



Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy
School of International Affairs and Business

**AZERBAIJAN IN THE WORLD
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AZERBAIJAN AS A REGIONAL HUB IN CENTRAL EURASIA

A Conversation with Taleh Ziyadov
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Azerbaijan in the World: Your study on Azerbaijan as a Regional Hub in Central Eurasia was recently published. What was your objective in preparing this work?

Taleh Ziyadov: The book, *Azerbaijan as a Regional Hub in Central Eurasia*, is the result of a four-years long process that started in 2008 at the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy (ADA) as part of ADA's multi-faceted research project "Azerbaijan 2025: Strategic Outlook of the Country" (not to be confused with the on-going *Azerbaijan*

2020 initiative of the Azerbaijani government, AIW). The idea is to use these research findings and contribute to the country's on-going plans to develop a sustainable development model of future Azerbaijan.

As one of the components of ADA's "Azerbaijan 2025" project, this particular study has been focused on investigating current trends and dynamics in Euro-Asian trade. Its main objective was to identify potential advantages and common interests, projects and areas of greater cooperation between regional states along the ancient Silk Road that would strengthen Azerbaijan's position as a strategic transportation and logistics hub in Central Eurasia.

AIW: Your study opens with an argument that "[t]he success of Central Eurasia hub strategy largely depends on the ability of the regional states to attract some of ... Euro-Asian ... container trade" currently "conducted [mostly] by maritime transportation via Suez Canal" [p. 11]. Given that maritime transportation—and trade based thereon—has largely replaced land-based trade routes, do you not think an effort to re-introduce the past dominance of continental trade, if successful, would in fact be a step backwards as far as historically conditioned global evolution and progress is concerned? If one assumes a global, rather than nationally-circumscribed perspective, could we not view such efforts as a human's negative intervention in the progressively evolving historical forces, if you like?

Ziyadov: It is true that today the majority of the trade between Europe and Asia bypasses our region, and so do the attendant benefits. Large ships that can carry thousands of containers at a time have replaced the ancient caravans of the Silk Road. Nevertheless, the potential economic reward for commercial and transport-related development in Central Eurasia is enormous, and the realization of this potential will benefit the region as a whole. In other words, the re-introduction of continental trade in Central Eurasia need not be viewed through the prism of which mode of trade should dominate, maritime, air or land-based.

Maritime transportation did not come to dominate the Euro-Asian, or global trade for that matter, all at once. It took a long time before the industry came up with new solutions such as containers and large ships for affordably transporting big volumes of goods across continents. The inland continental trade, in contrast, disappeared because the traditional modes of transportation used along the Silk Road such as camels, horses, mules, and the like became expensive and obsolete, and the complex and well-organized logistics network of Eurasian commercial hub cities collapsed.

In addition to large container ships, industry also uses airplanes and freight trains to transport cargo between various destinations. These sectors also innovate and propose their own solutions. Although the maritime transportation is the cheapest, it is nonetheless the slowest. Air transportation, on the other hand, is the most expensive, but the fastest option. Transportation by train is somewhere in between. So reviving continental trade through Central Eurasia would require innovative approach from the private sector and demand adequate steps by the governments in harmonizing all regional transportation projects in the Caucasus and Central Asia, so that this once dominant route of continental commerce revives itself.

There are several examples when innovation by the industry has helped to revitalise hitherto unviable transportation corridors. For example, the freight transportation between America's West coast (California, Oregon and Washington) and its Midwest

(Michigan and Illinois) has traditionally been dominated by trucking industry. Transporting cargo by trains was too costly and slow. Faced with these challenges the rail freight transport industry came up with innovative solution, which was to develop track platforms that allowed carrying containers in double-stock formations. This simple, yet revolutionary, idea has altered the whole picture in the rail transportation business and made rail freight transport affordable, fast and the dominant mode of shipment between the West coast and the Midwest in the US.

AIW: What is your assessment of the state of affairs in the economic realm of Azerbaijan's current existence, particularly in light of where the country comes from (post-Soviet transition) and the kind and amount of work carried out to date? Which efforts so far have proved successful and what are the challenges that still need to be addressed?

Ziyadov: Azerbaijan is not only post-Soviet transition economy, but also a resource-rich state. As such, it faces specific challenges that resource-poor transition states may not have. Its oil wealth is its biggest advantage and managing this wealth is its biggest challenge. So far, Azerbaijan, along with Kazakhstan, has managed to avoid many of the major problems associated with oil wealth that have haunted many resource-rich states in the past. This was largely due to high oil prices and a disciplined macroeconomic policy. The oil revenues allowed the country to increase its GDP fourfold and start implementing strategic infrastructure projects both in energy and non-energy sectors that will be building blocks of the country's future economic performance. In particular, developments in transportation and IT sectors could be highlighted separately, including the on-going construction of the Kars-Akhalkalaki railroad and the new Alyat port and the expansion of e-government services for small and mid-size businesses.

In recent years, Baku has made economic diversification a central policy. While economic diversification is a trendy policy among many resource-rich states, it is not easy to implement and sustain. Diversifying an economy that has traditionally been dependent on production of natural resources requires an explicit strategy and a political zeal. Considering Azerbaijan's relatively small size, with only nine million inhabitants, any domestic demand-led economic growth is likely to be short-lived. Consequently, the country needs to pursue the foreign demand-led non-oil GDP growth strategy, which essentially equates to growth driven by Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Azerbaijan has successfully used the FDI driven growth strategy in its energy sector, and it could as well expand this strategy to the development of its non-oil sector.

AIW: What is your broader vision for Azerbaijan's future economic development? Is there any concrete model upon which you suggest the latter should rest?

Ziyadov: The future of Azerbaijan's economic development depends on the country's ability to build a sustainable, competitive and diversified economy making full use of its comparative advantages. Here, the role of transportation and logistics sector, as well as other non-oil sectors such as IT, tourism and agriculture will be important. Based on findings from the study, the necessary trajectory for Azerbaijan requires a coordinated effort at both national and regional levels. Nationally, the government needs to align all its major development projects under a single objective. In the non-oil sector, the study recommends focusing on two projects that are directly linked to Azerbaijan's grand hub strategy and that could generate significant FDI in the non-oil sector and raise the stakes in the country's Free Economic Zone (FEZ)

development. This means that the two key projects—the Port of Alyat and Heydar Aliyev International Airport in Baku—should be incorporated into the FEZ concept, which in turn must be constructed on a flexible and effective legal framework (i.e. Production Sharing Agreement). At a regional level, Azerbaijan needs to harmonize its transport strategy with that of neighbouring states, particularly Georgia, Turkey and the Central Asian countries along the East-West axis, and Russia and Iran in the North-South direction. If implemented properly, this strategy could help the country's transformation and contribute to achieving the goal of building a modern, competitive and developed Azerbaijan by 2030.

AIW: You noted two key projects, both in transport, around which Azerbaijan's non-energy development strategy should revolve. Yet it is the IT and tourism sectors that currently represent key non-oil areas around which the country's development agenda is pursued. Do you suggest a focus on transport should develop in parallel with the current emphasis on IT and tourism or should it rather replace it?

