its image as great power. Peacekeeping forces are also deploy to get the aim³⁷. Both short term and long-term interests of Russia in South Caucasus made it important for Russia to play active roles in conflict resolution and peacekeeping. On 12 May 1994, Russia held an agreement among Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh, which ceased years of fighting. After it since 1997, Russia along with France and U.S made several peace efforts including package solution and step by step solution. Package solution was to reach some conclusion regarding status of Nagorno-Karabakh and step by step solution was to address most of the issues. These include removal of forces from occupied areas, international guarantee of security to Karabakh, returning the displaced persons to their homes and smoothing the ties between the conflicting states including reopening of trade. Both these plans were opposite to each other. Further peace talks arranged in Key West and Paris in 2000-2002, which ended with the failure of package plan during Ilham Aliyev the president of Azerbaijan. In 2004, Prague process was introduced which covered the meetings of Presidents and Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Series of meetings resulted in positive hopes that peace achieved in the year 2006³⁸. In 2008, Dmitri Medvedev, the president of Russia was intended to show something distinct in his foreign policy so he made tireless efforts to resolve the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan did not agree on basic principles provided to them. Kazan and Sochi summits arranged in this regard in 2011 and 2012 respectively failed. In 2012, Putin returned to the presidency and efforts towards the conflict resolution decreased. In 2013, Presidents called again to hold a dialogue but the effort remain fruitless because they did not talk directly. It happened again in 2015 as both the presidents ignored each other's presence. Russia keeps on trying for Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents to reach an agreement. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov visited Baku and Yerevan and met his counter parts to enhance his diplomatic efforts. Later on, he presented his proposal to reenergize the process based on certain principles. Later on, it was termed as Lavrov plan by observers. It included deploying the peacekeeping forces in Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous Oblast and extraction of Armenians from its districts and Azerbaijan was supposed to remove trade and transportation barriers³⁹.

Role of Organizations

Throughout the history of long run conflict between South Caucasian states of Central Asia, Armenia and Azerbaijan some regional and international organizations remain active in conflict resolution process. Somehow, organizations managed to show their presence by creating dialogue forums, presenting resolution plans and other significant efforts. In 1992, the OSCE Minsk Group started the peace negotiations and became the main political body concerned with peace negotiations, controlled by the Co-Chairmen and Personal Representative of the OSCE Chair. The OSCE, the European Union are involved. Civil Society actors involved in peace building are the European Partnership for Peaceful Settlement of the Conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh, the European Movement and several CSOs from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh.

OSCE created OSCE in 1992 that aimed at following main objectives:

- To provide a proper framework for conflict resolution
- To organize the Minsk conference and a ceasefire agreement
- Installing peace keeping forces to enhance the peace process⁴⁰

OSCE Minsk Group made various efforts in the form of presenting set of principles, signing agreements and assuring peace keeping at the end. It gave various peacebuilding processes. Step by step approach for the resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict consisted of two phases. It was under the shade of Budapest Summit that offered to consider Nagorno-Karabakh as third party to the conflict later on.

³⁷ Abushov op.cit

³⁸ Zourabianop.cit

³⁹ ICGR op.cit

⁴⁰ Emma Klever, "the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan: An Overview of the Current Situation." (Brussels: European Movement International 24 Sep 2013). 5.

First step was to curb out the military conflict and to create such a kind of scenario that OSCE Minsk conference can summoned. Second step was to reach at some final agreement for peaceful settlement of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and giving it final legal status. Budapest Summit also adopted proper methodology and techniques to reach final resolution. It consisted of concluding the Agreement, installing the PKF, executing the Agreement, and summoning the Minsk Conference to determine the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh⁴¹. 1997- Package proposal proposed to assign a final status to Nagorno-Karabakh in not just theoretical way but also to get implementation. According to it Karabakh would have its own constitution approved by people through referendum, its own army, national anthem and flag. The citizens will be free to make their independent judiciary, executive and legislature. They may keep their police force. Nagorno-Karabakh would be free to maintain its domestic and foreign relations. They will be free to choose ethnic values and language of their own will. However, Nagorno-Karabakh rejected the proposal⁴². Late on common state proposal was given which was a slight modification in 1997 package solution. Its main clause was de jure unity of Nagorno-Karabakh with Azerbaijan although having recognized borders. De-facto independence of Nagorno-Karabakh cut down. Due to looser and de jure formulation of Nagorno-Karabakh republic, it was obvious that it can be easily occupied by Armenia so Azerbaijan rejected the proposal. It was the violation of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. One major flaw in this proposal was undecided status of Lachin district due to which it considered incomplete package⁴³.

Land swap idea brought to manage the shortcomings of common state proposal in the years of 1999 until 2002 according to which Meghari land must assigned to Azerbaijan and Lachin district to be given to Armenia. However, no official documents found showing the implementation of land swap plan. It was suspicious as land swap plan designed in order to hand over the control of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia by joining Meghari land corridor to Azerbaijan. None of the techniques, proposals or plans could work and final status of Nagorno-Karabakh remained unsolved. Later on Minsk group co-chairs gave the idea of referendum to decide the status of Nagorno-Karabakh. It considered acting as a road map towards the settlement of the conflict and establishment of peace. However, this also remained unimplemented⁴⁴.

Russia, France and United States presented Madrid principles in the form of a certain set of rules for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution. These ideologies based on Helsinki final act principles of equal rights and self-determination of people, territorial integrity and non-use of force. It included:

- The right of all internally displaced persons and refugees to return to their previous residence
- International security assurances
- A short-term status for Nagorno-Karabakh providing guarantees for security and self-governance
- A passageway linking Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh
- Return of the territories nearby Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijani control
- Upcoming determination of the final legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh through a legally obligatory expression of will⁴⁵

Along with OSCE, the role of European Union between Armenia and Azerbaijan is specific with Eastern Partnership and European Neighborhood policy. EaP is for betterment of relations between Eastern European and South Caucasus countries through bilateral agreements and trade treaties.

