General Assembly 4

Confirming the Sovereignty of Former Soviet States

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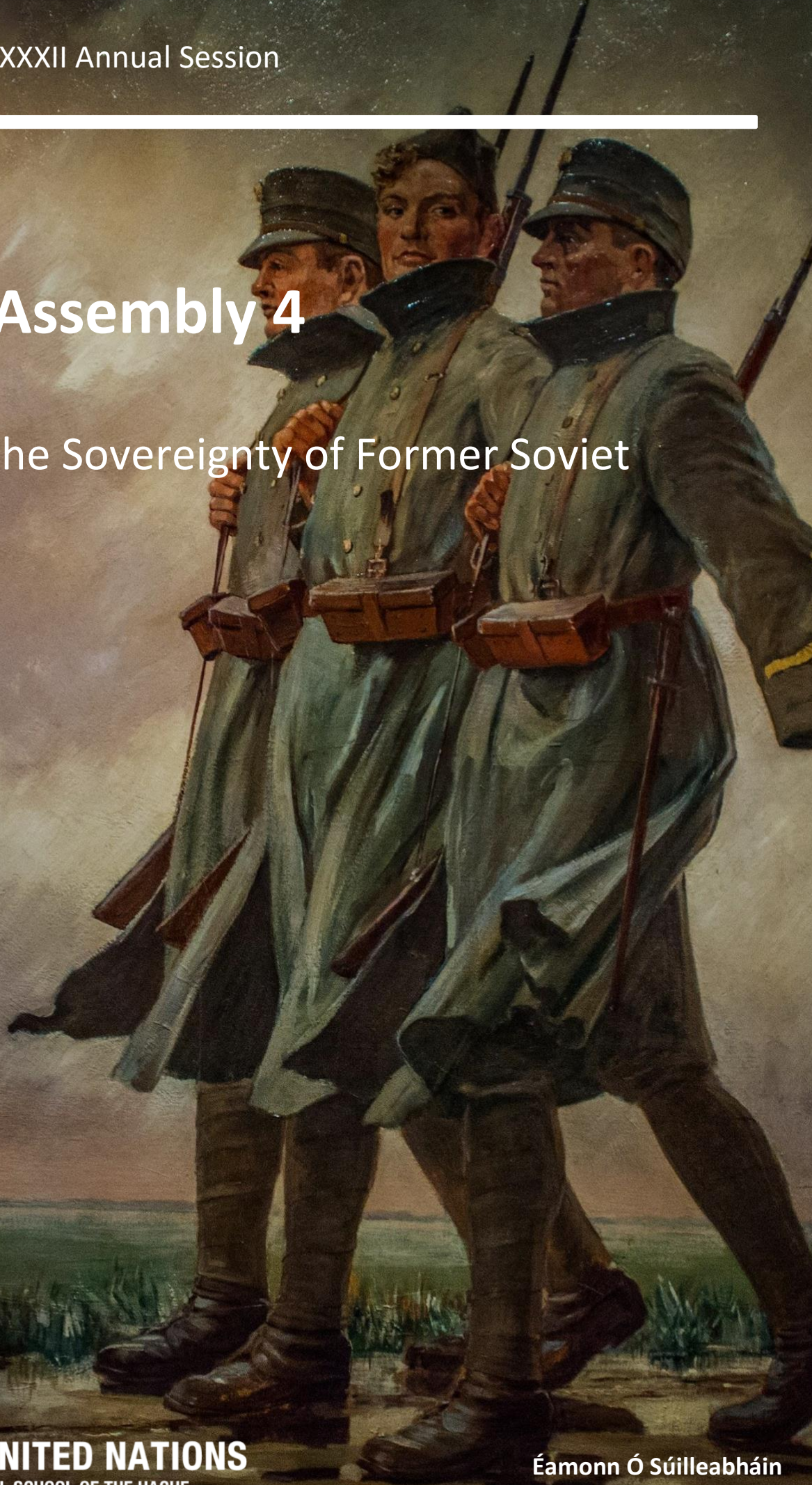
Forum	General Assembly 4 – Special Political and Decolonisation Committee
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Introduction

