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AZERBAIJAN-EU: **PARTNERSHIP IN PROGRESS**

Emin Eyubov, Amb.
Head of Mission
Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the EU

Integration into the European and Euro-Atlantic institutions has been at the top of Azerbaijan's foreign policy agenda ever since our country re-gained its independence and state sovereignty in early 1990s. Azerbaijan views the European Union as a good model of a successful development in political, economic, social and humanitarian fields. The cooperation with the EU and its institutions is not an end in itself, but rather means to raise the living standards for the citizens of Azerbaijan, develop the economy, improve public administration and judiciary, and, in the words of President Ilham Aliyev, "to modernize all spheres of life in our country".

The legal foundation of relations between Azerbaijan and the European Union was laid by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) signed on April 22, 1996. The agreement which entered into force on July 1, 1999, provides an appropriate framework for the political dialogue between the parties allowing the development of political relations, supports Azerbaijan's efforts to consolidate its democracy, to develop its economy and complete the transition into a market economy and promotes trade and investment, as well as harmonious economic, social, financial, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation.

The work of this and other Azerbaijani-European Union institutions was strengthened in June 2005 when President Ilham Aliyev issued a decree establishing the State Commission on European Integration of the Republic of Azerbaijan. This Commission serves as the main body of the Government, which provides coordination and oversight of activities of all governmental agencies in framework of relations with the EU, implementation of the Azerbaijan-EU ENP Action Plan, preparation of the National Progress Report of Azerbaijan and other relevant measures.

Among the most important of these partnership relationships are those involving the EU's special representative for the South Caucasus, the TACIS program which promotes infrastructure development, private sector expansion and human resources growth, EU support of refugee and IDP programs, energy and transportation programs, the rehabilitation of areas that have been impacted by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI).

The ENPI, which replaced TACIS and which is scheduled to last through 2013, provides support to democratic development and good governance programs, socio-economic reforms, and reforms in other areas, including transportation, energy and the environment. And this program has been supplemented by "twinning" projects in which a current EU member state has been "twinned" with Azerbaijan in particular areas. Of particular importance to Azerbaijan have been the EU's Rehabilitation Program which has helped to repair war-damaged infrastructure in the Fizuli, Agdam and Agjabedi districts and European support for the development of the TRACECA transportation corridor.

Azerbaijan has been an active participant in the European Neighborhood Policy since the Azerbaijan-EU ENP Action Plan was adopted on 14 November 2006. Baku has its own national action plan intended to help Azerbaijan make the kind of reforms that will allow it to more fully integrate into European institutions by promoting improved coordination within the established political dialogue formats and possible involvement of partner countries in aspects of Common Foreign and Security Policy and European Defense and Security Policy, the exchange of information, joint training and exercises and possible participation in the EU-led crisis management operations. This program also envisages the gradual opening of certain Community programs, based on mutual interests and available resources. Areas to be explored include education, training, education, youth, research, environment, as well as culture.

The Azerbaijan-EU Action Plan identifies ten priority areas for cooperation. These include joint efforts to:

Contribute to a peaceful solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the basis of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and OSCE documents and decisions;

Strengthen democracy in the country, including through fair and transparent electoral process, in line with international requirements;

Strengthen the protection of human rights and of fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, in compliance with international commitments of Azerbaijan (PCA, CoE, OSCE, UN);

Improve the business and investment climate, particularly by strengthening the fight against corruption;

Improve functioning of customs;

Support balanced and sustained economic development, with a particular focus on diversification of economic activities, development of rural areas, poverty reduction and social/territorial cohesion; promote sustainable development including the protection of the environment;

Bring into line economic legislation and administrative practices;

Strengthen EU-Azerbaijan energy bilateral cooperation and energy and transport regional cooperation, in order to achieve the objectives of the November 2004 Baku Ministerial Conferences;

Enhance cooperation in the field of Justice, Freedom and Security, including in the field of border management; and

Strengthen regional cooperation.

