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NOT BY EMBASSIES ALONE: HOW AZERBAIJAN REPRESENTS ITSELF AROUND THE WORLD

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At the direction of President Ilham Aliyev, Baku has nearly doubled the number of its embassies over the last five years, but that achievement, which has stretched the diplomatic resources of the country, nevertheless means that Azerbaijan has had to adopt other means to reach out to many of the more than 100 countries around the world in which it does not have a diplomatic mission but with which it has important political and economic relations.

Some of the mechanisms Azerbaijan has adopted will be quite familiar to students of the foreign relations of other countries, but others are more uniquely Azerbaijani. And this combination, especially during a period of diminished growth, points to a future in which, however important embassies may remain both symbolically and practically, Azerbaijan like many other countries will be promoting itself not by embassies alone.

Since recovering independence in 1991 and despite its building up to more than 60 diplomatic missions in the intervening period, the Government of Azerbaijan has relied on seven additional mechanisms to advance its interests in other countries. First, it has where possible jointly accredited its ambassadors to more than one country. Thus, for example, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Estonia is also ambassador to Latvia where he is resident. In most cases, joint accreditation is the first step toward the creation of an embassy. Thus, initially, the Azerbaijani ambassador to the United States was accredited to Mexico and Canada, but now Baku has diplomatic missions in both places.

Second, Azerbaijan has an active program of developing consulates, including honorary ones. Consulates, whether general or regular, can represent Azerbaijan's interests either in parts of a large country distant from capital cities – such as Los Angeles in the United States – or in places where there is a unique Azerbaijani economic interest – such as Aktau in Kazakhstan. And honorary consulates, although frowned upon by some countries, often provide both a channel of communication and a focus for Azerbaijanis abroad that helps promote Azerbaijan's interests.

Third – and during the first decade of independence, the most important – Azerbaijan has used its missions diplomatic, parliamentary and otherwise at international organizations and especially at the United Nations to develop ties with governments to which Baku does not have diplomatic representation. At the UN, Azerbaijani diplomats maintain contact with more than 180 states, making the country's permanent mission there among the most important diplomatic posts it has. Without having to fund embassies, Baku has expanded ties with many of them. At organizations like the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Milli Majlis deputies can reach out to representatives of member states where there is no Azerbaijani embassy. And in various business, professional, and intellectual organizations, Azerbaijanis in these fields can reach out to their counterparts as well.

Fourth, Azerbaijan is making increasing use of the sizeable Azerbaijani diaspora in many countries. Indeed, this is an increasing focus of Baku's foreign policy. Azerbaijani groups in Europe and the United States are increasingly active both on their own and in cooperation with both the Azerbaijani government and the Turkic diasporas to defend Azerbaijan's interests and promote its ideas. Although the European and US groups have attracted the most attention, diaspora groups in places like Latin America where Azerbaijan is "underrepresented" diplomatically probably play a bigger relative role than anywhere else. And in the case of Israel, which has an embassy in Baku but where Azerbaijan does not yet have an embassy, the Azerbaijani diaspora plays a critical role in reaching out to Israeli politicians and media personnel.

Fifth, Azerbaijan has a special relationship with Turkey, a country with more than twice as many embassies as Azerbaijan has at present. Where Turkey has a diplomatic mission but Azerbaijan does not, Ankara's mission serves as Azerbaijan's,

an objective realization of the oft-proclaimed principle of “one nation, two countries.” The existence of this channel has allowed Azerbaijan to develop close ties with many countries far from its traditional focus without having to make the investment in an embassy of its own.

Sixth, Azerbaijan often deals with other countries through its business community. As an exporter of hydrocarbons, Baku has representatives – either permanent or temporary – in many countries interested in acquiring these precious natural resources. Some of these representatives are government officials, but many are private businessmen who operate in support roles. Given that President Aliyev has made the promotion of oil and gas exports a priority in his national plan, such people often function as representatives of the country.

And seventh, like many others of the former Soviet republics, Azerbaijan has on occasion turned to foreign firms to lobby on its behalf. Often these firms have been retained in countries where Baku has an embassy and needs the additional help, but sometimes they are in places where Azerbaijan does not have a government mission of its own and needs either temporary or permanent representation despite that gap.

As Azerbaijan builds up its diplomatic corps, it is likely that the country will rely ever more heavily on embassies. But the experience it has gained with these other mechanisms has been sufficiently positive that it is unlikely that Baku will entirely dispense with them anytime soon. And consequently, any evaluation of Azerbaijan’s diplomatic activity must take these and not just the embassies into account.

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HOW AZERBAIJAN AND MEXICO COULD BECOME STRATEGIC PARTNERS

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Azerbaijan and Mexico would seem to have little reason to become strategic partners. The two countries are located far from one another; they lack historic ties, and they are at very different points in their national development. But despite what many would view as insuperable obstacles to cooperation, these two countries have good reasons and even good chances to become strategic partners. And their experience in that regard is instructive for Azerbaijan’s possibilities in other regions of the world as well.

