

# POLITICAL TRANSITION AND ETHNIC REVIVAL IN ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN: THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT (1987-1994)

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This article aims to examine how the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities came into violent conflict as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) went into terminal decline from the mid-1980s.

The article is divided into two sections. Section I analyses ethnic mobilization and the emergence of the Karabakh nationalist movement in Soviet Armenia and among the Armenian majority in the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) in Soviet Azerbaijan from 1987 to 1991. The impact of the democratization policies of Mikhail Gorbachev, the leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), on the 'ethnic revival' in Nagorno-Karabakh, Moscow's management of the Karabakh conflict, the organization of the Azerbaijani nationalist movement, and the escalation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict from 1989 to 1991 are also discussed in this section.

Section II examines the open warfare and escalation of hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh. It analyses key military and diplomatic developments from 1991 to 1994 and offers a historical examination of how various peace initiatives were introduced as the conflict threatened regional and international peace. This section also discusses the intentions of the neighboring states of Turkey, Iran and the newly emergent Russian Federation (as the main successor state of the former USSR). All three powers tried to intervene in the Transcaucasian region to prevent the escalation of the fighting that threatened their domestic stability. Moreover, Section II introduces the early mediatory efforts of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the United Nations (UN) Security Council resolutions trying to halt military escalation and bring the warring parties to the negotiation table. The article ends with the analysis of the Russian brokered cease-fire in May 1994, which holds to the time of writing.