Ziyadov: None of these sectors can be developed in isolation from each other. What I mean is that the government needs to adopt an integrated "bird's eye approach" in developing the non-oil economy in a way that would mobilize and align all of the country's resources and projects towards achieving a single strategy.

AIW: Finally, is there, in your eyes, any historically known development path Azerbaijan could replicate in devising its mid- to long-term development strategy?

Ziyadov: Each country devises its own destiny, but there are specific lessons that Azerbaijan could learn from countries like Malaysia, Dubai and Singapore. The first two are known for their deliberate and forceful diversification strategies, while the third is a good example of a resource-poor country's outstanding vision and economic performance in achieving a level of economic development that many resource-rich states could only dream of.

To become a successful economic model in the twenty-first century, Azerbaijan needs to carefully formulate its strategy and do it now. Azerbaijan of 2030 or 2050 will be the product of today's concept sketches. The country has the potential to be a true gateway to Central Asia for Europe and a door to Europe for Central Asia and China. It has the potential to become a "hub of hubs" in Central Eurasia—a vision that is yet to be fully studied and understood, but one that has great prospects if selected.

Note: Copies of Mr. Ziyadov's study, Azerbaijan as a Regional Hub in Central Eurasia (Baku: ADA, 2012), can be purchased from the ADA Book Center. For further detail, write to info@adabook.az.

ARCHITECTURE OF BAKU REVISITED

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I first visited Azerbaijan SSR in 1983 to participate in the First Azerbaijan Carpet Symposium, sponsored by UNESCO. One thing led to another, and, as some readers may recall, in 1985 I put on the exhibition *Architecture of Baku: Fabled capital of the Caspian* at Heinz Gallery RIBA sponsored by *inter alia* UNESCO, which was warmly received in London. The co-author of the catalogue was Emile Salmanov, a talented art historian, then based in Baku. The designer was Michael Anikst, then the leading Moscow book designer. I remember loading the plane by hand helped by Eldar Salayev who was Director of the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan SSR and Ramiz Abutalybov, then Foreign Minister and a senior member of the USSR National Commission for UNESCO. He is still president of the Azerbaijan Commission for UNESCO. Z. Baghirov, Minister of Culture, also gave support. The exhibition was possible thanks to the magic of Sergei Klovov of *MID*, also of the USSR UNESCO Commission; and the generous support of Levi Kelaty of London, doyen of carpet merchants of Azerbaijan and USSR.

Later in London, the foremost Soviet architect Academician Mikael Useinov appeared to relish his informal 80th jubilee at the Chelsea Arts Club where lunch stretched into dinner. Among his vast work, he had built much of the Baku Metro and Nizami Square. He was a keen supporter of the exhibition. Richard Napier, Pierre Cardin's designer, took some of the best photographs ever of Baku, especially the c.1500 Divan Khane; and Catherine Cooke, the Cambridge-educated foremost British authority on Constructivism, also helped on the history of those treasures of Baku, including the Penn Azernash building and the Armenikend Quarter. Since then, I have been a nominator for Architecture of USSR and now Former Soviet states for Aga Khan Award for Architecture. Sadly, there has been virtually nothing to nominate, with the stringent rules, for example, where a building has to have been in use for four years. In Baku, a few years later Polad Bulbuloglu who at that stage was minister of culture, during dinner, half in jest, described me as a real *Bakili* and it is in that spirit that I write about the architecture of Baku today.

Perhaps the essence of architecture of Baku today is the mixture of the Islamic and pre-Islamic architecture of the old city Icheri Sheher, with the capitalist international architecture of the late 19th century oil boom, Constructivist architecture of the 1920s-30s and Soviet architecture after the Great Patriotic War. The second oil boom since independence has been marked by a mixture of some exciting architecture with unfortunately poor quality property development driven by profit at the expense of aesthetics. The subtle problem is to maintain a balance, to enhance the treasures of Baku's architectural history rather than to erase it.

In the 1980s, Icheri Sheher contained its old mosques, as it does today, and the street plan of the medieval city. Much of the walls were rebuilt around 1800. Most of the buildings were two or three stories high, rebuilt during the oil boom of the late 1800s and early 1900s. It was a traditional old-town that reflected its history. It was inscribed on the UNESCO world heritage list in 2000, but the earthquake of 2003 when 70 per cent of the old city was damaged; and lack of planning regulation enforcement, led to its being placed on the "Danger List" in 2003. It was re-instated in 2009.

As a parallel in UK, since the 1960s medieval town centres were gutted to build new supermarkets and offices, in many ways similar to Icheri Sheher. In response, UK English Heritage was created in 1983 as an independent commission, state-financed

by law to look after about 400 historic sites, and to act as a filter for proposed high-rise developments in London. It combined several existing organisations and therefore had more power. In Azerbaijan, too, continual vigilance and serious funding is required to keep UNESCO world heritage site status for Icheri Sheher. Poor controls were highlighted on 28 August 2007 by the fatal collapse of a newly built and still uninhabited 16-storey block of flats on Mukhtarov Street, right in the centre of Baku. Perhaps Azerbaijan can create an equivalent independent single Heritage commission, properly funded by the state. It could devise a program with UNESCO and other foreign architectural organisations to continue restoration of Icheri Sheher. A model could be the meticulous restoration of old German cities such as Nurnberg, or the ArchNet studies by Elbai Kasim-Zade, which won an Aga Khan planning award. [1] This would complete Azerbaijan's full return to the international architectural community, well deserved by the standards of the new flagship architecture.

Around the world star architects (and others) have been transforming cities with breath-taking designs. The cities with the most money to spend are the capitals of the new energy-rich states, such as Baku, Moscow, Astana, and Dubai, Kuwait and Abu Dhabi in the Gulf. Hopefully, one objective is to build something that does not just look like a tall bar of gold.

Indeed, Baku is putting on a remarkable modern face, with numerous head-turning projects towering above low-rise Soviet-era apartments and the medieval walled city. It is premature to judge if the various landmark buildings and projects under construction will work well together. They will hopefully form a coherent character, which will reflect the essences of the old and new Baku. President Ilham Aliyev was at the opening ceremony for the London Olympics, so he will have had the opportunity to reflect if and how the associated new buildings fit in and work in London.

Baku's new landmark buildings initially may feel somewhat isolated, but the scale and quantity of the ongoing construction projects will mean that there is a unified statement to form a new focus of the Caspian Sea. If you look at a map, there are too many new buildings marked to describe here, so I have chosen a few examples to provide a brief overview.

First impressions are created on arrival. The Heydar Aliyev International Airport has an almost finished new major façade designed by Arup, who states that the new terminal building will promote Baku and Azerbaijan to the wider world. With projected demand of three million passengers per year, it is potentially a major hub for the whole of the Caucasus region. The central complex is redolent of a Japanese Momoyama-dynasty castle, where, similarly, all details are individual, but integrated sculptural designs. The Baku road system is far more than the usual airport boulevard. It has clearly been appreciated how widespread urban road and parks architecture can create a feeling of well-being and set off the many new buildings.

