

The Thirtieth Annual

Virginia Model United Nations Conference

Presents...

Nagorno-Karabakh Republic

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Dear Delegates,

Hello and welcome to VAMUN XXX! My name is Charles Hearn, and I'm from Richmond, VA. Before I go into the particulars about the committee let me take a moment to introduce myself. I am a second year here at the University of Virginia currently studying whatever I feel like. I enjoy long walks on the Lawn, stargazing, playing video games, sleeping, eating, watching sci-fi, programming, and being the rush chair of the Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity. I have been involved with Model UN ever since arriving at the Maggie Walker Governor's School as a lowly freshman many years ago, making it my longest running extracurricular activity. This particular committee is of interest to me because of its ongoing significance and deep-seated cultural issues that have made it an extremely difficult and fragile situation over the past twenty years.

The cultural shock resulting from the fall of the Soviet Union and how the fledgling governments in former Soviet republics dealt with their new independence are very interesting topics to examine in detail. Thus, I expect our committee to have plenty to talk about. This is a crisis committee, so we will be experiencing a wide range of crises in a fast-paced, constantly evolving war scenario. Your wits and diplomatic wiles will be put to the test trying to control the situation you are facing, despite your limited resources. You will be representing the small, currently unrecognized government of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. It is your job to try to control the situation, defend yourselves from attack and genocide, and build the influence of your government.

This guide will serve as an introductory to the situation overall, but I expect all of you to do a fair amount of outside research to make sure you know everything necessary about the crisis situation. There is a lot of history to this conflict, and the simulation will not run as well as possible if everyone is not on top of their information. I expect position papers from all delegates detailing the stance they will take concerning independence, what their priorities are in the formation of the government, etc. The rest of the background guide will entail other things to write about, and you should address the "questions to answer" sections as well. I am excited to be the chair of your committee and I hope you're ready to get thrown into one of the most intense ethnic conflicts of our generation!

If you have any questions feel free to email me at cmh3eg@virginia.edu anytime.

Sincerely,
Charles Hearn

Introduction

The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic was formed in a declaration of independence on December 10, 1991. After three years of elevated conflict in the Caucasus due to the repeal of the Brezhnev Doctrine, which dictated that the Red Army would intervene in any situation that would disrupt the Soviet goal of unification under Socialism, a new policy came about. The new Soviet doctrine, which developed under Gorbachev's perestroika, was nicknamed the Sinatra Doctrine, for the Frank Sinatra song "My Way." This doctrine, so named because it dictated self-determination for national minorities, sparked several independence movements, including the revolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh people.

The issues that follow need to be seen from a distinctive viewpoint. It is unlikely that any of you have dealt with a similar situation in the past, because of the unique position that Nagorno-Karabakh Republic was faced with in 1991 and 1992, early in its development.

Since there are so many issues that need to be addressed in this process, I will try not to hinder what is talked about in committee to any strict topics, but I will give you specifics of what needs to be covered to get you started in the right direction. The two topics that must be addressed are defense and diplomacy. To be more specific, you need to develop an army/ defense force (including the acquisition and distribution of weapons, draft of troops, and deployment of said troops), and consider diplomatic talks or relations with other governments to receive international aid. The purpose of each of these topics is fairly self-explanatory. You will have to deal with counterrevolutionary movements, espionage, diplomatic crises, and other challenges before this fledgling government can succeed. This cabinet will be comprised of an eclectic organization of people in the fields of politics from the NKR and Armenia, writers, journalists, inventors, and public advocates. Each of these people has a role to play in the battle for the success of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

This is a crisis committee, so that means we will have an almost constant bombardment of crises that you will have to think on your feet and draw from the knowledge you receive before the conference to deal with. It is crucial that you be prepared for whatever situation is presented to you.

As you can see in the picture to the right, the Armenian population extends across the recognized border of Azerbaijan into the region known as Nagorno-Karabakh. The population of Nagorno-Karabakh is nearly 95% ethnically Armenian. Unfortunately, the Nagorno-Karabakh region has been hotly disputed since the collapse of the Russian Empire in 1914, and has changed hands many times.

Committee History

There have always been problems with the placement of internationally legitimate “states” versus the cultural “nations” which make them up. Unfortunately, state lines sometimes come to encompass cultures that do not agree with the states that govern them. This has been the case in many areas of the former Soviet Union, Israel, Sudan, and the list goes on. These situations often result in genocide and civil war.

The USSR has never been accused of being too easy on national ethnic minorities within its boundaries

however, and thus the region of Nagorno-Karabakh was given to the Azeri government. The USSR supposedly did this mainly with the intentions of satisfying Turkey, who they hoped

would accept Communism if the USSR appealed to them enough. Ever since the collapse of the Russian Empire however, the Nagorno-Karabakh region was hotly disputed, and changed hands many times. After Armenia and Azerbaijan



were established as independent states in 1918, the First Congress of Karabakh convened to establish the National Council of Karabakh (which served as the regional body of Karabakh Armenians, and declared Karabakh as an integral part of the Republic of Armenia (then the Ararat Republic). Over the next few years, strong pressure from the British army in Azerbaijan caused the National Council of Karabakh to consider joining with Azerbaijan, or risk military action by the British.

In spring of 1920, the National Council finally rejected the British proposal to unite with Azerbaijan. Azeri troops then had moved into Karabakh, aided by Turkish troops. They took the capital of Karabakh in March and massacred over twenty thousand Karabakh Armenians in the city of Shusha between March 22 and March 26. Over the next few months, the Soviet Union conquered both Azerbaijan and Armenia, and the Red Army marched into Karabakh, setting up puppet governments in each country. Initially, the USSR granted Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia, but Stalin reversed that decision in July of 1921, granting the region to Azerbaijan.

However, he did grant the Nagorno-Karabakh region a fair amount of autonomy as a compromise. This led to the creation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) in 1923, under general control from Azerbaijan. Despite discontent among the Karabakh people and a strong movement to bring the issue to a national discussion, the Soviet government sidelined the issue by force until 1988.

When Mikhail Gorbachev became the new General Secretary of the Soviet Union, the opportunity arose to bring the Karabakh issue back to light. The *perestroika* reform of *glasnost* (“openness”) was especially conducive to the reopening of negotiations. In February of 1920 the NKAO’s Council of People’s Deputies brought up reunification of the NKAO with Armenia. Only days later a skirmish within the NKAO occurred between Armenians and Azerbaijanis, resulting in the death of two Azerbaijanis.

The announcing of these deaths on February 27th brought about the beginning of mass riots, especially in the city of Sumgait, close to the Azerbaijani capital of Baku. What started out as a gathering of people in the town center

developed into an armed mob as provocateurs stirred up to the crowd with false allegations of Armenian violence toward Azerbaijanis. The Soviet government reported that 32 people were killed, but Armenians claim that such a figure is too low. It is known that hundreds of Armenians were injured and 18 thousand became refugees in the following violence. Below are statistics from a 1996 report showing the extreme case of the refugee situation within the South Caucauses. Many of the displaced that can be seen on the chart were displaced due to the genocide carried out such as these pogroms (mass violent riots). The

refugee situation within Armenia and Azerbaijan is yet another topic that may need to be addressed in our cabinet, but first a suitable living environment must be made for the refugees to come back to.

Reports from Soviet court records show the extreme violence that ensued during the Sumgait pogrom. The rioters went to apartments they knew were occupied by Armenians, dragged the inhabitants out and stabbed or pummeled them repeatedly before or after raping them and setting them on fire. The women who were not set on fire or beaten to

(Internally Displaced Persons)

IDPs	
Armenia / Azerbaijan	
Nagorno-Karabakh > Azerbaijan	684,000
Armenia > Armenia	72,000
Georgia	
Abkhazia > Georgia	273,000
S. Ossetia > Georgia	14,000
Russian Federation	
Chechnya > Russian Federation	487,000
N. Ossetia > Ingushetia	25,000
Refugees	
Armenia > Azerbaijan	185,000
Azerbaijan > Armenia	299,000
Uzbekistan > Azerbaijan (Meskhetians)	46,000
Georgia > Armenia	5,000
Georgia > Russian Fed. (refugees / repatriants)	119,000
Russian Federation	
Chechnya > Kazakstan	6,000
Chechnya > Belarus	5,000
Returnees	
Armenia > Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)	35,000
Azerbaijan > Azerbaijan (Fizuli)	25,000

death with pitchforks or shovels after being raped were lead naked through the streets. For three days these pogroms went on virtually uninterrupted by police forces.

After the NKAO declared that it was succeeding from the Azerbaijan SSR, the resulting months were filled with Azerbaijani mass genocide against Armenians all across Azerbaijan including in Baku in January of 1990. During the spring of 1990, Soviet MVD forces (Ministry of Internal Affairs) working with Azeri troops forcefully deported or killed Armenians from 24 villages in northern Karabakh and the Shahumian Region (a border region of the NKAO).

Initial peace talks began between Azerbaijan and Armenia using Russia and Kazakhstan as mediators. The Zheleznovodsk Communiqué was agreed to on September 23rd, 1991, which basically called for non-interference and civil rights within the regions involved. In October, Azerbaijan declared independence from the collapsing USSR, but did not seek to forcefully absorb the NKAO until NKAO rebels shot down an Azerbaijani helicopter that was carrying high-

ranking Azeri, Russian, and Kazakh peacekeepers on November 20th over a border town in the NKAO.