Azerbaijan is now an active partner in the Eastern Partnership initiative. This program, put forward by Poland and Sweden a year ago and approved by the European Council in March 2009, calls for the development of deeper bilateral relations between the EU, on the one hand, and Azerbaijan and five other countries in the region, on the other, through the conclusion of new association agreements, improved economic integration, and increased mobility via visa facilitation. President Ilham Aliyev attended the Eastern Partnership Summit held in Prague on May 7, 2009, where the Joint Declaration creating this partnership was adopted.

One measure of growing ties between Azerbaijan and the European Union is trade. At present, the EU is the main trading partner of Azerbaijan, responsible for 55 percent of its external trade, with Azerbaijan exporting oil and gas and the European Union exporting manufactured goods such as machinery and transportation equipment. Another measure is the growing cooperation between Azerbaijan and the EU at the parliamentary level, cooperation that has led to the creation of the Azerbaijan-EU Parliamentary Cooperation Committee.

But perhaps the most important evidence of cooperation between Azerbaijan and the European Union has been the latter's unwavering support for Azerbaijan's position on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Although the EU is not directly involved in the settlement process of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, it has frequently spoken in support of the principle of territorial integrity of states as being the foundation of any resolution.

Given these shared values and principles, Azerbaijan looks forward to growing integration with the European Union, confident that both the people of Azerbaijan and the peoples of the EU will benefit in the future just as they have in the past.

**THE EUROPEAN UNION'S EASTERN PARTNERSHIP:
WHAT DOES IT OFFER AZERBAIJAN?**

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Azerbaijan has sought to integrate itself into European structures since the recovery of its independence in 1991. Consequently, Baku has always been interested in EU efforts to reach out to countries to the east of the Union in the hopes that such efforts will ultimately lead to EU membership for Azerbaijan. Given that history, Azerbaijan is extremely interested in the possibilities the new EU Eastern Partnership offers, but Baku has many questions about the meaning of this new program.

Announced at the end of 2008, the Eastern Partnership has been declared to be a further step in the development of relations between the EU, on the one hand, and six former Soviet republics – Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia – on the other. But because the program is so new and so many aspects of it are as yet not precisely defined, there are mixed feelings about it in many capitals, including Baku, with some seeing it as a consolation prize offered to countries that will not ever be offered membership and others arguing that it represents a logical next step toward the inclusion of these countries in the EU.

That debate was also fuelled by the way in which discussions about this program have been taking place within the EU. Former Eastern European countries now in the European Union have been enthusiastic about the program and want to develop relations with all or some of the six as quickly as possible. But the older members of the EU, either because they are concerned about the impact of any further enlargement on their prerogatives or because they would prefer to see the Union move forward in other directions, including the Southern Dimension of the European Neighborhood Policy, are reluctant to move forward in this direction.

The EU and its member countries have also complicated the situation by being explicit that relations between them and each of the six will be nationally specific, something that inevitably reduces the importance of the overall Eastern Partnership idea. But it is also the case that each of the six has pursued its own distinctive approach to the EU and to the Eastern Partnership.

Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine have been in varying degrees suspicious about this program, fearful that they are being offered a consolation prize in place of the membership they seek. Armenia and Belarus, in contrast, have viewed the Partnership idea as an opportunity to escape from regional isolation. And Azerbaijan while continuing to want closer ties with the EU put its participation in a multilateral component of the Eastern Partnership at risk by making it very clear that it would not engage in any cooperative measures with Armenia as long as Yerevan remains in occupation of Azerbaijani territory.

These various positions and tensions were not resolved before the EU and the six Eastern “partners” signed their joint declaration in Prague in May, and they have not been resolved since that time either. But several things have become clear over the last two months. Two of the Eastern Partnership countries, Georgia and Ukraine, were eager to move forward with EU ties as quickly as possible. Azerbaijan in contrast was more restrained because of the Armenian issue, and, consequently, Azerbaijan’s understanding of the Eastern Partnership can be said to include the

following elements. First, the EP represents a continuation of the EU's regional approach. Second, it reflects a repacking of existing programs rather than the development of something completely new. And third, it leaves open both the question of the way in which the six can interact with the EU – each has enormous discretion – and the possibilities that each of them has for eventually being invited to join the EU.

From Azerbaijan's perspective, that means that Baku welcomes the country-specific thrust of the Eastern Partnership but won't get involved in multilateral arrangements within it alongside Armenia, as long as the latter remains in occupation of Azerbaijan territory. Further, it means that Baku will seek to push the EP in the direction of addressing the political problems member states face. And last but not least, the Eastern Partnership offers Azerbaijan yet another opportunity to advance its own interests, political and economic, with important EU countries and to demonstrate that it too is a good and reliable partner for them.

**THE AZERBAIJANI-RUSSIAN GAS ACCORD:
A "MILESTONE" ON MORE THAN ONE ROAD**

Paul Goble
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Gazprom and SOCAR signed an agreement on June 29 under the terms of which the Russian company will purchase 500 million cubic meters of gas from Azerbaijan next year. That gas will then pass through Russian territory rather than flow through one of the various pipelines projected to bypass Russia. And consequently it was no surprise that visiting Russian President Dmitry Medvedev described the deal as "a milestone" in Moscow's efforts to prevent Europe from diversifying its gas suppliers. And while it is certainly that at least in the short term, the accord and the rapprochement between Moscow and Baku are equally important "milestones" on at least three other roads as well.

First, Azerbaijan was in a position to sign such an accord not only because it is a net exporter of gas rather than only an importer and transit country. As recently as three years ago, Azerbaijan was importing gas from Russia, something it stopped doing when Moscow said it would dramatically increase the price. And consequently, during most of that period, Azerbaijan approached the issue of sending gas to Western markets not as a producer but rather as a country through which gas produced by others would pass.

But in the intervening period, Azerbaijan had rapidly developed its own gas fields and is projected to produce 30 billion cubic meters in 2010. Not only does that allow Azerbaijan to export a significant portion, but that level of production, which will rise even further by 2014 when the second phase of the Shah Deniz field will go on line, means that Baku under the terms of the agreement committed itself to sell to Gazprom less than two percent of its output and a relatively small portion of its projected exports by other routes.

Consequently, although he did not use the term, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev could certainly have described the Gazprom-SOCAR accord as a "milestone" on his country's plans to diversify the export of natural gas. And while Baku's willingness to do so may give Moscow more influence over the Europeans than they would like as well as reducing some of the enthusiasm for pipeline projects bypassing Russia, it is simply wrong to say as some Russian and Western analysts have that this accord will kill them. Azerbaijan is producing too much gas and is selling too little of it to Russia to justify such apocalyptic conclusions.

Second, the Russian side was so interested in reaching this accord that it was willing to pay a premium for Azerbaijani gas, a premium that some are suggesting reflected the political as opposed to the economic intention of the agreement. From Moscow's point of view, it is certainly true that politics trumped economics in this interest, but from Azerbaijan's, both factors not surprisingly were in play.

On the one hand, under President Aliyev, Azerbaijan has pursued what he calls a "balanced" foreign policy, one in which every move toward the West is matched by another toward Moscow. In this case, Baku's willingness to sign an accord with Moscow underscores its commitment to find and develop other routes and not, as some have suggested, a retreat from that commitment. At the joint press conference with the visiting Russian leader, President Aliyev said as much.

On the other, Baku was certainly pleased to be offered the higher price for its gas because it will now certainly argue that the Russian commitment represents the minimum other foreign purchasers should expect to pay. Moscow may have assumed that it was worth paying the premium to get the political result it wanted, but Baku did not give the Russian side the total victory some have suggested Medvedev obtained and SOCAR is certainly going to profit financially as a result of the Russian president's one-day visit to the Azerbaijani capital.