Crystal Hall, the 23,000 capacity multipurpose venue built on and into the Caspian, initially for the Eurovision song contest, was designed by architects Gerkan, Marg and Partners based in Hamburg, Germany, which also designed the Berlin Hauptbahnhof. Project Managers were Alpine Bau Deutschland AG, Nussli Group, and Basler & Hofmann AG and Main contractors SSF Ingenieure AG, Seele Austria GmbH & Co. KG. There is nothing new about using foreign architects and contractors to build Baku. The same happened during the first oil boom c.1900 and the post-

revolution period when many of the great architects from Russia built in Baku. Part of the oil-rich social life is the wish to host international events and the prestige, which this gives the hosts, considered as a flexing of “soft power.” Baku has indeed become a location of choice in the region.

Zaha Hadid’s Heydar Aliyev Cultural Centre is redolent of the ancient windswept caves of Gobustan with their archetypal zoomorphic rock carvings, the snout and gills of a giant sturgeon and the shallow contours of the Caspian Sea. “The Cultural Center houses a conference hall with three auditoriums, a library and a museum. The project is intended to play an integral role in the intellectual life of the city. Located close to the city center, the site plays a pivotal role in the redevelopment of Baku. The neighboring area is designated for residential, offices, a hotel and commercial center, whilst the land between the Cultural Center and the city’s main thoroughfare will become the Cultural Plaza—an outdoor piazza for the Cultural Center as well as a welcoming space for the visitors.”

Another cultural creation, the strange, humorous and deeply satisfying unrolling carpet-shaped carpet museum, was designed by Austrian architects Hoffmann-Janž ZT GmbH and overlooks the coast. It is near the International Mugham Center with an intimate concert hall that fits 350 people. The design of the building was based on elements and shapes of the evolved figure-of-eight *tar*, the Azeri musical instrument played in performing *Mugham*. As with the carpet museum and several of the buildings described here, it takes a figurative or naturalistic curved shape. Traditional music continues to be very popular in Azerbaijan with much exposure on television, and it is hoped that carpet weaving will be inspired to have a similar revival. Well before my first visit to Baku in 1983, I was interested in Azerbaijan’s carpets, historical culture and *Mugam* music. I am therefore delighted that a central part of the new architecture is devoted to both museums and the continuation of living traditions. For example, the carpet center under Roya Taghieva will encourage weavers, embroiderers, natural dyers, hand-spinners, designers and all the arts of silk and wool that are central to Azerbaijan’s history and family architecture.

The topological limitations of the Baku site are the coast, the existing city and the shape of the arid Absheron peninsula, with local oil fields. One solution is to clear away parts of the city avoiding historical landmarks, and another is to build into the shallow sea near the former oil field road. One ground-breaking work is known as *White City*—in contrast to Baku’s old name *Black City*, related to its oil pollution. A 220-hectare former industrial site will accommodate offices, hotels, homes and facilities for 50,000 Baku residents and 48,000 workers. It statedly may take decades to complete and may be less radical in its design. The several Baku White City projects involve not only the British company “Atkins” that specializes in engineering designs, and Azerbaijani specialists, but also such luminary architect firms as Foster+Partners and F+A Architects.

Already dominating the skyline are the iconic Flame Towers and the Baku TV Tower. The Flame Towers look down like three mythological ancestors of the historic mysterious Sassanian Maiden’s Tower, imitating its unexplained, but characteristic and recognizable horizontal fins like a giant stone radiator. Flames obviously reflect the local auto-combusting oil pools that made ancient Baku a centre of fire-worshippers and reappeared in the emblem of Azerbaijan.

Building started on the TV Tower in 1979 and completion was scheduled for 1985, but was delayed. After the return of Heydar Aliyev to power in 1993, the construction of the tower was continued, and was opened in 1996, which makes it

probably the last Soviet era building. It is reminiscent of the equally iconic Berlin TV tower designed by the GDR architect Hermann Henselmann and opened in 1969. Joining these soaring landmarks are some even more eye-popping structures: the towers of Crescent Place and the Hotel Crescent, designed by South Korean architects, Heerim, also the 39-story Crescent City and 38-floor future headquarters for the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR), won by international competition. When completed in 2015, Hotel Crescent will stand on the banks of the Caspian Sea, its 33-stories housed in a vast, down-turned crescent. A sister project was proposed, called the Full Moon Hotel, that would have brought something resembling the Death Star from "Star Wars" to the Caspian coastline. [2]

It all makes Baku an exciting place for the student of modern design. It is a grand experiment in the future. It appears to be designed to welcome, impress and enchant the visitor and the growing number of ex-pats who work in Azerbaijan, as a symbol of traditional Caucasian hospitality. As in 1900, Baku has never been afraid of change, and it has always enjoyed its own individual eclectic style. Baku's population is now estimated at ~2.1 millions. Hopefully these landmark buildings will inspire similar progress with social housing and solving the long-term water shortage, that will make Baku even more of a model for post-Soviet countries.

From a consumer's point of view, it seems to be working as well. My friends in Daghestan—without prompting—have told me that there are an increased number of visitors to Baku from Daghestan and elsewhere in the Caucasus. They enjoy the new grand boulevards and the opportunities to go on holiday-shopping trips. They found that accommodation is modestly priced, for example at the new hotel near the low-level Swiss Embassy, near Icheri Sheher. They are amazed by the changes, especially the thinking that has gone into renewal of the infrastructure of roads, walkways and parks. Caspian Caucasians have long enjoyed their evening promenade in the cool, after a hot day. It is a traditional family leisure activity, which has been built into the new architecture.

Note

[1] See http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site_id=1630 (accessed 5 August 2012).

[2] Color images of all these buildings and many more can be accessed by searching "Baku architecture" on Google Images.

AZERBAIJAN AGAIN ON THE CUSP OF ALPHABET CHANGE

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Just as was the case 90 years ago, Azerbaijan appears to be on the cusp of changing its alphabet, a development that now as then has potentially far-reaching geopolitical consequences. At the Baku Congress of Peoples of the East in 1920, Azerbaijani

scholars outlined the Latin script that was introduced with variations in both Azerbaijan and Turkey and that simultaneously helped both peoples to expand their contacts with Europe and each other. This past month, another Azerbaijani scholar has urged new modifications in the Azerbaijani script not only to bring it and the Turkish script closer together, but to serve as a model for the other countries of the Turkic world.

The adoption of a common script by all the Turkic peoples of the world would not mean that they would all soon speak the same language—there are genuine lexical and even grammatical differences among them—but it would simultaneously expand the sense of commonality of these nations and contribute to their separateness from the Russian state that dominated many of them in the past and that still dominates some of them. Consequently, what may strike some as an intellectual tempest in a teapot could presage the kind of geopolitical shifts that more obviously political steps often do not.