On December 10th, a referendum was held in which 99.89% of the participants voted for the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh. On January 6, 1991, the recently elected legislative body of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic adopted the declaration of independence. This is where history leaves off, and we will be starting our crisis simulation as the newly declared independent Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

Topic 1: The Formation of an Army

The problem obviously with a recently formed government during a time of war is that it needs a way to defend its citizens. The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic currently has a very rudimentary, guerilla-style militia system based on the historical militia style of the *tchokat*, or a small volunteer detachment of less than 40 people. Each detachment operates independently, but they sometimes collaborate to hold a position. The detachments, since they

are free of a centralized control, operate on whatever ethical values they see fit and are with whatever they can get their hands on. As a cabinet, you may choose to unify these detachments or create a new system altogether. The issue, however, must be addressed. At the very least, the government needs to come up with a system of supplying what troops it has.

Upon the collapse of the Soviet Union, both sides of the conflict began scrambling to get a hold of the enormous stockpiles of Soviet weaponry. Unfortunately for Armenia, Soviet military strategy had heavily fortified Azerbaijan and not Armenia, as Azerbaijan would be used as the main supply center if Turkey had attacked the USSR through Armenia. Thus, Armenia and the NKR struggled to get all the munitions they could out of the Karabakh region's weapon caches. Withdrawing Soviet troops were also more than willing to sell or barter off their weapons or ammunition. Luckily, the Armenian Army has the advantage of experience on its side. More of its population served in the Soviet Army, and has more military expertise,

compared to the larger but less experienced Azeri army.

Allocation of troops cannot simply be restricted to the border of the NKR because there are still Azeri troops within the NKR at this point. The Azeri government still recognizes the N-K region as its own, so the problem of Azerbaijani troop strongholds must be addressed. One major stronghold is the town of Shusha, from which Azeri troops can easily shell the NKR capital of Stepankert with GRAD missile batteries from a mere four miles away.

Questions to Answer:

1. Is a universal draft necessary? How effective is the current *tchokat* system?
 2. How should the NKR acquire weapons? Should we resort to the black market in Soviet weaponry, appeal to other governments, or is there another option?
 3. What sort of weaponry would be most effective in the terrain of the NKR? What should the government invest the most in obtaining (one aspect- defensive or offensive weaponry)?
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4. Where should troops and weapons be allocated along the NKR's border and within the republic?

You may want to open missions in countries that you feel are particularly important to success in the Nagorno-Karabakh War. These may be countries that pull a lot of weight in the international community, have access to weapons that they might be willing to sell or donate to the NKR's defense, or countries that would be willing to enter into a mutual defense treaty. Diplomatic relations have many incentives. However, it is going to be very difficult to get countries to recognize the existence of the NKR, because of its very unstable and precarious situation. This may cause you to think about incentives for countries to open diplomatic relations with the government of the NKR. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, or CSCE, will soon meet to discuss the formation of a mediation group for this particular conflict. Dealing with this committee and the other mediation organizations or governments will be a key aspect in getting favorable treatment for the Nagorno-Karabakh territory as well as the people located in it and those who have been forced from their homes within it.

Topic 2: Diplomacy

Every country needs diplomatic relations with other nations. As a developing government, you should be trying to contact other countries relevant to the conflict, or who can provide assistance. You as a cabinet may be able to begin peace mediation talks – if it can gain recognition from the mediators' national governments. Also, you need to take into account the diplomatic ties between countries that might result in military intervention from foreign countries. For instance, the Azeri government has the strong support of the Turkish government as well as most Islamic nations. Armenia, to combat this large defensive alliance that Azerbaijan has amassed, has committed fairly quickly to participating in the CIS (the Commonwealth of Independent States, an organization of former Soviet Republics) to get the support of Russia and other former Soviet states.

Questions to Answer:

1. What governments/ organizations should the government of the NKR appeal to? Which organizations are most likely to establish a rapport with the government of the NKR?
2. What is the government of the NKR looking to get out of its diplomatic ties with each foreign government or organization?
3. Is the NKR willing to send representatives to peace talks with the Azeri government?
4. Are there any incentives that other governments have to open diplomatic relations with the NKR?
5. Should permanent missions be established in other countries to provide those governments with information about the NKR or to be easily accessible in case the government needs to meet with an NKR representative?

Conclusion

The government of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, while currently being very weak, is in a unique position

to decide the fate of the very land it resides upon. The Karabakh populace made it in order to give a voice to the people who have been persecuted and restricted for many years, unable to do anything while governments used their territory as a bargaining chip. This committee is said to be a government cabinet, but it will include not only leaders from the early parliament, but also military leaders, revolutionaries, economists, and anti-Soviet dissenters. Careful negotiation will be necessary, as you will have to balance the desires of those who call for peace with those committed to a full and aggressive prosecution of this war. Despite the limited information readily available about some of the people you will be representing, keep in mind the position they play and research the problems from that angle. The time has come to take back our homeland of Karabakh!

NOTE: You may read over the events that happened after January of 1991, but do not let the decisions that were made influence you. Remember, the NKR is still a body that is unrecognized and seen as part of Azerbaijan to this day. We

don't want our committee to end like that, do we?

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