And third – and this almost certainly is the most important "milestone" of the meeting – President Medvedev's coming to Baku to oversee the signing of this accord signals something else: the rise of Azerbaijan in the calculations of the Russian government. From Russia's point of view, Azerbaijan has always been the prize in the South Caucasus because of its location and natural resources. But now both of those things have become even more important than they were only a few years ago, and Medvedev clearly felt that it was important that he rather than any other Russian official should come to Baku.

A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

President Ilham Aliyev, on the eve of Azerbaijan's Armed Forces Day, says that "today the Azerbaijan army is the strongest in the region" and that "if in the first years of [the country's] independence Heydar Aliyev had been the leader of Azerbaijan, then Azerbaijani lands would never have been subject to occupation." The president adds that he "does not doubt that the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan will be restored, that an end will be put to this injustice." Not only is "international law on our side," but both military force and economic potential are "on our side" as

well. "We operate on the strength of the Azerbaijani people," he says. And he concludes by saying that "we live in conditions of war and therefore we must all be involved in the building of the army. The war is still not at an end, its first stage has been completed, and at any moment we must be ready by armed force to liberate our native land from the enemy" (http://president.az/articles.php?item_id=20090625112703758&sec_id=11).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov says that "Azerbaijan does not plan to join NATO" but feels it is benefiting from its cooperation with the Western alliance (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162106.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that "Azerbaijan is interested in the restoration of stability in Iran." Speaking in Tokyo, he adds that Iran has the right to develop its nuclear program for peaceful purposes if it cooperates with the IAEA (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161835.html>).

The Azerbaijan foreign ministry says, in response to a Turkish proposal to raise the Nagorno-Karabakh issue at the UN Security Council, that "Azerbaijan always has welcomed the discussion of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within the framework of the international community" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161347.html>).

Polad Bul-Bul oglu, Azerbaijan's ambassador to the Russian Federation, says that in recent times, there has been "a positive dynamic in the coming together" of Russia and Azerbaijan "not only in the political but in the economic sphere as well" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161940.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

The Russian foreign ministry says that "Russia is prepared to be the guarantor of a Nagorno-Karabakh resolution" once the parties agree on one (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162586.html>). Dmitry Rogozin, Russia's permanent representative at NATO, says that "Russian military forces are the guarantor of peace in the South Caucasus" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162639.html>).

Russian Federation President Dmitry Medvedev says that his visit to Baku, albeit brief, reflects "the strategic character" of relations between Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162951.html>).

In advance of his visit to Baku, Israeli President Shimon Peres says that "Azerbaijan is for [him] a special country which I can trust." Like Israel, it is a small country which seeks to become "great" by using contemporary science and technology. The Israeli leader says he looks forward to expanding ties with Baku and at some point to the opening of an Azerbaijani embassy in Jerusalem (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162588.html>).

During the second day of his visit to Azerbaijan, Israeli President Shimon Peres says in a speech at the Baku Language University that Israel supports the principle of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and is grateful for Azerbaijan's longstanding tolerance toward the Jewish community (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162866.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

30 June

Mikhail Zabelin, a member of the Milli Majlis and a member of the Azerbaijan-Russian Inter-parliamentary Group says that conversations between President Ilham Aliyev and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict give "a new push toward its resolution" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/163056.html>).

The French Foreign Ministry issues a statement saying that "France will devote all efforts for a just resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/163045.html>).

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu says in Corfu after meeting his Armenian counterpart Edvard Nalbandyan that "Ankara has decided on the normalization of relations with Armenia" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/163050.html>).

The Iranian embassy in Baku says that Ambassador Mohammed Baghir Behrami is in Tehran for consultations (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/163051.html>).