On August 17, Fahraddin Veyselli, the director of the Institute of Linguistics of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan, said that the Azerbaijani alphabet must be simplified by eliminating the letters "q", "ğ", "ə", and "ç" and expressing their sound values with combinations of other letters as do Turkish and other European languages. Such changes, he argued, are needed to ensure that Azerbaijanis turning to the Internet will be able to communicate more easily and that others searching on line will find Azerbaijani materials. [1]

"If we use the Latin script," the Baku scholar continued, "then we must use it as it is. There is no need to add new signs to [that] script." Moreover, he said, that would assist the creation of "a common Turkic language for the Turkic language peoples." "It isn't necessary to change anything. One can simply use the letters of the Latin alphabet or use specific combinations or diacritical marks." However, he stressed that creating "a single Turkic alphabet," something scholars and politicians have talked about over the last two decades, does not mean creating "a common Turkic language." Such an artificial creation, Veyselli said, is "problematic from the scientific point of view."

"Do you suppose that the Ottoman Turks will give up their own language and shift to Azerbaijani? Or that we will give up our language and begin to use another? That [would involve] a complex and lengthy process." And for it to succeed, there would need to be "a common economy, market and political unity." Nonetheless, having a common alphabet, one based on the Latin script, would help promote such developments.

Ten days later, Nizami Jafarov, chairman of the Milli Majlis' committee on culture, gave qualified support to Veyselli's proposal. He noted that the leaders of the Turkic countries have proposed creating special government agencies to create a common alphabet for the three Turkic language countries which currently use the Latin script (Azerbaijan, Turkey and Uzbekistan) and for other Turkic nations including both those which have state independence (the three other Central Asian Turkic countries) and those which do not (such as Tatarstan and Gagauzistan). [2]

However, in contrast to Veyselli, Jafarov suggested that the academician was wrong to discuss the future of the Azerbaijani alphabet in terms of European languages like English and German. The Milli Majlis deputy argued instead that, "the Azerbaijani alphabet should be discussed not separately, but rather together with the alphabets

of [the other] Turkic language peoples and that the letters should be adopted jointly." And he pointedly suggested that the Turkish Turks should adopt the Azerbaijani letter "ə," rather than having the Azerbaijanis adopt the Turkic letter.

This exchange is the latest round in the fateful discussions of the Azerbaijani and Turkic scripts over the last century. [3] Azerbaijani activists had called for the introduction of a Latin script alphabet already in the nineteenth century, and it was their proposals that in 1920 became the basis for replacing the Arabic-based script not only in Azerbaijan and Turkey, but somewhat later in the Turkic republics of Central Asia. That Azerbaijani script survived until 1939 when Stalin imposed a Cyrillic-based one as part of his broader effort to isolate the Soviet peoples from the outside world. In 1958, the Azerbaijani Cyrillic-based script was simplified, and then in 1991 and 1992, Azerbaijan having recovered its independence restored its Latin-based script in order to signify and solidify its solidarity with Turkey.

As Azerbaijan considers yet another alphabet reform, both Azerbaijanis and others need to keep three things in mind. First, as noted above, alphabets are important, but they are not the same as languages. Second, every time a country changes its alphabet, that creates problems for some of its citizens, leading a few to stop reading altogether and others to ignore earlier writings in a different script. And third, this debate is the first of its kind in Azerbaijan to be affected by the Internet as a social and political force. As such, it is important not only for Azerbaijan and the Turkic world, but for all countries now linked by the world wide web.

References

Hatcher, Lynley (2008) "Script Change in Azerbaijan: Acts of Identity," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 192, pp. 105-116.

Marquardt, Kyle L. (2010) "Nation-Building and Language Policy in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan," *Azerbaijan in the World*, 3:19, pp. 1-6, available at <http://ada.edu.az/uploads/file/bw/pdf367.pdf> (accessed 29 August 2012).

Notes

[1] See <http://news.day.az/society/350124.html> (accessed 29 August 2012).

[2] See <http://news.day.az/society/351958.html> (accessed 29 August 2012).

[3] For background on this, see Hatcher (2008) and Marquardt (2010).

A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

President Ilham Aliyev tells the ambassadors of Muslim countries to Baku that, "Azerbaijan in its foreign policy devotes particular significance to cooperation with

Islamic countries” and defends their positions in all international organizations (<http://news.day.az/politics/349342.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov, in Tehran for the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, meets with Iranian Oil Minister Rustam Hashemi and tells him that the arrest of the two Azerbaijani poets is having a negative impact on relations between their two countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/352218.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Baku will continue its efforts to attract the attention of the international community to the Khojaly genocide, including by erecting memorials in various countries around the world (<http://news.day.az/politics/351877.html> and <http://news.day.az/society/352014.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

Richard Morningstar, incoming US ambassador to Baku, arrives in Azerbaijan and says that Azerbaijan is “a very important country” for the US (<http://news.day.az/politics/351664.html>).

Grigory Karasin, Russia’s deputy foreign minister, says that Moscow hopes that progress on resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will be made in 2012-2013 (<http://news.day.az/politics/348425.html>).

The US Department of State, in its annual report on fight against terrorism, says that Baku has achieved “definite successes” in this area (<http://news.day.az/politics/347099.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan’s Foreign Policy

31 August

The Foreign Ministry says that Baku highly values cooperation by Hungary in the return to Azerbaijan of Ramil Safarov, an Azerbaijani officer who was convicted by a Hungarian court for killing an Armenian officer in Budapest in 2006 (<http://news.day.az/politics/352356.html>).

Fuad Alaskarov, head of the law enforcement department of the Presidential Administration, says that the return to Azerbaijan of Ramil Safarov, an Azerbaijani officer who was convicted by a Hungarian court for killing an Armenian officer in Budapest in 2006, shows that President Ilham Aliyev “stands behind each citizen of Azerbaijan and each soldier and officer” (<http://news.day.az/politics/352414.html>).

Ali Ahmadov, deputy chairman and executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that the pardoning of Ramil Safarov, an Azerbaijani officer who was convicted by a Hungarian court for killing an Armenian officer in Budapest in 2006, is “a triumph of decisiveness, courage and justice” (<http://news.day.az/politics/352397.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, a Milli Majlis deputy and deputy executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that the pardon President Ilham Aliyev gave to Ramil

Safarov, an Azerbaijani officer who was convicted by a Hungarian court for killing an Armenian officer in Budapest in 2006, is "a very joyous event" (<http://news.day.az/politics/352408.html>).

Bayram Safarov, president of the Azerbaijani Community of Nagorno-Karabakh, says that the extradition and pardoning of Ramil Safarov, an Azerbaijani officer who was convicted by a Hungarian court for killing an Armenian officer in Budapest in 2006, is "one of the steps on the path of the liberation of Karabakh" (<http://news.day.az/politics/352381.html>).

Leaders of the Azerbaijani community of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan meet with the leaders of youth organizations of Lithuania (<http://news.day.az/politics/352379.html>).

Allahshukur Pashazade, sheikh-ul-Islam and head of the Administration of Muslims of the Caucasus, meets with Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov (<http://news.day.az/politics/352372.html>).