Despite their differences, Azerbaijan and Mexico in fact have a great deal in common. They both have long experience with a regional hegemon. Both have had to deal with imperialism and intervention, but both nonetheless have been able to achieve a certain degree of independence and project themselves as nation states. And last but not least, both have significant hydrocarbon reserves that make them important both regionally and internationally.

Another important commonality is their experience with diasporas. Nearly 20 million Mexicans live abroad but maintain strong ties with Mexico. And even more than that number of Azerbaijanis live abroad, although perhaps only about four million of these

are actively involved with their national homelands. And yet a third commonality is that both countries in international forums support diplomacy, multilateralism, and the equality of states.

All these things push them together, but even those aspects of their national lives that might appear to push them apart are not necessarily having that effect. Reflecting its geographical location, political history, and economic possibilities, each of the two has a distinctive set of national interests. Baku is still consolidating its statehood by recovering part of its territory, diversifying the economy and increasing political stability, while Mexico has already achieved a solid statehood and now confronts serious issues like organized crime.

Because of these differences, each of these two countries has deployed distinctive political and economic resources to achieve its goals. Azerbaijan is working towards the liberation of some 20 percent of its territory from the Armenian occupation and is trying to secure foreign markets for its oil and gas, while Mexico is trying to become a more influential actor in the Western hemisphere. In this process, Azerbaijan is rapidly ramping up its diplomatic presence around the world, more than doubling its missions since 2004 (Vaisman 2007). But Mexico has been cutting back and focusing its efforts on its region (Millán 2001).

Despite the challenges the two countries face from larger regional powers, the largest factor keeping them from cooperating at present appears to be Mexico's foreign policy strategy which focuses almost exclusively on that country's traditional partners like the United States, the European Union and Latin America and which largely ignores the possibility of developing partnerships with others.

If Azerbaijan is to overcome that, Baku needs to pursue a policy that combines soft power (Bohorquez 2005) and public diplomacy. That would involve visits by parliamentarians, cultural diplomacy, academic exchanges, cooperation in fundamental research, and the development of sister-city relations. But at the same time, Azerbaijan cannot afford to neglect official ties (Hardy 1968, p. 14), including the promotion of more visits by high level officials such as the April 2008 visit by Mexico's deputy foreign minister María de Lourdes Aranda Bezaury to Baku; [1] the establishment of a Mexican honorary consulate in Azerbaijan, and the creation of an Azerbaijani-Mexican House of Friendship in Mexico.

And in both these spheres, Baku can only benefit by stressing the common economic situation of the two countries. Both are major oil producers, with Azerbaijan relying on oil for years of double-digit growth (Bayramov 2008) and Mexico using oil revenues for 40 percent of its government budget (Martínez-Díaz 2008). At the same time, there are differences: Azerbaijan is consolidating its position as a transition economy, but Mexico is already moving toward a more diverse and developed economy. And at the same time, Azerbaijan still depends on exporting secondary sector [2] commodities whereas Mexico is anchored to a more diversified exporting structure, emphasizing on the tertiary sector. [3]

Perhaps more important for the development of future ties is the fact that both Azerbaijan and Mexico face serious risks in the hydrocarbons sector. On the one hand, Ilham Aliyev's administration copes with the challenge of developing the non-oil sector to guarantee that the economy continues to grow even after the oil prosperity, meeting both short-term expectations and longer-term demands (Center for Economic and Social Development 2007). On the other, Felipe Calderon's

administration faces a severe decline in Mexico's oil reserves and the urgent necessity to modernize PEMEX.

Clearly, both countries are poised to play a much larger role in an increasingly globalized world. As then Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev put it in his speech at the United Nations Summit in 2000, Baku is in a position to make a positive contribution to development of globalization because of its geographic location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia and its own immense resources. [4] In a similar way, Mexico is at the crossroads of the American continents between north and south and also has significant natural wealth. But these advantages also pose challenges because both countries will have to become more open and transparent if they are to benefit from globalization.

So far, both of these countries have made significant strides in that direction. Because of its pipelines, Azerbaijan is now the only country other than Russia and the Middle East states that exports hydrocarbons directly to Europe (Ibrahimov 2008). And Mexico not only has promoted trade ties with the rest of the world, [5] but it has signed free trade accords not only in the Americas but in Europe, Asia and the Middle East (Rodríguez 2006). And both have made the response to globalization a central focus of their foreign policies.

But these trends have not yet led to the development of bilateral trade. As of March 2009, for example, Mexico's exports to Azerbaijan mounted to only 262,000 dollars - 0.001% of the Mexican total exports – and there were no imports from Azerbaijan registered at all. [6] Changing that and expanding bilateral economic cooperation will lay the groundwork for political ties.

Among the steps the two countries should consider are the following: expanded cooperation in the hydrocarbons sector with Azerbaijan providing technical expertise to Mexico, increased visits by businessmen in both directions, and the establishment of business offices in the two capitals to facilitate economic cooperation and trade. Once those steps have been taken, the two countries should find it possible to create chambers of commerce in both countries, expand cooperation beyond the hydrocarbons sector, and create regional commercial hubs. And on the basis of that alone, strategic cooperation should be possible as well.