29 June

President Ilham Aliyev, at a joint press conference with visiting Russian Federation President Dmitry Medvedev, announces an agreement with Moscow on the export of Azerbaijani gas to Russia, a development he says opens "a new sphere in our relations." President Aliyev says that this is a commercial rather than a political step, part of the diversification of the sale of Azerbaijan's gas (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162951.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Russian Federation President Dmitry Medvedev. The two meet one-on-one and sign joint declarations on the Caspian Sea and on the principles of completing the delimitation of the Azerbaijani-Russian border. President Medvedev says that his visit to Baku reflects "the strategic character" of relations between Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162951.html>).

The Azerbaijani foreign ministry says it has received no information from the Iranian embassy in Baku or the Iranian foreign ministry in Tehran that Iran has recalled its ambassador from the Azerbaijani capital to protest the visit of Israeli President Shimon Peres (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/163014.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov meets Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu at the sidelines of a meeting of the OSCE in Greece (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162919.html>).

Samad Seyidov, the chief of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that "the processes taking place in the Council of Europe are weakening that organization," and he points to the "unequal" approach of the council to Azerbaijan and Armenia (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/163001.html>).

28 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives Israeli President Shimon Peres. The two watch as inter-government agreements are signed in the fields of culture, education and science and information and communications technology. Afterwards, they have a one-on-one meeting (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162866.html>).

27 June

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan says that Turkey has made progress in its talks with its regional partners, including Azerbaijan, on the establishment of its proposed Platform of Stability and Cooperation in the Caucasus (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162835.html>).

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu says that "the parallel consideration of the questions of the normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia and the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem will guarantee peace in the region" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162813.html>).

US Congressmen Salomon Ortiz, Bill Shuster and Eddie Johnson have called for the repeal of Article 907 saying that "we must in the first instance extend a hand to Azerbaijan, a true ally of the US in the sphere of energy security and against international terrorism, and strengthen relations with this country" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162817.html>).

26 June

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with his Armenian counterpart Edvard Nalbandyan in Paris to discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute and to prepare for a future meeting between their two presidents (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162819.html>). The Azerbaijan foreign ministry says the meeting was useful (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162846.html>), as does Matthew Bryza, US deputy assistant secretary of state and co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162827.html>).

25 June

President Ilham Aliyev tells a visiting Latvian delegation that he considers the development of relations between Baku and Riga to be "very important" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162690.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev names Sultan Magomed oglu Gasymov to be Azerbaijani consul general in Yekaterinburg (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162706.html>).

The Russian foreign ministry says that "Russia is prepared to be the guarantor of a Nagorno-Karabakh resolution" once the parties involve agree on one (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162586.html>).

Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister Unal Çevikoz says that "Turkish public opinion will not agree to the establishment of diplomatic relations with Armenia" until there is a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162680.html>).

Yashar Aliyev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to the United States, says that Washington will suspend the operation of Article 907 this year and ultimately repeal it altogether (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162622.html>).

Nicolae Urescu, Romania's ambassador to Azerbaijan, whose country serves as NATO coordinator with Baku, says that "NATO is a supporter of the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within the framework of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162629.html>).

Dora Bakoyannis, Greek foreign minister and OSCE chairman in office, says that making the arguments around Nagorno-Karabakh "eternal" does not correspond to the interests of "anyone" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162594.html>).

Azerbaijani parliamentarians take part in an Astana seminar organized by the Parliamentary Assembly of NATO to discuss the state of civil society in Eurasia (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162433.html>).

June 24

Samad Seyidov, the head of the Azerbaijani delegation to PACE, sharply criticizes the activities of that organization because it is applying double standards in its evaluation of Azerbaijan. His country, Seyidov says, is "the only country in which the Council of Europe demonstrates a different approach" to various issues, choosing to react to any reports of problems rather than investigating the facts (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162544.html>).