Serik Primbetov, Kazakhstan's ambassador to Baku, meets with the Society of Azerbaijani-Kazakhstani Friendship (<http://news.day.az/politics/352332.html>).

30 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives Lars Nyberg, president of TeliaSonera (<http://news.day.az/politics/352172.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov, in Tehran for the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, meets with Iranian Oil Minister Rustam Hashemi and tells him that the arrest of the two Azerbaijani poets is having a negative impact on relations between their two countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/352218.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov, in Tehran for the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, meets with his Kazakhstan counterpart Erzhan Kazykhanov (<http://news.day.az/politics/352193.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov, in Tehran for the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, meets with his Syrian counterpart Waled al-Muallem (<http://news.day.az/politics/352121.html>).

Azerbaijani border guard officials meet with their Georgian counterparts to discuss the expansion of cooperation (<http://news.day.az/society/352077.html>).

Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy hosts a group of Egyptian students who are studying Azerbaijani at Ain-Shams University (<http://news.day.az/society/352412.html>).

Aleksandr Mishchenko, Ukraine's ambassador to Baku, hosts a reception on the 21st anniversary of Ukraine's independence. Among Azerbaijani officials in attendance is Media and Information Technology Minister Ali Abbasov (<http://news.day.az/politics/352257.html>).

Toyli Komekov, Turkmenistan's ambassador to Baku, says there is a firm foundation for relations between his country and Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/352075.html>).

Tetsui Yamada, director of the Central Asian and Caucasus Department of Japanese Agency for International Cooperation, says that Tokyo will continue to support the reconstruction of sewage and water lines in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/economy/352168.html>).

29 August

President Ilham Aliyev is awarded the Order of Friendship of the Peoples by Belorussian President Aleksandr Lukashenko during their meeting in Minsk (<http://news.day.az/politics/351767.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that the recent Armenian military maneuvers in the occupied territories testify to Yerevan's aggressive policy and the indifference of the international community to that aggression (<http://news.day.az/politics/351882.html>).

Namig Abbasov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Tashkent, says that Baku devotes "particular importance" to the strengthening of cooperation with Uzbekistan (<http://news.day.az/politics/351831.html>).

Nizami Jafarov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that certain limitations of the current Azerbaijani alphabet are connected with the use of the Internet (<http://news.day.az/society/351958.html>).

Serik Primbetov, Kazakhstan's ambassador to Baku, says that Astana is interested in broadening its cooperation with Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/351925.html>).

Rafi Arpaz, the incoming Israeli ambassador to Baku, arrives in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/352006.html>).

28 August

Economic Development Minister Shahin Mustafayev signs an economic cooperation agreement with Lee Ji-Han, Korea's ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/351824.html>).

Nizami Jafarov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the education ministries and cabinets of the governments of the Turkic language countries are considering the creation of an organization to discuss the creation of a common Turkic alphabet (<http://news.day.az/society/351754.html>).

Hijran Huseynova, chairman of the State Committee on Problems of the Family, Women and Children, meets with Latvian Social Security Minister Ilza Vinkele to discuss cooperation (<http://news.day.az/society/351698.html>).

An international seminar organized by ISESCO and TURKSOY on "The Role of Media in the Development of Inter-Cultural Dialogue" opens in Baku (<http://news.day.az/society/351707.html>).

Rovshan Taghiyev, president of the Congress of Azerbaijanis of Ukraine, says his group will seek to elect ethnic Azerbaijanis to the Ukrainian parliament

(<http://news.day.az/politics/351759.html>).

Rovshan Taghiyev, president of the Congress of Azerbaijanis of Ukraine, says his group is creating a legal aide office for its members
(<http://news.day.az/politics/351744.html>).

Lithuanian Foreign Minister Audronius Ažubalis says that Azerbaijan has much to be proud of (<http://news.day.az/politics/351544.html>).

Belorussian Economic Minister Nikolay Snopkov says Minsk and Baku are creating the legal basis for broadening licensing in each other's country
(<http://news.day.az/economy/351819.html>).

Valentina Matvienko, speaker of Russia's Federation Council, says that a certain tendency toward mutual understanding has been observed between the sides of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/351800.html>).

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mehdi Ahundzade says that the European office of the Non-Aligned Movement could be opened in Baku
(<http://news.day.az/politics/351757.html>).

27 August

Azerbaijan's Seismological Service is elected an associate member of the European Seismological Commission (<http://news.day.az/society/351517.html>).

Egemen Bagis, Turkey's European affairs minister, says that France, instead of focusing on the distortions of historical facts ought to devote greater efforts to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within the OSCE Minsk Group framework
(<http://news.day.az/politics/351559.html>).

Harold Auchter, head of the Trade and Industry Chamber of the German state of Rhineland-Pfaltz, says that his land is interested in developing economic cooperation with Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/economy/351433.html>).

25 August

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov says that the continuing detention of two Azerbaijani poets by Iran is damaging relations between Baku and Tehran
(<http://news.day.az/politics/351320.html>).

Fazil Aghamaly, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Yerevan's recent public statements are "a new form of slander" against Azerbaijan and Turkey
(<http://news.day.az/politics/351164.html>).

Ahmet Davutoglu, Turkey's foreign minister, says that Ankara would like to see Azerbaijan and Armenia negotiate in Istanbul
(<http://news.day.az/politics/351225.html>).

24 August

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Seid Abbas Arakci, Iran's deputy foreign minister (<http://news.day.az/politics/351195.html>).

Tamerlan Garayev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Jakarta, meets with Indonesian Deputy Defense Minister Marshal Erris Herrianto (<http://news.day.az/politics/351066.html>).

Rasim Sattarzade, an official in the ecology and natural resources ministry, says that Tehran's latest accusations against Baku are baseless (<http://news.day.az/politics/351183.html>).

Seid Abbas Arakci, Iran's deputy foreign minister, says that relations between Baku and Tehran are based on mutual respect and good neighborliness (<http://news.day.az/politics/351188.html>).

Seid Abbas Arakci, Iran's deputy foreign minister, says that the Iranian parliament is considering whether to declare the Khojaly tragedy genocide (<http://news.day.az/politics/351186.html>).

Seid Abbas Arakci, Iran's deputy foreign minister, says that the two Azerbaijani poets now detained in Iran were arrested for illegal acts (<http://news.day.az/politics/351185.html>).

Aydzhigit Buranov, Kyrgyzstan's charge d'affaires in Baku, says that Kyrgyzstan will be opening an embassy in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/351196.html>).

The European Commission allocates 19.5 million euros to Azerbaijan for the reformation of its migration law and judicial system (<http://news.day.az/politics/351108.html>).

Constantin Yerocostopoulos, special representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, completes his mission to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/351038.html>).

Raja Al Marzouqi takes up the position of IMF representative in Baku (<http://news.day.az/economy/351043.html>).

23 August

Prime Minister Arthur Rasizade signs the Bishkek Declaration of the Bishkek Summit of the Council of Cooperation of the Turkic Language Countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/350849.html>).

Prime Minister Arthur Rasizade meets his Kyrgyzstan counterpart Omurbek Babanov (<http://news.day.az/economy/350870.html>).

Deputy Prime Minister Ali Hasanov attends the ceremonial opening of a Park of Mexican-Azerbaijani Friendship with a statue of Heydar Aliyev in Mexico City (<http://news.day.az/politics/350866.html>).

Deputy Prime Minister Ali Hasanov meets with Oscar Arse, speaker of the Mexican Chamber of Deputies (<http://news.day.az/politics/351295.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Lee Ji Han, Korea's ambassador to Baku, on the completion of his assignment in Azerbaijan

(<http://news.day.az/politics/350966.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Mikhael Lavon-Lotem, Israel's ambassador to Baku, on the completion of his assignment in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/350940.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Saber Abdelqadr Mansur, Egypt's ambassador to Baku, on the completion of his assignment in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/350927.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that the Tanzanian interior ministry has promised to remove a map from its website which incorrectly shows Nagorno-Karabakh to be separate from Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/350876.html>).

The Foreign Ministry reminds that illegal visits to the occupied territories show a lack of respect to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/350963.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that the Azerbaijani embassy in Moscow is seeking information about possible Azerbaijani victims in the incident at the mosque in the Daghestani city of Khasavyurt (<http://news.day.az/politics/350868.html>).

Ali Alizade, consul general in Tabriz, says that Azerbaijan is helping Iran in the aftermath of the earthquake just as Iran has helped Azerbaijan in its times of troubles (<http://news.day.az/politics/350936.html>).

Govhar Bakhshaliyeva, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the main reason for the rise of a shadow economy in Armenia is the greed of the Yerevan leadership (<http://news.day.az/politics/350774.html>).

The State Statistics Committee says that foreign investment has increased by 36.8 percent this year over last (<http://news.day.az/economy/350956.html>).

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu criticizes Yerevan's "unconstructive position" on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/350891.html>).

22 August

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with Ramil Hasanov, secretary general of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic Language Countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/350696.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov says that Azerbaijan enjoys the support of the entire Turkic world in its effort to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/350807.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Azerbaijan's membership in the Non-Aligned Movement has strengthened Baku's international position (<http://news.day.az/politics/350787.html>).

Abbasali Hasanov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Dushanbe, meets with Tajik Transportation Minister Nizom Khakimov

(<http://news.day.az/economy/350711.html>).

Rovshan Rzayev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says Iran is using Armenia as a means to escape the sanctions regime (<http://news.day.az/politics/350640.html>).

Fuad Muradov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that ever more international organizations are taking note of the deteriorating situation in Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/350565.html>).

Azerbaijani soldiers begin four months of English language training in Lithuania (<http://news.day.az/society/350684.html>).

Turkish President Abdulla Gul says that the process of strengthening ties among the Turkish countries has intensified since the October 2009 Nakhchivan Agreement (<http://news.day.az/politics/350812.html>).

Seid Abbas Arakci, Iran's deputy foreign minister, says that the broadening of relations between Baku and Tehran serves the interests of the entire region (<http://news.day.az/politics/350739.html>).

Lt.Gen. Mark Hertley, commander of US armed forces in Europe, says that Washington highly values Azerbaijan's contribution in Afghanistan and Baku's steps to building a military that corresponds to NATO standards (<http://news.day.az/politics/350808.html>).

21 August

Zhalya Aliyeva, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenians are fleeing Armenia because of Yerevan's policies (<http://news.day.az/politics/350442.html>).

20 August

The Azerbaijani government names new military attaches to Ukraine, Turkey, the US and Pakistan (<http://news.day.az/politics/350414.html>).

Members of the Congress of Azerbaijanis of Sweden meet with Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt (<http://news.day.az/politics/350396.html>).

Tamir Suleymanov is elected president of the National Assembly of Azerbaijanis of Georgia (<http://news.day.az/politics/350402.html>).

18 August

Eynulla Madatli, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Kyiv, meets Crimean Prime Minister Anatoly Mogilev in Simferopol (<http://news.day.az/politics/350241.html>).

Azay Guliyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that young Armenians do not want to defend the lands, which their government has occupied (<http://news.day.az/politics/350141.html>).

Lt. Gen. Elchin Guliyev, chief of Azerbaijan's Border Service, marks the 93rd anniversary of the establishment of that organization (<http://news.day.az/politics/350229.html>).

Allahshukur Pashazade, head of the Administration of Muslims of the Caucasus, sends assistance to the victims of the earthquake in Iran (<http://news.day.az/society/350243.html>).

17 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives Egyptian Ambassador Saber Mansur on the latter's completion of his service in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/350071.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says in Austria that a stable economy is the guarantee of long-term development and that education is the foundation of this (<http://news.day.az/politics/350190.html>).

Malahat Ibrahimgizi, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Yerevan's plan to settle Armenians from Syria in the occupied territories is the latest provocation by Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/350076.html>).

Azerbaijani border guards block five armed smugglers at the Iranian-Azerbaijani border (<http://news.day.az/society/350133.html>).

Adam Sterling, charge d'affaires at the US embassy in Baku, hosts an Iftar attended by, among others, Allahshukur Pashazade, sheikh-ul-Islam and head of the Administration of Muslims of the Caucasus (<http://news.day.az/politics/350191.html>).

The Iranian embassy in Baku greets all Muslims in Azerbaijan on the occasion of Ramadan (<http://news.day.az/society/350147.html>).

16 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives Israeli Ambassador Mikhael Lavon-Lotem on the latter's completion of his diplomatic appointment in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/349928.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Baku supports the declaration on Syria made by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (<http://news.day.az/politics/349853.html>).

Nasimi Agayev, Azerbaijan's consul general in Los Angeles, meets with students at Chapman University (<http://news.day.az/society/349857.html>).

Bakhtiyar Sadykhov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Syrian Armenians do not want to settle in the occupied territories as Yerevan hopes (<http://news.day.az/politics/349669.html>).

Jeykhun Osmanly, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Yerevan sees the growing military strength of Azerbaijan and recognizes that its idea about a "Greater Armenia" has no future (<http://news.day.az/politics/349954.html>).

SOCAR signs a cooperation agreement with the Kvemo Kartli region of Georgia (<http://news.day.az/economy/349929.html>).

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation again condemns Armenia for its occupation

of Azerbaijani lands (<http://news.day.az/politics/349882.html>).

Hulusi Kilic, Turkey's ambassador to Baku, greets the Azerbaijani people on Ramadan (<http://news.day.az/politics/349904.html>).

Larisa Leshchenko is named the new manager of the World Bank office in Baku (<http://news.day.az/economy/349873.html>).

15 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, president of the International Chess Federation (<http://news.day.az/politics/349714.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with his Kazakhstan counterpart Erezhan Kazykhanov on the sidelines of the Fourth Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Summit in Mecca (<http://news.day.az/politics/349674.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, a Milli Majlis deputy and deputy executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that Turkey is playing a most positive role in promoting the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/349771.html>).