The Soviet Union was dissolved more than 30 years ago. In its wake, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), produced 15 sovereign states. These states included: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Each of these countries is now self-governed and is internationally recognised as a sovereign nation. However, recently events have transpired that potentially threaten peace in the region, and the right to autonomy of former Soviet republics. One such example is of course Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Russia claims they are saving the Russian-speaking Ukrainian population from a Nazist genocide, and have invaded to prevent this, by the "de-Nazification" of Ukraine. Ukraine alleges that the act of war was unprovoked and is an attempt to seize power in the region to intimidate NATO member states that were previously in the USSR, such as Estonia and Lithuania. The invasion has almost guaranteed that Ukraine will not be able to join NATO in the foreseeable future. Your role as delegates is to write resolutions aimed at creating a peaceful solution between conflicting former Soviet States, by multinational cooperation leading to increased peace.

Definition of Key Terms

Sovereign(ty)

Sovereignty is the independent governance of a country, without the infringement of foreign nations. A sovereign state is one that has full autonomy.

(Former) Soviet State

One of the 15 states that formerly made up the Union of Soviet Socialist republics (USSR), governed by the Soviet Union; Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Existed for most of the 20th century.

Soviet Union

Eastern communist bloc of the Cold war, major global nuclear superpower.

NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is a military alliance made up primarily of European countries as well as the US, that was a response to the Warsaw Pact during the Cold War.

OSCE

Originally the Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe, this was established by the US government in order to spread their influence and defend their interests in the West, primarily on security-related issues.

Satellite State

A satellite state is a nation technically with autonomy but is essentially a puppet for another state to use as a proxy to further their international interests.

Oblast

Soviet-era province, with a degree of self-governance.

General Overview

Soviet Union

With the formation and expansion of the Soviet bloc, the 15 aforementioned states were established as under Soviet rule. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, these states gained independence, that is internationally recognised. However, the central power of the Union, Russia, has maintained strong ties and a lot of influence over many of these states. It is alleged that they are

involved in foreign elections and have installed puppet leaders that they use to control the states despite their apparent independence, as seen with Ukraine. Two case studies explored in this resolution include one with Russian aggression against one of its former satellite states, as well as another conflict between two former Soviet states that threaten each other's autonomy.

Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

The Armenian-majority Nagorno-Karabakh province in Azerbaijan (a former Soviet Union satellite state) is a highly unstable region in a state of frozen war since 1994. The region has since newly proclaimed itself the autonomous Republic of Artsakh, although it has not been internationally recognised as an independent state. There is an ongoing conflict between the region's Armenian-majority forces and Azeri soldiers, amplified by historical context with mistreatment of Armenian people (assistance in genocide). Additionally, when it was under Soviet rule, the province had been made an autonomous region of Azerbaijan, that ended with the subsequent dissolution of the USSR. The consequent rise in tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan resulted in a full-blown conflict between the nations.

The rights to the Nagorno-Karabakh region are heavily contested and the situation is very complicated. Historically it was an autonomously governed Armenian-majority oblast, however it is legally and geographically a part of Azerbaijan. Hostility and fighting in the region have displaced thousands of civilians, which caused concern within the UN for the humanitarian aspects of this conflict. Additionally, as stated in UN resolution 822, the UN recognises that the threat to peace and stability in the region is caused by local Armenian forces inside Nagorno-Karabakh, not necessarily the Armenian military. It is also important to note that Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognised as a part of Azerbaijan, and that in addition to the Armenian occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh, 7 other Azeri provinces have been partially or wholly taken illegally by Armenia.

Russian-Ukraine Conflict

The recent Russian invasion of Ukraine is the product of political turmoil that has been exacerbated for years. Since the 2014 Russian invasion of Crimea, and the installation and ousting of puppet-leaders by the Ukrainian people, who did not want to live under Russian influence anymore, there has been growing tension between the two countries. The sovereignty of Ukraine is unquestionable, it is internationally recognised as an independent nation by the international community and UN, with its own constitution and government. However, Russia invaded Ukraine on the 24th of February 2022, radically escalating the already present conflict started in 2014. The motives for the invasion are disputed, although the Russian stance is that there is a growing threat to the Russian-speakers of the Donbas region, due to militias, along with some Nazis, fighting with Russians. It is worth noting that at the previous election, only 2% of voters supported the Ukrainian far-right party in 2019, with the current Jewish president Volodymyr Zelenskyy receiving 73% of the votes. The invasion has also made it very difficult for Ukraine to join NATO, due to the political instability and hostility that the war has created between Russia and the West, including military aid and massive economic sanctions. With Ukraine not in NATO, there is very little possibility of there being direct NATO support of Ukraine in the war, as this would be to declare war on Russia, something that NATO does not want, as it could escalate and become nuclear. However, the international community does value and support the right to sovereignty that Ukraine has. They have shown this with enormous donations of military equipment, as well as refugee aid and relocation of displaced families. The invasion has been deemed by many as an intimidation tactic for an increasingly imperialist Russia, that is grossly stepping on the feet of rightful Ukrainian independence. The UN is clear, and has condemned the invasion, as well as subsequent Russian actions. There is also evidence of massive atrocities committed against Ukrainian civilians by Russian soldiers, and alleged mistreatment of prisoners of war (POW's) on both sides, such as unlawful killings. The objective of Russia appears to be to secure the Donbas region, as they were unable to take Kyiv, which is legally and geographically a part of Ukraine. Essentially the overall remains the illegal occupation of a sovereign state, which under all standards is an unacceptable crime.

These specific issues are not the only ones that you as delegates can make resolutions on. There are different situations throughout former Soviet states that require addressing, to bring about peace and justice through international cooperation. Remember, upholding international law is essential, and the UN security council has condemned the actions of Russia. This means the UN stands with Ukraine and will not implement pro-Russia solutions.

Major Parties Involved

Russian Federation

Russia, was the central Soviet State in the USSR, and its founder. It remains the most powerful by far after the dissolution. It has maintained a large global presence in terms of both military size and global trade. It also has many influential relations with many of the former USSR states. Belligerent in Russo-Ukrainian war.

Ukraine

Ukraine is a former USSR state bordering Russia, that has had a troubled past with them and many disputes regarding sovereignty, particularly concerning the regions near the eastern border. These include the insertion of a Russian puppet leader, poisoning of a Ukrainian president, alleged interference in elections, and invasion. They are currently a former Soviet state having their sovereignty threatened.

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

Military alliance, currently focuses on greater international security and is a key part of the Russo-Ukrainian war. Supports Ukraine against Russia, without technical allegiance, and provides major military aid. Is also a main antagonist to Russia on a global scale, with the power to stand up to them.

Armenia

Armenia is a former Soviet state that borders Azerbaijan. The country has had a long history of negative relations with Azerbaijan, and has taken military action against them, intervening with the Armenian-majority Nagorno-Karabakh province within Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan is a former Soviet state, and within its borders lies Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian-majority province. There is a lot of hostility towards Azeris from the Armenians within Nagorno-Karabakh, and regional forces cause instability and violence when skirmishing with Azeri forces. The question of recognition is very complicated here as the geographical and legal status of

Nagorno-Karabakh is within Azerbaijan, however this sovereignty is contested by Armenia and the local Nagorno-Karabakh population.

Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) (then Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), has attempted to solve the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh with the Minsk Group process. They regularly observe the conflict zone and document violations of international law and the 1994 ceasefire.

Timeline of Key Events

July 7th, 1923: Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast created under Soviet rule

February, 1988: War between Armenia (and Nagorno-Karabakh local forces) & Azerbaijan

December 31st, 1991: Dissolution of Soviet Union

May 8th, 1994: Ceasefire

February 20th, 2014: Russian invasion of Crimea, beginning of Russo-Ukrainian war

February 22nd, 2014: Maidan revolution, revolt against Russian puppet leader

January 2022: Build-up of Russian forces on Ukrainian border, denial by Russian government

February 24th, 2022: Russian invasion of Ukraine

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- UN Security Council Resolution 822, 30 April 1993

- UN Security Council Resolution 853, 29 July 1993

- UN Security Council Resolution 874, 14 October 1993

- UN Security Council Resolution 884, 12 November 1993

- UN General Assembly, Territorial Integrity of Ukraine, 27 March 2014, (A/RES/68/262)

- UN General Assembly Resolution ES-11/1, 2 March 2022

- UN General Assembly Resolution ES-11/2, 24 March 2022

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

In the case of Nagorno-Karabakh, the Minsk Group process has been the primary way that the international community has attempted to resolve the conflict. They have proposed several solutions that Armenia and Azerbaijan were unsatisfied with. These solutions initially attempted to end hostilities and provide a political solution to the problem. The second was essentially a more elaborated version of the first in which strategic steps were proposed to end the armed conflict. In 1998, after a ceasefire was achieved 4 years prior, the Minsk Group proposed that the Nagorno-Karabakh region become a "state-territorial formation," that was inside the jurisdiction of Azerbaijan. This would give the Nagorno-Karabakh province its own currency, police, and passport, with the barring of Azeri forces without approval of Nagorno-Karabakh. However, the population would still participate in Azeri elections. In 2009 the Madrid Principles were laid out, re-establishing Azeri control over the occupied provinces surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh, guaranteeing the security of the population, a corridor to Armenia, a referendum of the final legal status of the province, the relocation of displaced individuals, and the deployment of peacekeepers. However, the main problem with this is that there is no longer a properly defined province of Nagorno-Karabakh, as the original oblast created by the Soviet Union is no longer the same, as Azeri forces have taken back several key points including the city of Shusha. Additionally, despite referenda being a proposed solution, there is no Nagorno-Karabakh administrative region within Azeri borders that exists, thus a referendum cannot determine the legal status of the province if it does not legally exist. The UN stands by the Azeri stance that there is an occupation of Azeri land by Armenia, as stipulated in multiple 1993 resolutions.

In the case of Ukraine, due to the sensitivity of major nuclear powers, the United States and Russia, the two largest nuclear superpowers having conflicting military interests, there are very limited direct actions that have been taken to attempt to solve what has been a crisis since 2014. The

primary way that the international community has responded have been heavy economic sanctions against Russia, which have had success and are crippling their internal economy, decimating the value of the Rubel, and creating discontent amongst the Russian population. As well as these sanctions of course, there has been a huge amount of aid provided, both militarily and humanitarian, by NATO member states among others, and surrounding countries among others respectively.

Possible Solutions

Possible solutions, however unlikely, to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict could include the following: the complete withdrawal of Armenia from Azeri borders, the establishment of an autonomous Armenian territory within Azeri borders, or the establishment of a special administrative region of Nagorno-Karabakh within Azeri borders. The latter is more likely than the two formers, with the idea being one country with two systems, like the situation of China and Hong Kong, in which a region has a degree of autonomy and different governance, while remaining within the jurisdiction of a larger entity.

Possible solutions to the Russo-Ukrainian war, would initially include a full ceasefire, and likely complete withdrawal of Russian forces from Donbas. A treaty would have to be signed in which there would have to be a guarantee that Russia will not invade again, and a confirmation that any further acts of aggression will have far more severe consequences. Additionally, the Crimea situation would have to be addressed and properly resolved, in a manner that respects international law, and the wishes of the population.

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