Ganira Pashayeva, a Milli Majlis deputy who serves on Azerbaijan's delegation to PACE, calls on that group to conduct "an active struggle against the crude violation of human rights in Armenia" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162506.html>).

US Major General Tracy Garrett, who commands American Marines in Europe and Africa, says in Baku that the US and Azerbaijan are now "ready" to work together to provide mutual assistance in guaranteeing security in the South Caucasus region and beyond (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162495.html>).

23 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162354.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov and his visiting Serbian counterpart Vuk Jeremic state that Azerbaijan and Serbia agree that the Kosovo and Nagorno-Karabakh conflicts must be resolved according to the principles of international law (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162280.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that "Azerbaijan would like to achieve a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict before the end of the year" but he reminds that "this depends not only on us" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162282.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that "the most rapid restoration of stability in Iran is important for Azerbaijan because it is a neighboring state" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162284.html>).

Serik Primbetov, Kazakhstan's ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that "Baku and Astana intend to strengthen their political dialogue" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162295.html>).

Canan Kalsyn, a Turkish parliamentarian who is a member of the ruling AKP Party, says that "the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border is not a question of the immediate future" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162220.html>).

22 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives US Ambassador Anne Derse on the completion of her service in Baku (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162184.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives incoming Brazilian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Paulo Antonio (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162141.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Ahmet Unal Çevikoz, Turkey's deputy foreign minister (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162139.html>).

The foreign ministry expresses surprise at a suggestion by the Armenian foreign ministry that the issue of refugees and internally displaced persons should be addressed only after a settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute rather than as part of that settlement as international law requires (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162175.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov takes part in the OSCE Security Conference in Vienna (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162172.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov says that Baku "does not expect movement on the question of the joint use of the Gabala radar station" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162123.html>). In other comments, he says that the US and Russia have "good chances for achieving progress" toward the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162103.html>).

Haji Sabir Hasanly, deputy chairman of the Administration of Muslims of the Caucasus, says that the newly formed Consultative Council of Muslims of the CIS will make the Nagorno-Karabakh question "a priority" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162132.html>).

21 June

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with his Turkish counterpart Ahmet Davutoglu outside Istanbul for an informal meeting "under the device 'one nation, two states'" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/162061.html>).

20 June

Foreign Minister Elmar Mamedyarov completes his working visit to Japan. While there, he meets with Prime Minister Taro Aso, the heir to the throne Naruhito, foreign minister Hirofumi Nakasone, and other officials. In addition, he gives numerous interviews to the media and addresses the Japanese foreign ministry's Institute of International Relations on "Azerbaijan as a Bridge between East and West" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161991.html>).

Shain Abdullayev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Kuwait, says that the two countries "intend to continue their constructive dialogue," something he says will be accelerated as a result of the upcoming visit of the emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmed as-Sabah, to Baku (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161948.html>).

19 June

Arthur Lenk, Israeli ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that the upcoming visit of Israeli President Shimon Peres to Baku will "advance the national interests" of both countries (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161854.html>). In other remarks, he says that relations between the two countries "can be an example of relations of Israel with the Muslim world" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161830.html>).

Arthur Lenk, Israeli ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that "Iran's nuclear program represents a threat not only to Israel" but to the region and the world as well (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161879.html>).

Azerbaijan and Georgia are unable to agree on the demarcation of their border after two days of talks in Tbilisi where the Azerbaijani side was led by Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161911.html>).

Anne Derse, US ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that "the United States will make every effort for the achievement of the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161890.html>).

Yagub Makhmudov, a deputy in the Milli Majlis, calls for protesting to Iran and Georgia because institutions in those two countries have posted distorted maps on their Internet sites (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161873.html>).

Gudrat Gasanguliyev, a Milli Majlis deputy and head of the Party of the United Peoples Front of Azerbaijan, protests the intention of the US Congress to provide assistance to Nagorno-Karabakh bypassing Baku (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161846.html>).

NATO's international school begins a five-day training program in Baku on crisis management (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161838.html>).

Elkhan Guseynov, Azerbaijani ambassador to Turkmenistan, says that "Baku and Ashgabad intend to bring their positions into closer alignment on the question of the status of the Caspian Sea." He indicates that Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov will discuss this issue with Turkmen officials in September (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161789.html>).

18 June

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says in Tokyo that "relations between Moscow and Baku are developing successfully, a pattern that corresponds to the national interests of the two countries" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161710.html>).

Ali Hasanov, deputy prime minister and chairman of the State Committee for Work with Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, expresses regret that a portion of these people have been excluded from the UNHCR's refugee list. He notes that over the last 16 years, Baku has spent some two billion US dollars on the needs of these people (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161734.html>, <http://www.day.az/news/politics/161742.html>).

The foreign ministry says that "providing any humanitarian assistance in the occupied territories should be agreed upon with the authorities of Azerbaijan" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161737.html>).

US Congressman Robert Wechsler (D-Fl) says that "the rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia should serve as a catalyst for the development of relations between Baku and Yerevan," adding that Washington attaches "great significance" to both of these processes (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161621.html>).

Zbigniew Rybacki, the NATO Liaison Officer in the South Caucasus, says that Azerbaijan is not "required" to replace arms of Soviet origin as the country moves toward closer relations with the Western alliance (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161442.html>).

Turkey's ruling party says that media reports that some of its members visited a monument to the Armenian "genocide" in Yerevan are not true (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161759.html>).

17 June

Bahar Muradova, vice speaker of the Azerbaijani parliament and head of the Azerbaijan delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, says that Baku expects the Minsk Group to show greater activity in seeking the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute. To promote that end, she calls for an assessment of the activities of the current co-chairs (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161555.html>).

Philip Gordon, US assistant secretary of state, says that "Azerbaijan is an important strategic partner of the United States in the region," in particular in the areas of energy supply and the struggle against terrorism (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161461.html>).

Alla Ampar, program specialist for social and humanitarian sciences for the UNESCO bureau in Moscow, says that "Azerbaijan is actively participating in UNESCO projects devoted to the participation of women in the political life of society" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161540.html>).

The UNDP and the Azerbaijan Council for State Support of NGOs which is part of the presidential administration agree to sign a memorandum of understanding (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161524.html>).

A delegation from the Polish parliament visits the mass graves at Guba where some of the victims of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict were interred (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161588.html>).

16 June

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aser at the start of his five-day visit to Tokyo and extends an invitation from President Ilham Aliyev to the Japanese leader to visit Baku sometime in the future (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161401.html>).

Hulusi Kilic, Turkey's ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that "peace in the South Caucasus is a priority in the foreign policy" of his country and that Ankara seeks "the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the basis of the principle of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and in correspondence with the norms of international law." In other comments, the ambassador says that the adoption by Azerbaijan of a military doctrine is "an important step on the path toward NATO standards" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161337.html>, <http://www.day.az/news/politics/161318.html>).

Iosif Shagal, the president of the Israel-Azerbaijan Association and a former member of the Israeli parliament, says that he does not think that "the Knesset will seriously consider the question of the Armenian 'genocide' in the foreseeable future" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/160462.html>).

Abbasali Hasanov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Iran, says that "there are no citizens of Azerbaijan among those who have suffered at meetings" in Tehran. He adds that the post-election dispute is "an internal affair" of Iran in which Azerbaijan will "not interfere" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161304.html>).

Zbigniew Rybacki, the NATO Liaison Officer in the South Caucasus, says that "in Azerbaijan, civilized and democratic control over the armed forces is being realized," something that contributes to the "positive" development of Azerbaijan's cooperation with the Western alliance (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161299.html>).

The US embassy in Baku puts out a statement indicating that the Armenian National Committee of America has misstated the amount of US aid going to the three South Caucasus countries (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/161282.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.