Turkish Economics Minister Zafer Caglayan says in Baku that Ankara is interested in promoting economic cooperation on a trilateral basis with Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan (<http://news.day.az/economy/349749.html>).

Turkish Economics Minister Zafer Caglayan says in Baku that Ankara is ready to share with Azerbaijan its experience in creating industrial zones (<http://news.day.az/economy/349614.html>).

Tetsuya Hirose, first Japanese ambassador to Baku and currently secretary general of the Union of Parliaments of the Asia-Pacific Region, says that the successes Azerbaijanis achieved at the Olympic Games in London reflect the great attention and concern of Heydar Aliyev and President Ilham Aliyev (<http://news.day.az/politics/349755.html>).

The Georgian Statistics Agency says Azerbaijan was the second largest foreign investor in Georgia in 2011 (<http://news.day.az/economy/349748.html>).

14 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives Turkish Economic Minister Zafer Caglayan (<http://news.day.az/politics/349500.html>).

At the direction of President Ilham Aliyev, the Emergency Situations Ministry delivers assistance to the victims of the Iranian earthquake (<http://news.day.az/politics/349579.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev receives General Miles Diring, commander of the National Guard of the US state of Oklahoma (<http://news.day.az/politics/349451.html>).

Economic Development Minister Shahin Mustafayev tells the Baku ministerial

meeting of the Council of Cooperation of Turkic Language States that Azerbaijan is increasing its trade with these states (<http://news.day.az/economy/349502.html>).

The Ukrainian foreign ministry says that media reports claiming that Kyiv has sold advanced weaponry to Armenia are not true and are "a provocation" (<http://news.day.az/politics/349520.html>).

Turkish Economics Minister Zafer Caglayan says that Turkey expects to increase its trade with Azerbaijan to a level of 4 billion US dollars by the end of 2012 (<http://news.day.az/economy/349538.html>).

13 August

President Ilham Aliyev tells the ambassadors to Baku of Muslim countries that "Azerbaijan in its foreign policy devotes particular significance to cooperation with Islamic countries" and defends their positions in all international organizations (<http://news.day.az/politics/349342.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Li Ji Han, Korean ambassador to Baku on the completion of his assignment to Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/349303.html>).

At the initiative of First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, the Heydar Aliyev Foundation provides an Iftar dinner for 1200 Pakistani orphans (<http://news.day.az/politics/349260.html>).

Yashar Aliyev, ambassador for special assignments, meets with Chilean Foreign Minister Fernando Schmidt (<http://news.day.az/politics/349258.html>).

Rahman Mustafayev, ambassador to Greece and Albania, says that Baku seeks to promote TAP and Nabucco West equally (<http://news.day.az/economy/349325.html>).

Rovnag Abdullayev, president of SOCAR, receives Roy Oelking, Group President-Hydrocarbons of the US company KBR (<http://news.day.az/economy/349363.html>).

An Azerbaijani delegation takes place in the Fourth Hunnic-Turkic Congress in Budapest (news.day.az/society/349301.html).

The State Customs Committee announces that its officers have arrested an Iranian attempting to smuggle narcotics into Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/society/349299.html>).

Khanlar Hajiyev, a judge at the European Human Rights Court says that compared with earlier years, there has been a breakthrough in the work of the Supreme and Constitutional Courts of Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/society/349291.html>).

An Assembly of Azerbaijani Youth is created in Georgia (<http://news.day.az/society/349240.html>).

12 August

The Foreign Ministry says that Baku has offered to provide humanitarian assistance

to Iran (<http://news.day.az/politics/349150.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that there is no indication that any Azerbaijani citizen was among those who suffered from the earthquake in Iran (<http://news.day.az/politics/349141.html>).

11 August

Rovnag Abdullayev, president of SOCAR, receives Kyrgyzstan Industry and Energy Minister Askarbek Shadiyev (<http://news.day.az/economy/349020.html>).

The Azerbaijani embassy in Bishkek hosts a meeting of Kyrgyz students who have enrolled in the Diplomatic Academy of Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/349070.html>).

The International Center of the Diaspora stages a solidarity demonstration in front of the Turkish embassy in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/348922.html>).

10 August

Novruz Mammadov, head of the foreign relations department of the Presidential Administration, says that Baku is not against Russian proposals to continue to rent the Gabala radar site, but that Moscow must "take into consideration" changes in the South Caucasus since it established that site in Soviet times (<http://news.day.az/politics/348911.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, a Milli Majlis deputy and deputy executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that, "the foreign policy of Azerbaijan is pragmatic, flexible and based on an activist diplomacy. The goals of our foreign policy are well-known. The foreign political course, conducted by President Ilham Aliyev, is bearing fruit" (<http://news.day.az/politics/348956.html>).

Bahar Muradova, deputy speaker of the Milli Majlis, says that Azerbaijan is committed to conducting its own independent domestic and foreign policies (<http://news.day.az/politics/348905.html>).

Shahin Abdullayev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Cairo, hosts a Day of Azerbaijan at the embassy there in connection with Ramadan (<http://news.day.az/politics/348777.html>).

Abel Maharramov, rector of Baku State University, tells Li Ji Ha, outgoing Korean ambassador to Baku, that his university will reopen the Korean Center there after reconstruction (<http://news.day.az/society/348891.html>).

Günther Oettinger, the European Union commissioner for energy, says that Azerbaijan is an important player in energy issues and that the EU views the Nagorno-Karabakh region as an "inalienable" part of the Azerbaijani republic (<http://news.day.az/politics/348810.html>).

Nurlan Tleubayev, president of the Kazakhstan Grain Union, says that Kazakhstan will export its grain through Azerbaijan and use the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway beginning in 2014 (<http://news.day.az/economy/348941.html>).

9 August

Ambassador Agshin Mehdiyev, Azerbaijan's permanent representative to the United Nations, says that the UN Security Council will study Yerevan's plans to resettle Armenian refugees from Syria and Libya in the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/348648.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, a Milli Majlis deputy and deputy executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that the events in Syria "have acquired a yet broader character" (<http://news.day.az/politics/348640.html>).

The Baku Institute of History releases volume four of documents on the genocide Armenians conducted against Azerbaijanis in 1918-1920 (<http://news.day.az/politics/348615.html>).

The Iranian embassy announces that it is simplifying application procedures for Azerbaijanis to obtain visas to visit Iran (<http://news.day.az/politics/348742.html>).

8 August

Elnur Aslanov, head of the political analysis and information support department of the Presidential Administration, says that, "the artificial dragging out of talks on Karabakh by Yerevan freezes the development of Armenia" (<http://news.day.az/politics/348389.html>).

Nizami Jafarov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenia can get out of its current crisis only by improving relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey (<http://news.day.az/politics/348436.html>).

Aydyn Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Azerbaijan has often been the victim of terrorist actions by Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/348401.html>).

Grigory Karasin, Russia's deputy foreign minister, says that Moscow hopes that progress on resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will be made in 2012-2013 (<http://news.day.az/politics/348425.html>).

