

Fact Sheet: Nagorno Karabagh

1) Nagorno Karabagh's commitment to peace

Nagorno Karabagh has repeatedly demonstrated its commitment to a peaceful, compromise resolution of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict

Nagorno Karabagh is a major contributor to efforts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to reach an equitable and lasting peace.

2) Azerbaijan's threat to regional stability

Azerbaijan's inflexible position - unchanged for more than 15 years - is to force Nagorno Karabagh back under Azerbaijani administration - as it was during the Soviet era.

The Azerbaijani government seeks to pressure the U.S. and the international community to ratify Joseph Stalin's divide-and-conquer gerrymandering by returning to a failed system of foreign rule over free peoples.

In pursuit of this policy, Azerbaijan has taken reckless steps that have contributed to instability in a region of strategic and economic importance to the United States - including:

- * Threatening to renew aggression
- * Obstructing the peace process by walking away from their agreements at the 2001 Key West Summit and undermining the hopes for a settlement at the 2006 Rambouillet Summit.

3) Nagorno Karabagh's economic growth

Nagorno Karabagh has successfully transitioned from a Soviet-inherited centrally planned economy to a vibrant market economy.

Nagorno Karabagh's progress has been marked by steady, broad-based economic growth that benefits all segments of society.

4) Nagorno Karabagh's right to self-determination

Nagorno Karabagh is a historic part of the Armenia homeland. It has never been part of an independent Azerbaijan.

Declassified Central Intelligence Agency reports confirm that:

- * Nagorno Karabagh is historically Armenian.
- * Nagorno Karabagh, throughout the Soviet era, always maintained a legitimate claim to be reunited with Armenia.

The U.S. government has consistently taken steps in support of Nagorno Karabagh:

- * The U.S. Senate, in November of 1989, adopted S.J.Res.178, recognizing that “Nagorno-Karabagh has continually expressed its desire for self-determination and freedom.”
- * The U.S. State Department’s representative to the OSCE “Minsk Group” regularly visits in Stepanakert with the democratically elected leaders of Nagorno Karabagh, which is an official party to the peace process.
- * The U.S. Government, since 1992, has been on record officially condemning Azerbaijan’s blockades and other uses of force against both Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh (Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act).
- * The U.S. Government, over strident Azerbaijan’s protests, has provided direct humanitarian assistance to Nagorno Karabagh since 1998.

Since the end of the Soviet Union, a new generation in Nagorno Karabagh has grown up in freedom, under a democratic government of its own choosing. Allowing Baku to force free citizens back under an authoritarian Azerbaijani regime - now a hereditary monarchy - would undermine years of democratic progress, derail a decade and half of economic growth, and the set back the hope for regional stability for generations to come.

5) Nagorno Karabagh's commitment to democracy

A de facto independent state, the Nagorno Karabakh Republic is a country of proud citizens committed to the values of freedom, democracy and respect for human rights.

Since declaring independence in 1991, the people of Nagorno Karabagh have steadily progressed on the path of democracy.

Nagorno Karabagh has successfully conducted a series of elections - including four parliamentary and three presidential votes - that have been praised by international observers as free, fair and transparent.

The people of America and Nagorno Karabagh share common democratic values - including:

- * Free and fair elections
- * Open press and vibrant public debate
- * Human rights and tolerance for diversity

Even in the face of war and brutal aggression, the people of Nagorno Karabakh have stood up for the values that we hold so dearly as Americans.

6) Nagorno Karabagh's pivotal role in ending the Soviet threat to America

The people of Nagorno Karabagh, in 1988, despite great risks, were the first to rise up against the Soviet Union, to right the wrongs imposed by Joseph Stalin, and to demand their right to live under a government of their own choosing - the very same right that we cherish as Americans.

Nagorno Karabagh played a vital role in sparking the democracy movement, that helped bring about an end to the Soviet threat to America and to decades of dictatorial rule over millions in the USSR and its satellite states.