Notes

[1] For more information on this visit, see Embassy of Azerbaijan to Mexico 2008.

[2] The secondary sector includes those sectors that create a finished usable product.

[3] The tertiary sector of an economy is the service industry.

[4] Heydar Aliyev, Statement at the United Nations Millennium Summit, September 2000, available at: <http://www.un.org/millennium/webcast/statements/azerbaijan.htm> (accessed September 16, 2009).

[5] Mexico has free trade agreements with the United States, Canada, Costa Rica, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Uruguay, the European Union, Israel, Japan, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

[6] Banco de México, Mexico's Trade Balance Data, available at: <http://www.bancomexico.gob.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?accion=consultarCuadro&idCuadro=CE86§or=1&locale=es> (accessed 16 September 2009).

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TAKING GEOPOLITICAL RISKS INTO ACCOUNT IN THE FORMATION OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

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Foreign policy as such represents an extremely complex process. In this sphere, every term and concept must be used with absolute precision. From this point of view, in contemporary policy in the use of terms like "national goals" and "national interests," one must consider all their nuances. Sometimes these concepts correspond: national interests are understood as national goals and conversely. But in fact there are extremely precise differences between them.

The resolution of the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh can be presented as a national goal. But it would be incorrect to achieve this goal at any price. Here the demand to observe national interests is an absolute condition. Since the means and conditions of achieving national goals must be regulated by starting from the standpoint of national interests. This fact is confirmed by history and experience. For example, at the present time, under conditions of the existence of geopolitical risks, attention to national interests becomes more important. The theoretical study and practical application of the possibilities of administration of geopolitical risks in foreign policy in correspondence with national interests are acquiring particular importance.

The origin of the concept of "risk" is not exactly known. The first discussions of it occurred in the ancient East. In the West, this concept is encountered only at the point of the transition from the Middle Ages to Modern Times. In the 16th century, Giovanni Votero uttered the phrase that remains well know to this day: "Chi non risica, non guadagna" – or "Who does not risk does not gain anything."

In the middle of the 20th century, Martin Heidigger stressed that risk is the actualization of possibilities, the result of which were earlier unknown. All authors of serious scholarly research devoted to risk consider that a definition of risk corresponding to all scientific requirements does not exist. In addition, the concept of "risk" is widely used both in scholarship and in politics and geopolitics. When they use this term, diplomats have in mind concrete factors and a relationship to them.

In every contemporary society there exist recognized spheres of risk. Thus, this concept can be applied to both a region and to the world as a whole. Despite the fact that risk appears in the entire world, each society and state must investigate risks related to it, take them into consideration, and use them in politics. The price of attempting to achieve success in this world full of risk by studying only the experience of others can be even as great as involving the loss of statehood! That makes it absolutely necessary to consider risks in foreign policy.

The world is rapidly globalizing and intergovernmental relations are becoming so complicated that even the strongest states find themselves unable to completely avoid the risks that arise. The reasons for that lie in the essence and nature of risk: this factor forms a specific quality of the contemporary world and in a natural way appears everywhere. Indeed, wherever there are political processes, there are also risks. And as a result, the most constructive foreign policy will take them into consideration. In principle, risks are closely connected with the adoption of decisions.

In connection with foreign policy, two things are especially important. The first aspect consists of the analysis of decisions taken by a diplomat arising out of the essential features of the goals of foreign policy. In this aspect, the adoption of decisions depends on the specific nature of the problems. Here are defined the goals, formed principles adequate to the situation, and proposed a method of assessing diplomatic moves. And on this basis, it is possible to define the relationship between utility and harm.

The second aspect involves an assessment of how adequate to the goals of the state are the decisions taken by a diplomat on the basis of his learning, worldview, and ability to assess what is taking place. In this case are defined possible geopolitical risks. This approach is closely connected with analytic thinking and is applied also in diplomacy. Analytic thinking is capable of offering formal rules, procedures, and methods which can bring maximum benefit to the subject in various situations.

Geopolitics is the realization of state policy regarding the geographic position of the country. This is a very complicated procedure and it immanently (internally) unites in itself a multitude of factors. Moreover, risks arising in the implementation of this policy include within themselves many factors as well. These include the risk of foreign aggression against the state, the risk of the collapse of the state as a result of internal forces, the risk of the reduction of the ability of the state to defend its interests in the internal sphere up to the point of loss of sovereignty, political risk and domestic risks as well.

In this way, geopolitical risks have strategic significance and may even have global harm. Earlier these risks related to fundamental risks, and as a result they were included in the category of force majeure situations. However, the contemporary level of globalization has made more important the problem of managing these risks. Among those who may be involved in this administration are international organizations, organs of state power, trans-national corporations, national elites, ethnic groups, diasporas, and political parties, among others.

Therefore, in the investigation of geopolitical risks, one must consider also ideological, ethno-psychological, inter-ethnic relationships, mental capacities, geo-cultural and other factors. Foreign policy is the sum of actions taken by the state on the international arena and is realized by the inter-relationships of the state with

other states and peoples. Inter-state relations are regulated on the basis of bilateral and multi-lateral agreements signed in the framework of international law and norms. From this point of view, it is necessary to consider that foreign policy is closely connected with domestic policy because for contemporary societies, questions of a systemic approach and of the unity of internal and foreign aspects are vitally important.

The principles noted above in connection with geopolitical risks and the necessity of managing them permit the definition of the anatomy of these risks in the South Caucasus and the formation of a foreign policy corresponding to them. In the South Caucasus, these risks manifest themselves at three levels: First, the concrete form of the manifestation of global geopolitical risks in a definite region, second, risk conditions by the historical, ethno-political, socio-cultural features and the specific traditions of statehood in the region, and third, risks for the political, geographic, ethno-demographic, socio-cultural, economic and territorial integrity of a specific country as they arise as dangers in its society.

Each of these levels has its specific parameters. For example, it is possible to identify risks which are conditioned by relations among civilizations in the regional manifestation of global risks, risks which are generated by the competition of military blocs, risks which are created by inter-national terrorist networks and the drug trade, risks which appear as a result of contradictions between interests of trans-national corporations and the interests of local governments, and risks, the source of which are the energy policies of the superpowers.

Among the other parameters of risks formed in the South Caucasus region itself, one can identify risks conditioned by the inter-relationships between powers neighboring the region and the local governments, threats for regional integration, dangers created by the aggressive foreign policy for the development of inter-relationships among regional states, risks arising from the interest of outside powers in the territory, and cultural and national-spiritual values of states of the regions, risks determined by the contradictions between energy security and other spheres of security in the South Caucasus and also risks the source of which are frozen conflicts.

As parameters of risks arising inside these states are separatist challenges directed from abroad, risks arising from efforts to artificially create problems around national minorities, risks conditioned by efforts to transform religious questions into political ones, risks arising as a result of regional contacts, risks arising from the impact of separatist regions on other parts of the country, and risks arising from a violation of the demographic balance, among others.

Given this very complexity, it is quite difficult to take into consideration risks in the formulation and conduct of the foreign policy of Azerbaijan. Diplomacy must consider also the connections between risks appearing at various levels. And these risks must be evaluated in terms of the hierarchy of goals of the state in each particular case. For example, at the contemporary historical state in the foreign policy of Azerbaijan, the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh is a matter of priority. Considering the various geopolitical risks involved in the course of the resolution of this question, their combination into a single structure and the management of them in order to serve the government interests of Azerbaijan require a creative political and diplomatic approach. Here it would be a mistake to ignore even for a moment a variety of factors which do not have direct relationships to politics.

An example of this complexity is provided by an attempt to consider how and to what degree the financial crisis in Russia plays on the geopolitical dynamics of the South Caucasus or alternatively the impact of financial crises in the West on the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In both cases, these changes require the development of a dynamic model of policy. From this point of view, the definition of the place of factors of risk in the formation of the foreign policy of Azerbaijan through the prism of the intensification of the social-cultural and economic integration in the region seems to us to offer real possibilities. However for this, our diplomacy must cope also with the difficult task of dealing with the geopolitical factors which interfere with the resolution of frozen conflicts. Observations show that precisely on this issue, Azerbaijani diplomacy has recently increased its efforts.

One should recognize that after the August events of last year, serious changes have taken place in the geopolitical picture of the South Caucasus. Here, the factors of risk have significantly intensified. Now, in diplomatic activities, it is considered that the geopolitical situation in this region has become very febrile and can lead to unexpected events. The recognition of the factor of unpredictability has become one of the basic aspects of foreign policy. And in this aspect, we consider that the method of managing geopolitical risks is the most effective, because under contemporary conditions, geopolitical processes are so closely connected with one another that the understanding of them as an integral system together with the use of indefiniteness in state interests is one of the most constructive approaches.

The super powers use this approach at a global level, and regional states must use it in correspondence with their level as well. It is possible that the systemic management of indefiniteness as part of the pursuit of a specific goal is a new direction in diplomacy. But this requires that careful steps be taken in order to make the country's foreign policy more successful. In undefined situations, arising at the regional level, one must conduct a balanced foreign policy in order to guarantee our state interests.

Thus, the formation of a successful foreign policy under conditions of the presence of hierarchical geopolitical risks requires the application of new scientific approaches to policy formation and implementation. In this, the basic principle is not the suppression of risks but their management. And the management of risks must be carried out in correspondence with the priorities of foreign policy in a specific time and place. That is, the management of risks from the beginning must serve concrete goals, or in other words, at each particular stage, the tactic of managing risks must be able to change, remembering that in all cases, the support of state interests as the basic goal must form the essence of diplomatic activity.

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A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that the withdrawal of Armenian forces from the occupied territories is "the key to the rapid resolution of the Nagorno-

Karabakh problem” and that if that happens, “this will create the basis for normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan and for providing for the self-administration of Nagorno-Karabakh within the borders of Azerbaijan.” Moreover, he continues, “this will give a firm and just basis for resolution [of the conflict] and essentially reduce tension” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183855.html>).

Fuad Akhundov, head of the political research and analysis sector of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that “Russia is the only country which at the level of a president is actively taking part in the process of the resolution of the Karabakh conflict” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185020.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev says that “the military path of resolving the Karabakh conflict is always real” and will be “inevitable” if “a peaceful path” for resolving it does not lead to the return of Azerbaijani territory (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185298.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that “Azerbaijan expects real and essential results from the *Eastern Partnership*” especially in the areas of helping the South Caucasus to reach European standards in various sectors (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184796.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

Vladimir Dorokhin, Russia’s ambassador in Baku, says “Russia is not playing in the Caucasus; we are realizing our interests.” He adds that “the so-called Georgian war changed not only the South Caucasus but the entire world.” It is obvious, he says, that “if one political charlatan can provoke an almost universal confrontation then something is not in order in the world” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184483.html>).

Mammadbaqir Bahrami, Iran’s ambassador to Baku, says that “the withdrawal of Armenian occupation forces from the territory of Azerbaijan will help Armenia itself.” No occupier, he continues, “can forever remain on occupied land. History testifies about this. You saw what was the fate of [Iraqi leader] Saddam Husein after his occupation of Iranian territories.” In other comments, the Iranian ambassador says that “the activity of the OSCE Minsk Group is not giving any results” because those who form it “do not want to achieve results. They are pursuing their own interests” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184456.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan’s Foreign Policy

15 December

Iranian President Mahmud Akhmadinejad tells visiting Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov that the friendly and fraternal relations between the two countries will continue to intensify in all spheres. During Mammadyarov’s visit to Tehran, the two countries agree to expand economic cooperation, including additional sales of Azerbaijani natural gas to Iran (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185492.html>).

The Milli Majlis adopts an appeal to the President and Congress of the US protesting the decision of the Congress to provide assistance to the separatist regime in Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185653.html>).

Ganira Pashayeva, a Milli Majlis deputy, says the decision of the US Congress to provide assistance to the Armenian community in Nagorno-Karabakh will have a negative impact on relations between the US and Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185728.html>).

The Party of National Independence adopts a resolution criticizing the US Congress for providing assistance to the separatist regime in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Ganira Pashayeva, a Milli Majlis deputy, proposes declaring 2010 "the Year of Karabakh and Khojaly" during a speech in the Turkish city of Bursa (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185666.html>).

14 December

Iranian Foreign Minister Manuchehr Mottaki tells visiting Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov that Tehran "is prepared to serve as a mediator in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185488.html>).

Igbal Agazade, the head of the *Umid* Party and a deputy in the Milli Majlis, says that "the activity of the OSCE Minsk Group is ineffective," that Azerbaijan does not and cannot agree with the Madrid Principles, and that "it is difficult to predict when the Karabakh conflict will be resolved – perhaps today or later" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185250.html>).

The US Embassy in Baku says that "the United States does not recognize 'the government of Nagorno-Karabakh.' This is our policy and it remains unchanged." Embassy spokesman Terry Davidson says this response to Azerbaijani suggestions that the extension of US assistance to the region represents de facto recognition (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185511.html>).

12 December

Tofiq Abdullayev, Azerbaijan's ambassador in Saudi Arabia, like Baku's representatives in many other capitals, organizes a ceremony in memory of Heidar Aliyev on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the former president's death (<http://www.day.az/news/society/185359.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev says that "the military path of resolving the Karabakh conflict is always real" and will be "inevitable" if "a peaceful path" for resolving it does not lead to the return of Azerbaijani territory (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185298.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov says that "Azerbaijan continues to maintain normal inter-state relations with Turkmenistan and that these relations are developing," with "cooperation between the two countries continuing in all areas" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185346.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov says that “we do not intend to exert influence on Iran just as it does not intend to influence Azerbaijan.” Instead, the two countries remain “friends and neighbors” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185303.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that “Azerbaijan condemns the provision of financial help to Nagorno-Karabakh by the United States and calls on the US to preserve its neutral status and not give aid to the separatist regime” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185293.html>).

11 December

President Ilham Aliyev receives the three co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185180.html>). They say they hope to “complete work on the basic principles of the resolution of the Karabakh conflict in 2010” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185238.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev expresses his sympathy to Turkish President Abdulla Gul concerning the mine disaster in Bursa in which numerous lives were lost (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185255.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that the US should provide financial assistance to internally displaced persons of Azerbaijan forced out of the country’s occupied territories, similar to one Washington makes available to the people living in Azerbaijani areas under occupation (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185247.html>).

Ziyafat Askarov, vice speaker of the Milli Majlis, says that “Azerbaijan does not understand” the decision of the US Congress to provide financial assistance to Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185251.html>).

Yashar Aliyev, Azerbaijani ambassador to the United States, says that a Congressional measure to provide assistance to Nagorno-Karabakh should have been coordinated with the government of Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185176.html>).

Masamitsu Oki, Japan’s ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that “Japan hopes for the most rapid resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within the framework of the activity of the OSCE Minsk Group” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185162.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that it would consider a request from *Euronews* to film another story about Nagorno-Karabakh but that it has received no such request. The ministry statement follows a Baku protest about an earlier *Euronews* story on the region (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185155.html>).

Sheikh Mubarak bin Fahad Al-Thani, Qatar’s ambassador to Baku, says his country’s “ties with Azerbaijan are based on common spiritual, religious and cultural roots” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185118.html>).

The American University of Kuwait sets up a special permanent exhibit devoted to former Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185112.html>).

10 December

President Ilham Aliyev receives the letters of credence from the incoming ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Lee Jee-Kwang
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185099.html>).

Fuad Akhundov, head of the political research and analysis sector of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that "Russia is the only country which at the level of a president is actively taking part in the process of the resolution of the Karabakh conflict"
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185020.html>).

The Defense Ministry says that it expects "a broadening in cooperation between Baku and NATO" within the third stage of IPAP
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185025.html>).

Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan says that "the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict should be resolved in the near future" lest the lack of resolution affect other relationships in the region (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184965.html>).

US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Philip Gordon says that the conflict over Karabakh is "important in its own right, independent of any other questions," adding that Washington has "certain differences" with Ankara on its policies in the Caucasus
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184962.html>).

The Russian Foreign Ministry says that the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group have prepared an updated variant of the Madrid principles and that Baku and Yerevan "will receive [this] new variant" in the near future
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185071.html>). At the same time, a Russian foreign ministry spokesman says that Moscow "has not received signals from Azerbaijan about dissatisfaction with the work of the OSCE Minsk Group
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185058.html>).

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, EU commissioner for foreign policy and European neighborhood policy, says that "the EU has put before itself the task about the elimination of a visa regime for citizens of Azerbaijan"
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185040.html>).

Talat Aliyev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Ukraine, discusses with the Ukrainian foreign ministry the anti-Azerbaijan story carried by the Ukrainian television channel *Inter* (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185026.html>).

Anar Maharramov, counsellor at the Azerbaijani embassy in Madrid, says that relations between Azerbaijan and Spain will become more active in 2010
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184984.html>).

9 December

President Ilham Aliyev makes a one-day working visit to France during which he meets with his French counterpart Nicolas Sarkozy and stresses their rapidly developing bilateral economic and political ties (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184782.html>). In the course of the visit, Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov and his French counterpart Bernard Kushner sign agreements on diplomatic passports and the activities of cultural centers in the two countries (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/185090.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that "Azerbaijan expects real and essential results from the *Eastern Partnership*" especially in the areas of helping the South Caucasus to reach European standards in various sectors (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184796.html>).

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev says that "Russia will support further the normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184880.html>).

Turkish State Minister Egemen Bakhyshev says that "the energy ministers of Azerbaijan and Turkey are in the process of tense negotiations" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184895.html>).

Fuad Akhundov, head of the political research and analysis sector of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that the Russian media should behave more responsibly and not suggest that Moscow profits from a drawing out of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184872.html>).

Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt says that the OSCE Minsk Group is "the only format for resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184826.html>).

Javanshir Akhundov, Azerbaijan's incoming ambassador to Tehran, presents copies of his letters of credence, to Iranian Foreign Minister Manuchehr Mottaki and discusses the upcoming visit to the Iranian capital of Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184821.html>).

Movlud Chavushoglu, head of the Turkish delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that the Council views the Nagorno-Karabakh problem "through a distorted prism" and that it "should devote more attention to the South Caucasus in general and the Karabakh conflict in particular" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184818.html>).

8 December

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev says that a breakdown in talks on the Karabakh issue would "force Azerbaijan to turn to alternative methods" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184667.html>).

Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan says that "the liberation of the seven regions of Azerbaijan would assist a rapprochement in Armenian-Turkish relations" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184635.html>). In other comments, he criticizes the OSCE Minsk Group for failing to make more progress given the existence of UN

resolutions which "must be fulfilled"
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184617.html>).

The Azerbaijan Foreign Ministry, in response to Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu following Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan's meeting with US President Barak Obama during which they discussed the Karabakh conflict, says that Azerbaijan "welcomes any steps directed at the achieving of a just and peaceful resolution of the Azerbaijani-Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within the framework of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan"
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184649.html>).

Vladimir Dorokhin, Russia's ambassador to Baku, says that "relations between Russia and Azerbaijan are developing as a strategic partnership"
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184620.html>).

Roland Kobia, head of delegation of the European Union to Azerbaijan, says that "Azerbaijan is at the center of an important region from the point of view of the wealth of energy resources" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184775.html>).

Janan Aarytman, a Turkish Grand National Assembly deputy from the opposition Republican Peoples Party, says that "Yerevan must show that it is sincerely ready for the resolution of the Karabakh conflict" if it expects to improve ties with Ankara (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184702.html>).

Ayдын Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "the principled position of Turkey on the Nagorno-Karabakh question has already been known to all for a long time"
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184659.html>).

General Rodger Brady, commander of US air forces in Europe (USAFE), visits Baku for consultations (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184518.html>).

Matthew Bryza, former US co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, says that he "wants to be ambassador to Azerbaijan" but that no decision has been taken about that in Washington (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184686.html>).

Mustafa Kabakçi, head of the Azerbaijani-Turkish Friendship Group of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, says that "the liberation of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan is a first-order question for Turkey"
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184658.html>).

The Ukrainian foreign ministry is preparing a note in response to Azerbaijan's protest about an anti-Azerbaijani program on Ukraine's *Inter* television channel. The ministry's spokesman says that *Inter* is a private company and that its programming does not reflect the views of the government of Ukraine
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184657.html>).

Anar Mammadkhanov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "it is perfectly obvious that the Armenians are beginning an information attack" against Azerbaijan
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184622.html>).

7 December

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov says that Baku believes that “in the course of his visit to the US, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan will seek from Washington serious steps in the direction of resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184452.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov tells NATO officials that Azerbaijan’s defense ministry is undergoing “structural reforms” and that as a result, “the heads of a number of structures of the ministry will be headed by civilians” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184451.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov says that Baku is considering the possibility of increasing the number of its peacekeepers in Afghanistan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184485.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov says that the distorted story on Ukraine’s *Inter* television network about the South Caucasus “speaks not about the unprofessionalism of the journalists of the channel but about politics” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184474.html>). Meanwhile, the Azerbaijani embassy in Kyiv hands over to the Ukrainian foreign ministry a protest note about the program (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184475.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Vagif Sadykhov is in Delhi for a working visit (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184583.html>).

Mammadbaqir Bahrami, Iran’s ambassador to Baku, confirms that Tehran intends to eliminate, as of January 1, 2010, the visa requirement for Azerbaijanis travelling in Iran (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184446.html>).

Mammadbaqir Bahrami, Iran’s ambassador to Baku, says that “almost 70 percent of the questions on the definition of the status of the Caspian Sea have been agreed upon and that Iran hopes that in the nearest future, the sides will come to agreement on the remaining points as well” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184472.html>).

Mammadbaqir Bahrami, Iran’s ambassador to Baku, says that “the withdrawal of Armenian occupation forces from the territory of Azerbaijan will help Armenia itself.” No occupier, he continues, “can forever remain on occupied land. History testifies about this. You saw what was the fate of [Iraqi leader] Saddam Husein after his occupation of Iranian territories.” In other comments, the Iranian ambassador says that “the activity of the OSCE Minsk Group is not giving any results” because those who form it “do not want to achieve results. They are pursuing their own interests” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184456.html>).

Sadyk Yakut, deputy chairman of Turkey’s Grand National Assembly, says that “without the resolution of the Karabakh problem, one cannot talk about the development of relations with Armenia” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184489.html>).

Elman Abdullayev, Azerbaijani consul in Los Angeles, says that the US Administration of President Barak Obama “should increase attention to the Caspian region” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184453.html>).

A delegation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe visits Baku (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184486.html>).

The European Committee on Standardization (CEN) gives Azerbaijan observer status as of January 1, 2010.

6 December

Oktay Atakhan, the head of the Humanist Party of Azerbaijan, says that Armenian religious leaders are taking "an active part" in the plan under development by "the special services of Armenia for the occupation of Javakhetia" in Georgia (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/182889.html>).

5 December

President Ilham Aliyev sends a message of sympathy to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev over the loss of life in a nightclub fire in Perm (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184384.html>).

Zahid Orudzh, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "in the nearest future, we may become witnesses of movement forward in the resolution of the Karabakh conflict" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183589.html>).

Vladimir Ivanovsky, Moscow's ambassador in Ankara, says that his government favors Turkish-Armenian rapprochement and thus is "forced to find a path of resolution for the Karabakh problem. We have not other option" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184349.html>).

A Turkish newspaper reports that the European Court of Human Rights is investigating the possible involvement of Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan in the genocide at Khojaly (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184331.html>).

4 December

Novruz Mammadov, the head of the international relations department of the Presidential Administration, says that negotiations about Karabakh have achieved "a positive dynamic," with six meetings between the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia over the past year alone (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184250.html>).

The Azerbaijan Foreign Ministry says that "Armenia uses any mechanisms for disinforming the international public" about the situation around Karabakh (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184201.html>).

A petition campaign in Turkey to ask "the forgiveness of the Azerbaijani Turks" for Ankara's having signed the protocols with Yerevan has collected more than 70,000 signatures, its organizers say (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184246.html>).

Mustafa Kabakçi, head of the Azerbaijani-Turkish Friendship Group of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, says that only after Armenia withdraws its forces from Azerbaijani territory will the parliament ratify the accords with Yerevan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184127.html>).

3 December

Ethan Goldrich, head of the US State Department's Office of Caucasus Affairs and Regional Conflicts, meets with leaders of various parties in the Milli Majlis (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184102.html>).

Mammadbaqir Bahrami, Iran's ambassador in Baku, meets with Azerbaijani human rights activists to discuss the status of Rashid Aliyev, an Azerbaijani scholar under arrest in Iran (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184070.html>).

Fakhraddin Gurbanov, Azerbaijan's ambassador in London, meets with Rhodri Morgan, First Minister of the National Assembly for Wales, who tells him that Wales would like to expand its cooperation with Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184066.html>).

Azerbaijani officials take part in the Hague Conference of the Organization for Banning Chemical Weapons (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184038.html>).

Suat Kynklyoglu, deputy head for foreign relations of the ruling Turkish Party of Justice and Development, says that "ratification of the protocols" between Ankara and Yerevan is "a very delicate process" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183982.html>).

Rafael Jabrailov, a member of the Milli Majlis legal affairs and state-building committee, says that "Azerbaijani soldiers will decide the fate of the occupied territories" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183940.html>).

Yalchin Topchu, the head of the Turkish Party of Great Unity, says that "Turkey must keep the promises it made to Azerbaijan" regarding no opening of its borders with Armenia until Armenia withdraws from Azerbaijani territories (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183969.html>).

Zeinab Dagy, deputy chairman of the parliamentary fraction of the ruling Party of Justice and Development in Turkey, says that "the ratification of the Ankara-Yerevan protocols is not on the agenda" of the parliament (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183276.html>).

Egemen Bakhlysh, State Minister of Turkey and head of the Turkish delegation negotiating entry into the European Union, says that "it will be complicated to normalize relations between Turkey and Armenia without a breakthrough on the Karabakh problem" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183963.html>).

2 December

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that the withdrawal of Armenian forces from the occupied territories is "the key to the rapid resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem" and that if that happens, "this will create the basis for normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan and for providing for the self-administration of Nagorno-Karabakh within the borders of Azerbaijan." Moreover, he continues, "this will give a firm and just basis for resolution [of the conflict] and essentially reduce tension" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183855.html>).

Iranian Foreign Minister Manuchehr Mottaki tells outgoing Azerbaijani Ambassador to Iran Abbasali Hasanov that Tehran would like to broaden cooperation with Baku (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/184027.html>).

The government of Greece, which is the chairman in office of the OSCE, calls on Azerbaijan and Armenia to continue the "positive dynamic" of their negotiations on the resolution of the Karabakh conflict (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183948.html>).

OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut says that negotiations on Karabakh must continue at their current level of intensity for an agreement to be found (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183893.html>).

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu says that "Turkey supports the mediating efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183839.html>).

Lavon Lotem, Israel's ambassador in Baku, says "Azerbaijan and Israel are fruitfully cooperate in many areas" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183829.html>)

Donald Lyu, US charge d'affaires in Baku, says that Azerbaijan "is playing a very important role" in guaranteeing security in Afghanistan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183944.html>).

The Azerbaijan Foreign Ministry announces that the discussion at the UN General Assembly of the situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan has been postponed "for technical reasons" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183929.html>).

The OSCE Bureau for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights says it is ready to work with Azerbaijan to improve electoral processes in the country (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183848.html>).

Aishe Turkmenoglu, a representative of the ruling Party of Justice and Development in the Turkish Grand National Assembly, says that there is "forward movement" expected in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183914.html>).

Milli Majlis deputies participate in the 33rd plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the CIS in St. Petersburg (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183683.html>).

1 December

President Ilham Aliyev receives Prince Andrew of Great Britain (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183765.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Tony Blair, the former British prime minister (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183739.html>). Blair says that for the UK, relations with Azerbaijan are becoming "ever more important" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183733.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with his counterparts from OSCE member states at a ministerial in Athens and holds consultations with his GUAM colleagues (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183832.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that "Azerbaijan supports the proposal to hold an OSCE summit in Kazakhstan in 2010" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183876.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov makes a working visit to London.

Tofik Zulfugarov, Azerbaijani ambassador to Latvia and Estonia, says that Latvian entrepreneurs "are interested in establishing business contacts" with Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183270.html>).

Fuad Iskandarov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to the Netherlands, speaks to a conference on the 90th anniversary of the diplomatic service of Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183781.html>).

The Azerbaijan Foreign Ministry sends a formal letter of protest to *Euronews* concerning its program on Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183740.html>).

The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group issue a statement calling on Azerbaijan and Armenia "to complete in the near future work on the basic principles" for the resolution of the Karabakh conflict (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183635.html>).

Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou, whose country is chairman-in-office of the OSCE, praises the work of the Minsk Group and says it is necessary to make "greater efforts for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183711.html>).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says that "it is necessary to work out a single set of principles" for the resolution of conflicts (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183695.html>).

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kuchner says that there are "weighty bases for achieving a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183692.html>).

Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt says that "the Karabakh conflict must be resolved on the basis of 'a suitable combination' of principles of international law" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183718.html>).

Kazakhstan Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev says that Astana "considers Azerbaijan a key state in the Caucasus region" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183617.html>).

US Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg says that "Washington intends to promote the final resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183708.html>).

Azerbaijan supports Serbia at the International Criminal Court concerning the unilateral proclamation of independence by the Albanian powers in the Serbian region of Kosovo (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183680.html>).

Goran Lennmarker, special representative of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE for Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia, says that "the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is possible already in the next year" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183661.html>).

NATO publishes the program of Azerbaijani participation in the work of the alliance for next year (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183650.html>).

Ahmet Tan, an independent deputy in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, says that "the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border is impossible before the liberation of occupied territories of Azerbaijan" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/183361.html>).

Note to Readers

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