ENP's task is to create interest in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict for European Union by enhancing security, stability and prosperity in its neighbor states. Since 2008, EU has appointed its delegations in Armenia and Azerbaijan but no active role can noticed. In 2011, EU also appointed European Union special representative to South Caucasus, Philippe Lefort. He has to prevent conflict to happen and to settle it in peace. Mr. Lefort supported Minsk Group efforts by visiting South Caucasus on three different times. He used to conduct dialogue and meetings between the conflicting states on behalf of EU⁴⁶. Role of European Union in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution is undefined and it is limited. It did not clearly adopt the policy to strengthen any of the three conflicting sides.

⁴¹Zourabianop.cit

⁴²Ibid

⁴³Ibid

⁴⁴Ibid

⁴⁵Klever op.cit

⁴⁶Ibid

It has its bilateral ties with Azerbaijan on different grounds like trade, economy, development, human rights, international law and spreading the rules of democracy. Its ties seem to be inclined towards Caspian energy needs. However, it did not use any soft or hard core to settle the disputes between Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, its least role seems via Minsk group co-chairs Russia, France and America⁴⁷.

Least role of Council of Europe seems in the resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In 1994, Parliamentary Assembly of council of Europe (PACE) adopted a resolution to support OSCE Minsk Group. As the UN passed a resolution to withdraw military forces from all the occupied territories so in 2005 meeting of PACE called. In 2001, 2004, 2007 and 2010 PACE members refrain from self-declared Nagorno-Karabakh government to held elections⁴⁸. May be this act was meant to avoid further violence. Not much information can be availed through existing literature.

United Nations is not involved in resolution of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In 2008, UN General Assembly adopted resolution 62/243 on 14 March. According to the resolution, territorial integrity of Azerbaijan was to be valued and Armenian forces to extract out from all the occupied areas. However, again Minsk Group did not accept it because OSCE Minsk Group's process did not considered in decision-making⁴⁹.

EPNK is a European Civil Society initiative started in June 2010. Its main goal was to normalize Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through a series of peace building efforts. In this regard, several new initiatives taken by organizations like Conciliation Resources, Crisis Management Initiative, International Alert, Kvinna till Kvinna and the London Information Network on Conflicts and State Building (LINKS). Beside its two phases from June 2010 to November 2011 and second start from March 2012, it also worked on already taken initiatives for earlier London based organizations from 2003 to 2009⁵⁰.

Conclusion

The resolutions passed by UNSC were showing tilt towards Azerbaijan. Those were unjust. Right of self-determination that was favorable to Armenia was completely lacking. It showed U.S.A's behavior on newly emerged post-soviet states and interest in energy reserves of Azerbaijan. John Maresca's proposal was also same as that was more prone towards Azerbaijan giving it more advantage. That was the reason it could not get enough and equal weightage from both sides. During Bush and Clinton's administrations, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was less important to America than that of Bosnian conflict. It ended in peaceful Dayton agreement while all the peace efforts regarding NK conflict remain fruitless. Peace, oriented talks by Joseph Presel very often seem near resolution but could not get the desired results and the conflict remained as it was. Proposals presented in 1997 and 1998 could not get their fulfillment because all three parties did not considered it as given in their favor and resignation of Armenian president and declination by new president distorted its whole strength and value. However, U.S.A did not have any clear and effective policy for Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution. Although working as third important participant of Minsk Group co-chair, it made several mediation efforts but all those remain least effective. Although Iran is having comforts in South Caucasus but on conflict resolution efforts between Armenia and Azerbaijan it could not form any place and it could play its role a very few times which is unclear. Due to having differences with Azerbaijan its tilt on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is towards Armenia that is a biased approach. Despite such moves in South Caucasus, Turkey's role in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution remained indirect and minimum. However, instead of having desire to rule the region after Soviet fall Turkey made itself prominent in conflict resolution but lack any effective policy towards Armenia and Azerbaijan and its conflict management. Russian policy towards the Caucasian states always kept on fluctuating. It was never static and in the course of history, different factors keep on changing it towards Armenia and Azerbaijan.

From 2010 until June 2013, the state of the peace talks was termed as a deadlock, with a growing number of ceasefire violations and less meetings between the governments and Minsk Group. Some voices expressed their concern about the rising possibilities of war. However, from June 2013 onwards there is an obvious rise in the activities of the Minsk Group. The negotiations of Azerbaijan and Armenia with the EU about the Association Agreements and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements started in 2010 and used to lead to more EU influence. However, negotiations with Azerbaijan show a lack of progress.

⁴⁷Nicu Popescu, (2009). European Foreign Affairs Review. (The Netherlands: Kluwer Law International BV 2009). 471.

⁴⁸ Klever op.cit

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Ibid

Numerous meetings took place, new announcements released and OSCE Chair Leonid Kozhara visited Baku and Yerevan declaring a strengthening of Minsk Group activity. In addition, the US appointed a new Co-chairman, which is quite active in providing information on social media. U.S.A, Iran, Turkey and Russia are major contributors in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution and made various efforts to resolve the conflict but all the efforts of major powers are fruitless due to lack of international security guarantee, implementation and lack of trust in both sides of officials. However it is never too late to start any task from day one where task need to organize, starting from grass root levels and fulfill the aim by implementing the earlier plans that are still valued and up-to-date.