The trial of Farid Huseyn and Shahriyar Hajizade, the two Azerbaijani poets under arrest in Iran, concludes in Tabriz without a verdict being announced (<http://news.day.az/society/348441.html>).

Teymuraz Sharashenidze, Georgia's ambassador to Baku, says that Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey can "jointly provide security for infrastructure like pipelines and railroads" in the region (<http://news.day.az/politics/348497.html>).

Teymuraz Sharashenidze, Georgia's ambassador to Baku, says Tbilisi highly values Azerbaijan's support in overcoming the consequences of the Georgian-Russian war (<http://news.day.az/politics/348484.html>).

Anatoly Rusetsky, president of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, says that Minsk has proposed to Baku that the two countries cooperate in the use of military stores (<http://news.day.az/society/348372.html>).

7 August

Finance Minister Samir Sharifov receives Henry Karelly, the new regional director of the World Bank (<http://news.day.az/economy/348320.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that the staff of the Azerbaijani embassy in Damascus has left Syria (<http://news.day.az/politics/348191.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that statements by state legislators in certain US states in support of Armenia do not reflect the policy of the US government about the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/348240.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says Baku is investigating the arrest of four Azerbaijanis in the Iranian city of Ardebil (<http://news.day.az/politics/348199.html>).

Vahid Ahmadov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says inflation in Armenia reflects both rising international prices for grain and the unfavorable situation inside Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/348224.html>).

Arif Mammadov, director of the Civil Aviation Administration, says that Yerevan is violating international legal norms by seeking to open the Khankendi airport in the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/348298.html>).

Leaders of the Azerbaijani community of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan say they hope that the international community will condemn Armenia for its unconstructive action and take real measures to force Yerevan to end its occupation (<http://news.day.az/politics/348249.html>).

The Azerbaijan Foundation for Support of Exports and Investments says that Tajikistan has invited Azerbaijani firms to invest in that country (<http://news.day.az/economy/348226.html>).

Nazim Ibrahimov, chairman of the State Committee for Work with the Diaspora, says that the leaders of the Azerbaijani diaspora at the Bodrum forum adopted a resolution calling on members of the diaspora to lobby the governments of the countries in which they live (<http://news.day.az/politics/348268.html>).

Allahshukur Pashazade, sheikh-ul-Islam and head of the Administration of Muslims of the Caucasus, says that the number of people in Russia who have accepted Islam has grown in recent years (<http://news.day.az/society/348316.html>).

Emin Hajiyev, president of the Azerbaijani Youth Organization of Russia, says that the main factor behind that organization's success is the work of its leader, Leyla Aliyeva (<http://news.day.az/politics/348264.html>).

6 August

President Ilham Aliyev meets in London with UK Prime Minister David Cameron (<http://news.day.az/politics/347695.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Azerbaijan will raise the issue of Yerevan's plans to resettle Armenians from Syria in the occupied territories in all international organizations and with the co-chair countries of the OSCE Minsk Group

(<http://news.day.az/politics/347950.html>).

Aydyn Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Yerevan's plans to resettle Syrian Armenians in the occupied territories are a provocation (<http://news.day.az/politics/348046.html>).

Musa Gasymly, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that leadership in Yerevan is deeply split on its policies (<http://news.day.az/politics/347993.html>).

Azerbaijani journalists organize a protest in front of the Iranian embassy in Baku to demand that Tehran release two Azerbaijani poets (<http://news.day.az/politics/348066.html>).

The Iranian embassy in Baku announces that the temporary visas it is requiring for Azerbaijanis seeking to visit in Iran will be free (<http://news.day.az/politics/348009.html>).

5 August

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that, "each representative of the Azerbaijani diaspora represents his Motherland and his people abroad" (<http://news.day.az/politics/347918.html>).

4 August

Aydyn Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that if the Armenians insist on examining the contents of Azerbaijani textbooks at a session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Azerbaijani representatives will insist on an examination of Armenian textbooks at the same time (<http://news.day.az/politics/347731.html>).

3 August

The Foreign Ministry says that the just-completed visit of Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov to Latin America has promoted relations between Baku and that region by showing the particular importance that President Ilham Aliyev has laid on broadening the geography of Azerbaijani diplomacy (<http://news.day.az/politics/347557.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Mahmoud Mammadgulyev says that talks between Baku and the European Commission on an association agreement will start up again in September (<http://news.day.az/economy/347611.html>).

The Turkish embassy says that media reports that two Turkish deputies met with Armenian officials are without foundation (<http://news.day.az/politics/347584.html>).

The government of Kyrgyzstan announces that Bishkek and Baku will jointly construct an oil processing plant in Kyrgyzstan (<http://news.day.az/economy/347631.html>).

2 August

The Foreign Ministry says that Tehran will require Azerbaijanis visiting Iran between

August 5 and August 31 to obtain visas under a temporary visa regime the Iranian authorities have introduced during the summit of Non-Aligned States there (<http://news.day.az/politics/347449.html>).

Arif Aghayev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Bishkek, is received by Kyrgyzstan President Almazbek Atambayev on the occasion of Aghayev's completion of his assignment in the Kyrgyzstan capital (<http://news.day.az/politics/347353.html>).

Twelve Azerbaijani organizations in Georgia form an Assembly of Azerbaijani Youth Organizations in that country (<http://news.day.az/society/347394.html>).

The Cuban government names Omar Medina Gvintero as its new ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/347364.html>).

Tugba Balci, chairman of the Youth Council of the Pan-European Regional Council of the International Trade Union Confederation, says that unemployment in Azerbaijan is now less than it is in Europe (<http://news.day.az/politics/347285.html>).

1 August

Culture and Tourism Minister Abulfas Garayev receives Pascal Meunier, the new French ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/economy/347235.html>).

Culture and Tourism Minister Abulfas Garayev receives Israeli Ambassador Mikhael Lavon-Lotem (<http://news.day.az/society/347264.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Mahmoud Mammadgulyev says that Baku's talks with World Trade Organization officials concerning accession were productive (<http://news.day.az/economy/347244.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that the Azerbaijani embassy in Damascus continues to work normally (<http://news.day.az/politics/347181.html>).

Elin Suleymanov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Washington, takes part in a conference of the National Guard of the US state of Oklahoma (<http://news.day.az/politics/347266.html>).

Bakhtiyar Sadykhov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says the increasing number of suicides in Armenia reflects the deterioration of economic conditions there (<http://news.day.az/politics/347067.html>).

A delegation of the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan visits its counterparts in Estonia for an exercise (<http://news.day.az/politics/347209.html>).

The US Department of State, in its annual report on the struggle with terrorism, says that Baku has achieved "definite successes" in this area (<http://news.day.az/politics/347099.html>).

Andrey Kondakov, president of the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, says that Azerbaijan has achieved impressive tempos of economic growth, especially in the middle of the last decade (<http://news.day.az/economy/347137.html>).

Note to Readers

The editors of "Azerbaijan in the World" hope that you find it useful and encourage you to submit your comments and articles via email (adabiweekly@ada.edu.az). The materials it contains reflect the personal views of their authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan.