
WHAT CAN US DO FOR KARABAKH CONFLICT'S SETTLEMENT?

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By Elmira Tariverdiyeva – Trend.Az

Today, the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is the most serious problem in the South Caucasus region and the situation becomes more dangerous from year to year.

Speaking at all international platforms, leaders of various countries more frequently talk about the necessity of resolving this conflict, or at least achieving progress in this issue.

As a powerful geopolitical force and one of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs, the US has all the chances to play a separate significant role in the peace process. The question is - how badly Washington wants it.

Azerbaijans President Ilham Aliyev met with the US State Secretary John Kerry in Washington on March 30. Before the meeting, they made the press statements.

Azerbaijans president noted that the conflict must be resolved based on United Nations Security Council resolutions, which demand immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian troops from Azerbaijan territories.

The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, all the conflicts in post-Soviet area and in the world, must be resolved based on territorial integrity of the countries, the president added.

We want to see an ultimate resolution of the frozen Nagorno-Karabakh conflict that needs to be a negotiated settlement and something that has to be worked on over time, Kerry said.

President Aliyev clearly defined Azerbaijan's position, which is known and which is the only possible way to resolve the conflict. This position is based solely on international law, in contrast to the occupation policy of Armenia. At the same time, the US should understand that it is necessary to bring the peace process to a new level in order for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to be solved.

Armenia, if given chance, will continue protracting the conflict for quite a long period of time in order to maintain the status quo, with which it is completely comfortable with, despite being the occupier country.

However, the fact that the Minsk Group co-chairing countries and all global institutions continue to expect Armenia to change its position, allow the country to continue to pursue the occupation

policy, creating turbulence in the strategically important region of the South Caucasus.

If Armenia is forced to sit at the negotiating table and make real decisions, rather than to imitate the work, the process will be able to move forward. This will bring benefits to all sides involved in the negotiation process, of course, except Yerevan's authorities, who will have to return someone else's property.

And then there is the question of the US ability to do something as one of the main mediators of the Nagorno-Karabakh process. Had the US been active in foreign policy today as it was during the times of George W. Bush's presidency, positive changes in South Caucasus and in the Nagorno-Karabakh issue could've been expected.

The US is a country with big opportunities, starting from sanctions and up to use of financial assistance. The US could have forced Armenia to respect and fulfill the UN Security Councils resolutions and liberate Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding districts. Moreover, the US could have also attracted its Western allies in the process of restoring Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

It is obvious that the US has its own interests in the Caucasus region, and one of them is the need to diversify energy routes to the West, which should affect the results of Washington's mediation efforts.

When the OSCE Minsk Group new US co-chairman James Warlick arrived in Baku on Sep. 9, 2013, the US strong and unequivocal commitment to achieve a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by its parties, as well as support for opportunities of direct dialogue with Armenia, co-chairs' time and ability to find a way out of the current desperate situation during the negotiations was expressed in Warlick's cover letter from the US President Barack Obama addressed to Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev.

Three years have passed, and there is no progress.

Meanwhile, Baku sees less and less point in the negotiations with Armenia, which does not want to change anything in the current situation, from which, perhaps, only the Armenian authorities don't suffer. And nothing will change if the international community does not force Armenia to achieve peace. Taking this into account, the US, as well as other co-chairs, will be able to change the existing situation using their influence and the various tools of persuasion.

Kaynak/Source: