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TURKISH-ARMENIAN BORDER: WHERE ARE WE HEADING?

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Commentators in the Caucasus and more generally have focused their attention over the last month to the possibility that Turkey might reopen its borders with Armenia and on the consequences of such an action for the resolution of the territorial dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan. And such speculation has continued even though Turkish officials on every occasion have said that Ankara's policies in the region remain unchanged and that Turkey cannot open the border unless Armenia withdraws from the Azerbaijani territories it continues to occupy and whose seizure was the occasion for Turkey's decision 16 years ago to break its ties with Yerevan and to close the border between Armenia and Turkey.

Moreover, while Turkish and Armenian officials have conducted secret talks over the last two years, the Turkish authorities have provided Azerbaijan with details on each

and every one of these conversations. But despite all that, many in both Turkey and Azerbaijan remain fixated on the possibility of Ankara opening the border, a move some see as a ploy by Turkey to win points with the European Union and others see as a betrayal not only of its own history given Armenia's continuing demands for Ankara to recognize 1915 as a genocide but also of its allies in the Turkic world, first and foremost Azerbaijan.

The major reason behind such speculations and debates is that there have been genuine moves toward the normalization of relations between Ankara and Yerevan. Those moves reflect Armenia's desire to gain another route out, but more significantly they are the product of Turkey's new but far broader approach to foreign affairs, its effort to have "zero problems with neighbors" and to demonstrate its "pro-active role" in helping to find solutions to regional problems.

The timing of the latest warming in relations appears to be linked to Turkey's desire to prevent the US Congress from passing the so-called "Genocide Bill" that pro-Armenian groups submitted on March 17 and to persuade US President Barak Obama to avoid using the "g-word" not only during his visit to Turkey but more generally, especially since he had employed it during his race for the White House. From the perspective of Turkish leaders and the Turkish public, the passage of that bill or the use of that term would do irreparable harm to Turkish-American relations. By appearing to be ready to deal with Armenia, the Turkish government clearly hopes it can prevent either from happening.

In addition, Ankara does not want its Security Platform for the Caucasus to be derailed, something that a rise in tensions with Washington could easily entail. And to that end, Turkish officials, academics and opinion leaders have been travelling to the US to lobby against any change. Their ability to point to Turkey's new willingness to talk to Armenia is clearly something many of them believe is a trump card.

Most commentators have suggested that if Ankara exchanges diplomats with Armenia, it will also open the border at the same time. That could of course happen, but it is also possible that diplomatic ties could be restored before any move on borders. At the same time, however, it is also possible that the border might be open before any re-establishment of diplomatic ties. And the order as well as the timing of these steps almost certainly will reflect conditions inside Turkey as well as its diplomatic calculations.

During the latest round of local elections, Turkey's ruling party lost support, something that has provoked a great deal of discussion over the direction in which Ankara will move. Not only did the opposition gain votes, but it became more self-confident and outspoken, thus limiting the freedom of action of the government itself. At present, there are discussions about changing the composition of the cabinet. And there are indications that the Armenian issue and especially the question of opening the border is a divisive one within the government and between the government and the opposition. Such divisions, especially within the AKP itself, make it difficult if not impossible to imagine that the government could move forward on either of these issues because the parliament would almost certainly block any such effort.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev's decision not to take place in the Alliance of Civilizations summit was a setback for Ankara and is widely seen in Turkey as Baku's

vote on any move by Ankara toward Yerevan anytime soon. And Turkish media have been quick to pick up Azerbaijani criticism of any warming toward Armenia, forcing the government to say it has no plans to go forward, statements that by themselves tend to make it increasingly difficult for Ankara to take any steps, despite its foreign policy calculations.

And it remains an open question what American choices on the “genocide” bill or Obama’s statement on April 24th will mean. On the one hand, some in Turkey will see the defeat of the bill and restraint by Obama as a victory for Turkey, leading some to conclude that Ankara has done enough and others to say it has no choice but to move forward on Armenia. And on the other, if the bill goes through or Obama uses the “g” word, then there will be outrage in Turkey. But again, such developments could prompt Turkey to pull back from any movement on Armenia in a huff or alternatively cause some in the Turkish government to conclude that they need to recoup their losses by moving further on Armenia than anyone now expects.

AZERBAIJAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL CENTER OPENS IN MOSCOW

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On April 15, on the eve of President Ilham Aliyev’s visit to Moscow, Azerbaijani officials participated in the opening of the Azerbaijani Language and Cultural Center at the Moscow State Linguistics University, yet another institution designed to build upon and expand the influence of Azerbaijan internationally.

More than many other countries, Azerbaijan has chosen to rely not just on embassies and consulates to represent it abroad but also to make use of its diasporas and academic specialists in other countries to promote a better understanding of the country internationally and to counter efforts by representatives of some other states to blacken its reputation.

That makes the opening of this center so important. As Polad Bulbul-oglu, Azerbaijan’s ambassador to the Russian Federation, said at the opening of the center in the Moscow university, “the older generation does not need an explanation about who [Azerbaijanis] are. But the younger generation whose members live in independent countries sometimes has problems in answering the same question.” This center, he said, will underscore the critical reality that “we are neighbors” and that young people in all of them “must be brought up in a spirit of mutual respect and love.”

Bulbul-oglu said that the Azerbaijani government and his embassy would do whatever they could to develop this center, and representatives of Azerbaijan’s diaspora in the Russian Federation, a group that now numbers more than a million, said that the center represented “the fulfillment” of their long-standing desire to have a special center to provide Azerbaijani-language training in the Russian capital.

The Moscow State Linguistics University has in fact been training students in the Azerbaijani language for several years, but the new center, MSLU rector Irina Khaleyeva said, will provide broader and deeper training and offer those who complete its three-year course a diploma which will allow them to work as translators or specialists on Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus.

According to one of the instructors who will work in this course, this center will help provide not only training but also a model for other academic centers in the Russian Federation who would like to expand the training of people interested in the language of Azerbaijan or more broadly in the languages of other former Soviet republics, a task that is becoming ever more important given declining rates of Russian-language proficiency in many of them and the shift from Russian to non-Russian languages in their national media outlets.

One of the reasons that Azerbaijan is perhaps better positioned to open such a center in Moscow was remarked upon by the representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry who took part in the center's opening ceremonies. Andrey Kryushko, the deputy director of the ministry's Fourth CIS Department which is responsible for Moscow's ties with Baku, noted that "Azerbaijan is multinational country [where] the Russian language and culture is deeply respected."

Consequently, the Russian diplomat concluded, this center represents a logical "next step in [bilateral] humanitarian cooperation."

Reference

Trend News, April 15, 2009. URL: <http://news-en.trend.az/politics/foreign/1456270.html> (accessed April 15, 2009).

WHY AZERBAIJAN'S RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL ARE SO CLOSE

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No country in Eurasia has closer or warmer ties with Israel than Azerbaijan, a situation that surprises many people because Azerbaijan is a Muslim country and because Baku has not yet established a diplomatic mission in Israel. But the reasons for this close relationship lie in both the longstanding friendship between Azerbaijanis and Jews living in Azerbaijan – unlike many peoples, Azerbaijanis have never viewed Jews as foreign or alien – and in the emerging economic and even geopolitical cooperation between the two countries, a development that Israelis with roots in Azerbaijan are doing a great deal to foster.

Relatively few people outside the Azerbaijani or Jewish communities know about the remarkable role that the Jewish community has played in Azerbaijan. The first health minister of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic of 1918-20 was Jewish, and

there were representatives of Jewish groups in the parliament of that country. And during the existence of the republic from 1918 to 1920, these communities were able to publish a Caucasian Jewish Bulletin, the "Palestine" newspaper, and a biweekly magazine, "Youth of Zion." And throughout the Soviet period, Jews played a major role in the intellectual, economic and political life of Azerbaijan.

When Azerbaijan recovered its independence, Baku and Tel-Aviv reached out to each other. In April 1992, the two governments agreed to exchange diplomats. For some years thereafter, a young Israeli Defense Force rifleman represented Israeli interests in Azerbaijan, and subsequently, Eliezer Yotvat was named to be Tel-Aviv's first ambassador in Baku. Then President Heydar Aliyev sent his foreign policy advisor Vafa Guluzade and other officials, but to date, Azerbaijan has not opened an embassy in Israel. And at the same time, then Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu paid a short visit to Baku.

That might have been a tragedy were it not for the existence of a sizeable community of Israelis who themselves or whose parents came from Azerbaijan and for the warm feelings that the two peoples have for each other. These unofficial groups helped to make up for the lack of an Azerbaijani mission in Israel. Both parties always friendly concerned to each other. Israel has always been attracted to Azerbaijan not only because there is no anti-Semitism in that country but also because Baku has repeatedly denounced manifestations of anti-Semitism elsewhere. Indeed, after a visit to Baku, Avigdor Liberman, who is now Israel's foreign minister, said that "Azerbaijan is an interesting and a strategic country for Israel," a friendly Muslim country and a key supplier of energy and a place that welcomes Israeli investment.

One of the reasons that many observers have suggested for the "unofficial" basis of ties between Azerbaijan and Israel and especially for Baku's slowness in opening an embassy is that Azerbaijan does not want to offend its Muslim partners. At present, Azerbaijan chairs the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Were it to open an embassy in Israel, that could spark tensions with some Islamic countries and skepticism in others.

But if Baku has not opened an embassy, it has sent numerous official delegations to Israel and welcomed even more Israeli delegations to Baku. Consequently, it is not entirely fair to suggest that bilateral ties between the two countries exist only at the unofficial level. And that is especially true given the dramatic and continuing expansion of economic ties, with Israel purchasing Azerbaijani petroleum and investing in Azerbaijani agriculture and industry and Azerbaijan interested in expanding ties in ecology, telecommunications, natural resources, and the like. And both sides are promoting educational and cultural exchanges.

The development of economic ties is particularly great. Between 2000 and 2005, for example, Israel rose from being Azerbaijan's tenth largest trading partner to its fifth, and there is no sign that this trend is slowing, given Israel's need for energy and Azerbaijan's willingness to cooperate with Israel in this and other spheres.

As relations have developed, the Congress of Azerbaijanis in Israel, which I have the honor to serve as executive director, is playing a special role. It was established to present in a professional and dignified way the national interests of Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis to Israel, an especially important role given the absence of an Azerbaijani embassy in the country. Among its activities are assisting Azerbaijanis

living in Israel and promoting cooperation between our two countries. The congress, both its leaders and its membership, work closely with members of the Knesset, the government more generally, and with Israel's intellectual and business elites to promote the kind of strategic partnership between our countries.

At the present time, the Congress of Azerbaijanis in Israel is developing to ensure that it can meet the evolving pattern of interactions between Azerbaijan and Israel. I am convinced that as Azerbaijan gains in economic power and regional influence, Baku and Tel-Aviv, as the capitals of two friendly peoples, will find ever more in common. And to bring that day closer is our task, one that is made easier by the steps our two peoples have already made.

A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

President Ilham Aliyev tells a meeting of Azerbaijan's Security Council on April 6 that "Nagorno-Karabakh will never be offered independence." Because of the domestic stability it has achieved and its reliability as a partner, he continues, Azerbaijan is "successfully realizing the transnational energy, transportation and political initiatives" with which it is involved. Azerbaijan's approach, he says, on regional questions "always and on all occasions was very open and clear and brought positive results to all the countries of the region." President Aliyev stresses that Azerbaijan will "never interfere" in the internal affairs of other states or in bilateral relations between other states. And he concludes by expressing the hope "that Armenia finally will be forced to deal with the realities of the situation and that the Armenian-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will find its resolution" (http://www.president.az/articles.php?item_id=20090407111405340&sec_id=11).

The Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry says that "the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan has been recognized by all countries and is confirmed in numerous documents both of the United Nations and other international organizations." Consequently, the ministry says through its press secretary Elshan Polukhov, the status of Nagorno-Karabakh as part of Azerbaijan cannot be subject to discussion. It "was and will remain part of the territory of Azerbaijan," he continues (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153617.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says in Georgia that Baku and Tbilisi "must explain to our Armenian neighbors that peaceful resolution is the best way out of the existing situation. This will mean the restoration of transportation routes, the return of refugees, and development of infrastructure and so on." He says that the most important precondition for moving in that direction is the creation of "a space for successful dialogue" through the liberation of the 20 percent of Azerbaijani territories occupied by Armenia (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/151931.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov says that "speaking concretely, there is no negotiation process [about the occupied territories] at the present time. There are meetings and diplomatic visits," but they are largely discussions about principles to

be applied rather than about the conflict itself
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152897.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

US President Barak Obama telephones President Ilham Aliyev on April 8 to say that relations between Washington and Baku are strong and developing, that the US supports the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, and that Washington believes that the rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia will contribute to stability in the Caucasus
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152686.html>).

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev telephones President Ilham Aliyev on April 3 to describe the results of his meetings in London and to discuss the international situation under conditions of the economic crisis
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152243.html>).

Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko says at the conclusion of his visit to Baku that relations between the two countries are developing rapidly and welcomes Azerbaijan's support of the UN resolution on the Terror Famine in Ukraine in 1932-33
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153042.html>).

Yuri Merzlyakov, the Russian co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, says that whatever arrangements Ankara and Turkey make, "Armenia will not be able to stop conducting negotiations" because "levers of pressure on it remain." In other comments, he suggests it is "premature" to talk about a referendum on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/151964.html> and <http://www.day.az/news/politics/151933.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

15 April

President Ilham Aliyev receives the letters of credence from the incoming Saudi Arabian ambassador to Baku, Fahd bin Ali al-Dusari
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153655.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Matthew Bryza, US deputy assistant secretary of state and co-chairman of the Minsk Group
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153671.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Qahtan Abbas al-Jubouri, the Iraqi minister of tourism and antiquities, who expresses the hope that more Azerbaijanis will visit his country either as tourists or pilgrims (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153648.html>).

Azerbaijan Defense Minister Col. Gen. Safar Abiyev completes a three-day visit to Jordan during which he meets with his opposite number there Nader Dehabi to discuss military and security cooperation between the two countries
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153625.html>).

Matthew Bryza, US deputy assistant secretary of state and co-chair of the Minsk Group, says that US President Barak Obama is ready to do everything possible to promote the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and supports the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations as part of that process (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153551.html>).

14 April

President Ilham Aliyev appoints Ilgar Mukhtarov as Azerbaijani ambassador to Mexico (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153537.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov is in Moscow to take part in the 25th session of the working group on the definition of the legal status of the Caspian Sea and to hold bilateral talks with Russian officials. He says that Baku expects to complete the delimitation of the Azerbaijani-Russian border in 2009 (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153398.html> and <http://www.day.az/news/politics/153270.html>).

Turkish President Abdulla Gul says on Ankara television that "steps are being taken for the normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia" but "together with the dialogue with Armenia, we are working on the resolution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153510.html>).

13 April

Elkhan Polukhov, the press secretary of the Azerbaijan Foreign Ministry, says that Azerbaijan and Turkey are "allies and strategic partners" and suggestions by some in Baku that Ankara's discussions with Yerevan are harming these bilateral relations are simply "internal rhetoric." "We are open and conduct a transparent foreign policy," he continues. Azerbaijan always clearly expresses its views, he says, and Baku has made clear its view that the opening of the border between Turkey and Armenia before the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute is resolved will heighten tensions in the region (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153278.html>).

10 April

Ambassador Robert Simmons, NATO's special representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, says that the Western alliance recognizes that "the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is the major obstacle on the path to peace and stability in the South Caucasus." But he reaffirms that NATO does not play a leading role in its resolution, deferring to the OSCE's Minsk Group (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153014.html>).

National Security Minister Eldar Makhmudov receives Nikolai Malomuzh, the chief of the Foreign Intelligence Service of Ukraine, to discuss cooperation between their institutions (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153118.html>).

In an interview in advance of his May 16-17 visit to Baku, Latvian Foreign Minister Maris Riekstins says that Riga is ready to share its experiences as a member of the European Union and NATO with Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153056.html>).

9 April

President Ilham Aliyev says that he is “very satisfied with the results of the visit of Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko to Baku. President Aliyev’s comments come after the signing of a series of bilateral agreements expanding cooperation between the two countries. He adds that he and President Yushchenko had discussed a wide variety of issues of interest not only to their two countries and the region but to the larger world (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152985.html>).

Turkish President Abdulla Gul says that “the most serious problem in the Caucasus is the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and [he] consider[s] that this problem will find its resolution before the end of 2009” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152899.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Jean Francois Bureau, assistant to the secretary general of NATO to discuss relations between Azerbaijan and the Western alliance. The Azerbaijani foreign minister says that Baku appreciates NATO’s April 6th declaration supporting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152932.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov tells a conference in Baku on “NATO as an Alliance of Full Political Maturity” that Azerbaijan over the past 15 years has achieved “a qualitatively new stage” of ties with NATO and now among other things takes “an active part” in peacekeeping operations in Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152837.html>).

National Security Minister Eldar Makhmudov receives Povilas Malakauskas, head of the State Security Department of Lithuania, to discuss bilateral cooperation in the security area (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152973.html>).

US Ambassador to Azerbaijan Anne Derse says that President Barak Obama considers that the warming of relations between Ankara and Yerevan will promote stability in the region and that the American president is committed to the further development of bilateral ties with Azerbaijan and the rapid resolution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152922.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov says that there are many transportation links among Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan but that “unfortunately,” they pass through Armenian-occupied territories of Azerbaijan and cannot be used until that conflict is resolved. Consequently, he says, Turkey “would not gain much” from the opening of the border with Armenia (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152905.html>).

The Congress of Azerbaijanis of the World (KAM) sends a letter to Turkish President Gul and Prime Minister Erdogan expressing the group’s opposition to the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border until Armenia ends its occupation of Azerbaijani territory (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152956.html>).

Allahshukur Pasha-zade, the sheikh ul-Islam for the Caucasus, says in a letter to Turkish Religious Affairs Minister Ali Bardakoglu that the Muslims of Azerbaijan are “deeply concerned” by reports that Turkey may open its border with Armenia and re-establish diplomatic ties with Yerevan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152959.html>).

8 April

President Ilham Aliyev receives Peter Semneby, the special representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152759.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Chinese Ambassador Cian Jan to discuss bilateral relations. The foreign minister expresses his gratitude for Beijing's support of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and says that "a united and undivided China" is important for regional and international security (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152811.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives incoming Saudi Ambassador Fahd bin Ali al-Dusar to discuss bilateral relations. The ambassador says that until Armenia withdraws from Azerbaijani territory, Saudi Arabia will not establish diplomatic relations with Yerevan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152764.html>).

Elkhan Polukhov, press spokesman for the Azerbaijan Foreign Ministry, says that "the happiest stage in the history of the Karabakh resolution process will be the day when the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of Nagorno-Karabakh within Azerbaijan will peacefully coexist on this territory" and not when, as Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan has suggested, when Nagorno-Karabakh will be declared an independent state or alternatively be united to Armenia (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152708.html>).

Lithuanian Foreign Minister Vygaudas Ušackas says in Baku that "the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border would not guarantee Turkey's admission to the European Union" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152906.html>).

7 April

President Ilham Aliyev receives Lithuanian Foreign Minister Vygaudas Ušackas, during which meeting the latter notes that because this year Baku is the capital of Islamic culture and Vilnius is the capital of European culture, their experiences in these roles should promote an expansion of ties between the two countries (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152605.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Bernard Fassier, the French co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152576.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov signs a memorandum on deepening political dialogue between Baku and Vilnius with his Lithuanian counterpart Vygaudas Ušackas (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152574.html>).

Oktay Asadov, the speaker of the Milli Majlis, tells visiting Lithuanian Foreign Minister Vygaudas Ušackas that Baku is interested in studying Lithuania's experience in integrating with European institutions (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152650.html>).

National Security Minister Lt. Gen. Eldar Makhmudov meets with Kirco Kirov, the director of the National Intelligence Service of Bulgaria, during latter's visit to Baku to discuss bilateral security cooperation (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152658.html>).

The Federation of Azerbaijani-Turkish Social Organizations calls on Turkish President Abdulla Gul not to open the Turkish border with Armenia (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152638.html>).

6 April

Turkish President Abdulla Gul telephones President Ilham Aliyev to call on him to come to Turkey to participate in the Alliance of Civilizations summit. President Aliyev refuses. Then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton calls the Azerbaijani leader to make the same request but without any more success (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152453.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev sends a message of sympathy to Italian President Giorgio Napolitano after an earthquake in Italy claimed more than 250 victims (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152498.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Peter Semneby, the special representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus to discuss talks about the occupied territories and the EU's Eastern Partnership program (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152493.html>).

National Security Minister Eldar Makhmudov receives Giorgio Piccirillo, the general director of Italy's Agency for Internal Information and Security, to discuss bilateral cooperation in those areas (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152481.html>).

The council of ministers of the United Arab Emirates approves the opening of an embassy in Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152456.html>).

5 April

National Security Minister Eldar Makhmudov receives Gen. Aleksandr Bortnikov, the director of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB), and Mikhail Fradkov, the director of Russia's Foreign Intelligence Services (SVR) to discuss bilateral cooperation (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152326.html>).

3 April

President Ilham Aliyev receives a telephone call from Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, who tells President Aliyev about the results of his meetings in London. The two discuss the international situation under conditions of the economic crisis (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152243.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives the heads of various special services from abroad who are in Baku to attend meetings in connection with the 90th anniversary of Azerbaijan's Ministry of National Security (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152209.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Matthew Bryza, US deputy assistant secretary of state and co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152197.html>).

Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan says that until Armenia drops its demands about 1915 and withdraws from the territories of Azerbaijan it has occupied, Ankara will never agree to the opening of the border with Armenia (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152171.html>).

2 April

President Ilham Aliyev receives German Foreign Minister Gernot Erler to discuss bilateral relations (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152077.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives the transport ministers of the Caspian littoral states to discuss expanding cooperation (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152082.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives the incoming ambassadors of China, Morocco, and Bulgaria (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/152063.html>). He also receives the incoming ambassador of the Russian Federation.

1 April

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov visits Tbilisi during which he meets President Mikhiel Saakashvili as well as that country's prime minister and foreign minister. He stresses Azerbaijan's support for the territorial integrity of Georgia (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/151959.html>).

Visiting German Foreign Minister Gernot Erler says that Germany does not have anything to do with structures which support ties with the separatists of Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/151923.html>).

UK Ambassador to Azerbaijan Caroline Brown says that London "does not recognize a formation by the name of 'Nagorno-Karabakh'" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/151871.html>).

Dennis Sammut, the head of LINKS, a British NGO, says that the establishment of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey and the opening of the border between those two countries will contribute to the resolution of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/151896.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.