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School of International Affairs

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adabiweekly@ada.edu.az

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AZERBAIJAN NEEDS TO LOOK BEYOND WASHINGTON **IN ITS DEALINGS WITH THE UNITED STATES**

Editorial Note: George Friedman, the founder and Chief Executive (CEO) of STRATFOR, the internationally recognized center on world affairs, made a wide ranging presentation to the students and faculty of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy on June 11, 2010. Below is a selection of his comments.

The Nature of Diplomacy

Diplomacy requires first of all a clear understanding of the national interests of your country, something that is different from ideology, politics and wishful thinking. Second, it requires a deep understanding of your enemies. And third, you must have an objective understanding of the global system, the way in which globalization links

every problem with every other and makes it harder to solve. In the end, these three things come down to one: the need for a ruthless intellectual honesty and a willingness to avoid being driven by ideology.

Power Relations in the Post-Cold War World

Since 1991 there has been only one global power, the United States. That situation represents a major change in the international system because for the last 500 years there had always been at least one European global power. I am not talking about soft power because I have no idea what that is. Rather, I am talking about “deep power”—power in depth, something that involves not only military, but economic and moral power as well. The US has all of these elements; most other countries have only some of them. This arrangement does not exist because the US wants it but rather because it is objectively in that position: it produces 25 percent of the world’s goods, its navy controls all the oceans of the world, it can project power anywhere. And consequently, the US is constantly under pressure to do just that, even in places it does not want to do so.

The Middle East as a Subset of the International System

Let me define what I mean by Middle East: It is the region that begins in the Eastern Mediterranean and extends to the Hindu Kush, and extends southward into the Arabian peninsula. It includes many different countries, many different ideologies, and many different interests. But it is possible to suggest that there are currently three major regions there, three major balances of power: the Israel-Arab relationship, the Iraq-Iran relationship, and the Pakistan-India relationship. Each has a different dynamic but two common denominators, it involves Islamic powers, and it involves the US.

Let’s begin with Arab-Israeli balance of power. At the moment, Israel has disproportionate power over all of its neighbors. Its neighbors are not only deeply divided among themselves, but in many cases if not allied with Israel, aligned with Israel. Many are hostile to the Palestinians. And this is the fundamental problem of the region. Moreover, the Palestinians themselves are internally divided. As a result, you have a unified competent, deep power state—Israel, surrounded by profoundly divided and conflicted enemies, not even united in the principle of the destruction of the Israeli state, not able to engage in military action at this point in the history beyond sub-national conflict.

A Challenge for the United States

The fundamental problem for the US in this region consists of the following: It is unthinkable in the current situation within the Arab world that there will be a comprehensive and final settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is also not possible for the Arabs to contain Israel; to the extent that Israel is to be contained it must be by the US. The Arabs look to the US to deal with the Israelis, the Americans look to the Arabs and say—why don’t you deal with the Israelis; and the US appears to be in the difficult position because the Arabs then explain that the US is under the control of the Jews, the American Jewish Lobby is doing that, but in fact the fundamental problem is much more direct and much more under the control of the Arabs.

Moreover, whenever the United States changes its policies in the region, it is attacked by the Arabs. So, in other words, if the US says we don’t want 1600

houses built in Jerusalem, which from the US point of view is an opening position on the entire question of settlements, the response from the Arab world is to condemn the US for not doing enough. But the US is not going to take the position of the most extreme Arabs, the US may shift its policy moderately, but there is no reward for the US. It is not as if the US made this position on housing in Jerusalem and anybody in the Arab world said thank you, we will now let you base troops here, we will fight with you in Afghanistan, or something like that.

Thus, and this compounds the problems, the US has to motivate others to go along. But in the United States, many people ask why should we care and what will we get? It was very interesting to watch what happened after the Obama administration had a very serious confrontation with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu over the Jerusalem housing. When my team read the Arab press we were told that the US and Israel had contrived this crisis for some reasons, that the US is doing it for some devious purpose to strengthen Israel and so on. So we have some fundamental misunderstandings.

The Israelis use this disunity to create realities because in the nature of the balance of power when the balance of power collapses, that's what you do. The Arab world looks to the US and says, "Stop Israel." The US asks the question: "What is in it for me?" and the Arab states will answer, "You will be doing the just thing" to which the Israeli say, "No, no, this is the just thing" and nothing changes. In many ways, I think there would be a greater chance of peace if Israel were confronted by stronger, more united enemies. First, it would shape Israeli policy more effectively. Second, it would discipline Israeli policy. And third, it would create a basis for negotiations. At present, there is no basis for talks when no one party can speak for all.

International Politics in the Subcontinent

We have an analogous situation between India and Pakistan. The American interest in the India and Pakistan conflict is the balance of power. India and Pakistan have balanced each other since the 1940s not without conflict, but each has prevented the other from emerging as a dominant power. The US war in Afghanistan, triggered by 9/11, has put tremendous pressure on the Pakistanis. Whether to the point of causing the regime to fail—I don't think so, but certainly to the point of making India relatively more powerful. Should some catastrophe happen, in which the American pressure on Pakistan would cause the Pakistanis to collapse, that would leave India as the regional power without any regional enemies and thereby create a situation not in the interest of the US.

The End of the Iran-Iraq Balance

The balance that used to exist between Iran and Iraq has ceased. Consequently, the US will be forced to try to reconstitute something in its place, possibly withdrawing forces from Iraq and Afghanistan because of other challenges, particularly from Russia, that are emerging. We have no strategic reserve. We can't stay, but if we leave, Iran becomes the dominant conventional force in the region and this is truly the problem, it is not the nuclear weapons, because if we blew up all of Iran's nuclear weapons tomorrow, Iran would still be the dominant conventional power in the region if the US is not present. And therefore, the next step is to see if the US could reach some sort of understanding with Iran, in which Iran accepts the leading role in the region within limits and which the US has its interests protected in the region as well. But then the problem becomes: how do you enforce this agreement?

What the 'Armenian Genocide' Debate in the US Shows

Turkey is a very important friend of the United States, while Armenia is a minor power. That makes the voting the "Armenian genocide" resolution in the Congress intriguing because it reflected not US policy but rather US domestic politics especially outside of Washington. The Armenians carefully built up a network of political support because they recognized that in the US, the State Department does not run American foreign policy. Indeed, it is sometimes the case that the city of St. Louis or the State of Montana has more power. That is what happened in this case. But Turkey did not act upon this reality. It focused only on Washington, believing that because it has close relationships with the US government that is enough. Azerbaijan can learn from this in its efforts to solve its own problems: It has spent a great deal of time trying to get attention in Washington, but that is not where the Nagorno-Karabakh issue is going to be resolved, all the more so because Washington has no more appetite for conflict.

NATIONAL INTERESTS AND INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP: CONFUSION AND CONFLICT

Paul Goble
Publications Advisor
Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy

It is a fundamental proposition of world politics that countries do not have permanent friends but only permanent interests, but it is an equally powerful reality that in an age of mass politics, the expectation of friendship as the basis of relations between countries—if not in fact friendship itself—has profound consequences for the ways in which countries conduct relations with each other. And the tensions between the two have been very much on display in Azerbaijani-American relations during the last month.

The widely reported comments in Baku by an unidentified American official that "there is only thing [the United States] really care[s] about right now, and this is Afghanistan" not only sparked a debate in Azerbaijan as to whether that means the United States cares about Azerbaijan but also revealed some fundamental misunderstandings among Baku commentators about the nature of relations between countries in general and between the United States and Azerbaijan in particular, misunderstandings that threaten the broadening and deepening of a relationship that has been growing for some years.

The most dangerous of these misunderstandings was clearly that a single statement by a single and obviously junior official means more than the repeated visits to Baku by senior American officials, including one to be made in early July by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and by the efforts of U.S. policy makers to involve Azerbaijan in a variety of activities ranging from economic development of the energy sector to the expansion of democracy in Azerbaijan itself to security relationships in NATO and elsewhere. Washington's actions belie the implications of a statement that went viral not only internationally but in Azerbaijani circles as well.

Indeed, this single statement became the occasion for Azerbaijani commentators of various stripes to compile a list of American actions that supposedly provided “proof” of what this unnamed individual had said. The US has not had an ambassador in Baku for a year, the US did not invite President Ilham Aliyev to the counter-proliferation summit, the US has criticized Azerbaijan on human rights, and the US has failed to move in the directions Baku would like on the events of 1915 and Article 907 are all things that one or another writer has adduced as evidence that Washington is against Azerbaijan or doesn’t care about it.

In none of these cases have the authors pointed to three other more important pieces of evidence about the relationship between Washington and Baku. First, these writers and speakers have ignored the ways in which the policies of the US Administration as opposed to some in the Congress have underlined the importance Azerbaijan has in Washington. Second, these commentators have ignored the reality that the United States as a variety of interests in the world and naturally views Azerbaijan in terms of these broader interests. And third, these authors have failed to understand that many of “the facts” they adduce as evidence are in fact evidence of something else.

To give but one example: the gap between the presence of American ambassadors in Baku is not evidence of the lack of concern in Washington about Azerbaijan but just the reverse. The complex way in which individuals are considered for such positions and the multitude of parties involved in the process often means in the American context that the more important the country is for the US and the more challenging the problems both countries face together, the more likely it is that the process of selecting, nominating and confirming a senior American representative—especially when that process starts at the beginning of a presidential administration rather than later—often is protracted.

As a country that recovered its independence less than 20 years ago, Azerbaijan has faced a greater range of challenges than most. Not only does it face the serious problems arising from the occupation of part of its territory—an occupation whose seriousness means that Azerbaijanis often define all issues in terms of that tragedy—but Azerbaijan and its people have had to navigate in a world where relations between countries are more complicated and multi-tiered than ever before.

Learning to do so has not been easy. In some ways, the attention that Azerbaijanis pay to each and every statement by officials, identified or not, of officials from major powers is a testimonial to their maturity. Azerbaijanis understand far more than other peoples just how important their relationships are with other countries. But these relationships are not about friendship alone: they are first and foremost about national interests. And it is critically important not to confuse the two.

Azerbaijanis are an extremely hospitable people who place an extraordinarily high value on politeness and friendship. Those are all good things, but they are not a sufficient basis for evaluating the foreign policies of other countries or the way in which bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and any one of them are developing. Indeed, worrying about friendship alone, even in a world where frequent public statements have devaluated such terms as “strategic partner” and “international friend,” is an approach fraught with risks.

Instead, Azerbaijanis need to focus on their national interests as well as the national interests of others. When they do that, they will see that the national interests of the United States are remarkably congruent with many of theirs—not identical but quite similar and thus the basis for genuine as opposed to hypocritical cooperation—and they will be better able to proceed than if they respond in a febrile fashion to every media report to the contrary.

TURKEY'S EVOLVING FOREIGN POLICY: THE DOMESTIC SOURCES OF A MAJOR SHIFT

Javid Valiyev
Leading Research Fellow
Center for Strategic Studies (Baku, Azerbaijan)

Turkey is changing not only domestically but in its foreign policy orientation, increasingly shifting from a Western-centric approach to one that is more multi-vectored and balanced as can be seen in the accords Ankara has reached with Asian and Middle Eastern countries over the last several months. But despite the apparent suddenness of this shift, it in fact has deep roots extending back more than 40 years and has gone through a series of stages.

Turkey began to move away from its Western-centric policy after US President Lyndon Johnson wrote to Turkish Prime Minister Ismet Inonu in ways that led Turkish politicians and diplomats to re-examine their approach. The second step in this direction came after the emergence of the Cyprus peace movement in 1974. And the third began with Turgut Ozal after the collapse of the Soviet Union and involved a rapprochement with Greece, as part of Ankara's narrower "no problems with neighbors" approach.

But if these earlier changes in Ankara's policies came in reaction to the moves of others, the current shift goes beyond that, reflecting the view in Ankara that Turkey is a power unto itself and enjoys the support of its population. Even opponents of the ruling party, they note, support this multi-vectored foreign policy approach.

That reflects a broader change in the domestic politics of Turkey, a shift that has allowed Ankara and the AKP in particular to move with confidence, even though there are some critics in Turkey and abroad who have suggested that AKP leaders sometimes are acting impulsively. Such criticism, however, ignores the fact that the AKP by such steps wins supporters away from conservative and nationalist rivals, especially by blunting opposition charges that the AKP is taking orders from foreign powers or fears the actions of the latter inside Turkey with regard to religious or ethnic issues.

And that support in turn has reduced the power of the military to influence foreign policy and allowed Turkey's president and government greater freedom of action. Such freedom of action in turn has played back on the domestic scene and allowed Ankara to pursue a more independent internal policy as well. But what is becoming increasingly obvious is that much of the change in Turkish foreign policy is rhetorical rather than practical.

Ankara's approach to some issues has indeed changed, but it has not stopped its cooperation with the European Union and the United States. Instead, it is more accurate to say that the Turkish government is giving less attention to these centers of power. At the same time, Turkey's increasing involvement with the Arab world has led some to conclude that it is no longer devoting enough attention to the Turkic world. Only its relations with Azerbaijan have remained the same.

A major reason for Turkey's shift away from Europe is the obvious decision of the EU not to allow Turkey to join that grouping. Consequently, Ankara began to look elsewhere. And despite the continuing presence of the United States as a power in the region, Turkey also felt it could and should look to other power centers as it sought to navigate its way in the region. But again, Ankara's attention to other places does not mean that it is neglecting entirely its former friends and interlocutors, evidence that its foreign policy is truly becoming more balanced and multi-vectored.

A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

President Ilham Aliyev says in a statement read on Armed Forces Day that Azerbaijan's spending on the military has increased more than 13 times over the last seven years and now stands at more than 2.1 billion US dollars annually (<http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/170772/>).

President Ilham Aliyev tells the Azerbaijani armed forces that they must "be ready to liberate the occupied territories at any time" (<http://news.day.az/topnews/215887.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

The presidents of Russia, the United States and France, the three OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries, issue a joint statement at the G-8 summit in Canada on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict calling on the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia "to take the next step and complete the work on the Basic Principles" for an accord (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/g8-summit-joint-statement-nagorno-karabakh-conflict-dmitry-medvedev-president-russi>).

Irfan Gunduz, a member of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, says that Ankara "is not interested in the resumption of military action" between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Any such conflict would "negatively affect the development of society and the country as a whole." Consequently, Turkey "will try to do everything so that events will not head in that direction" (<http://news.day.az/politics/215293.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

30 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Peter Semneby, the special representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus (<http://news.day.az/politics/216755.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with his German counterpart Guido Westerwelle in Berlin (<http://news.day.az/politics/216788.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that "Azerbaijan devotes great importance to the visit of US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during which there will be discussions about "energy, international security, human rights and democracy," as well as Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://news.day.az/politics/216680.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that Baku is "satisfied with the declaration of the presidents of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries" (<http://news.day.az/politics/216669.html>).

Sultan Gasymov, Azerbaijani consul general in Yekaterinburg says that "the basic direction of [Baku's] foreign policy is the solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" (<http://news.day.az/politics/216792.html>).

Fakhraddin Gurbanov, Azerbaijani ambassador to the United Kingdom, says that Baku's relationship with the governments of Central Asia is based on a common interest in developing the exploitation and export of petroleum (<http://news.day.az/politics/216784.html>).

Elchin Amirbayov, Azerbaijani ambassador to France, the Holy See and Monaco, presents his letters of credence to Albert II of Monaco (<http://news.day.az/politics/216756.html>).

Samad Seyidov, the head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that the declaration of the presidents of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries is "very important and deserves approval" (<http://news.day.az/politics/216783.html>).

Azerbaijan and Syria sign an agreement under the terms of which Baku will supply Damascus with up to 1.5 billion cubic meters of natural gas over the next 20 years (<http://news.day.az/economy/216701.html>).

Kanat Saudabayev, Kazakhstan foreign minister and chairman in office of the OSCE, says that "only the conjunction of two factors—the further activity of the OSCE Minsk Group and the desire of the two sides, Armenia and Azerbaijan, to find a way out of the drawn out conflict—can solve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" (<http://news.day.az/politics/216796.html>).

Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Cemil Çiçek says that "the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is part of the national problem of Turkey" (<http://news.day.az/politics/216654.html>).

Philip Gordon, US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, says that "Azerbaijan and Armenia will gain from moving forward in the process of the OSCE Minsk Group" (<http://news.day.az/politics/216655.html>).

Kandeh K. Yumkella, the director-general of UNIDO, says that energy and environmental issues continue to be priorities in the relationship between Azerbaijan and his organization (<http://news.day.az/politics/216653.html>).

29 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives Josefina Topalli, the speaker of the Albanian parliament (<http://news.day.az/politics/216604.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Kandeh K. Yumkella, the director general of UNIDO (<http://news.day.az/politics/216626.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Soufian al-Allaw, Syrian petroleum and mineral resources minister and co-chair of the Syrian-Azerbaijan inter-governmental commission (<http://news.day.az/politics/216623.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives GDF Suez President Jean-François Cirelli (<http://news.day.az/politics/216628.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that the recent declaration of the presidents of the three OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries is "very important" because it recognizes that "an occupation is an occupation" (<http://news.day.az/politics/216633.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that he very much values the Turkish-Brazilian effort to find "elements of trust between Iran and the international community" (<http://news.day.az/politics/216638.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets a working group of the German Bundestag to discuss bilateral relations (<http://news.day.az/politics/216636.html>).

Gultakin Hajibayli, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "the limit of compromises by Azerbaijan [with Armenia] has been exhausted" (<http://news.day.az/politics/216469.html>).

The Heydar Aliyev Foundation hosts an international conference on "The Dialogue of Cultures under Conditions of Globalization" (<http://news.day.az/society/216516.html>).

Significant differences have been found between the Russian and the English versions of the joint text of the declaration by the presidents of the Russian Federation, the United States and France on the Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/216242.html>).

Paweł Wojciechowski, deputy foreign minister of Poland, is in Baku to discuss the Eastern Partnership and to attend the Azerbaijani-Polish business forum (<http://news.day.az/politics/216502.html>).

Azerbaijan, at the request of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenka, extends Minsk a 200 million US dollar credit (<http://news.day.az/politics/216621.html>).

The first Azerbaijani-Syrian intergovernmental commission on economic, scientific, technical, and cultural cooperation takes place in Baku. The co-chairs of the group are Azerbaijani agricultural minister Ismat Abbasov and Syrian oil minister Sufayan al-Alao (<http://news.day.az/economy/216495.html>).

28 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives Peer Stanchina, outgoing German ambassador to Azerbaijan on the conclusion of his assignment in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/216405.html>).

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan discusses the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with the presidents of Russia and the US, Dmitry Medvedev and Barack Obama, at the G-20 Summit (<http://news.day.az/turkey/216378.html>).

Armenian Foreign Minister Edvard Nalbandyan says that Yerevan "highly values" the joint Russian-US-French declaration on Karabakh (<http://news.day.az/armenia/216343.html>).

27 June

Tadeusz Ivinski, a Polish deputy to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that "it is extremely risky to use Kosovo as an example of the resolution of this or that conflict since in fact one nation cannot achieve self-determination in the borders of two states." And consequently, he says he is skeptical that any country will ever recognize "a self-proclaimed formation in the Nagorno-Karabakh region" (<http://news.day.az/politics/216314.html>).

26 June

President Ilham Aliyev says in a statement read on Armed Forces Day that Azerbaijan's spending on the military has increased more than 13 times over the last seven years and now stands at more than 2.1 billion US dollars annually (<http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/170772/>).

The presidents of Russia, the United States and France, the three OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries, issue a joint statement at the G-8 summit in Canada on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict calling on the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia "to take the next step and complete the work on the Basic Principles" for an accord (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/g8-summit-joint-statement-nagorno-karabakh-conflict-dmitry-medvedev-president-russi>).

Lt. Gen. Vahid Aliyev, assistant to the President for defense questions, says on the occasion of Armed Forces Day that "in the case of war, Azerbaijan, unlike Armenia,

will fight not with the peaceful population but only with the armed forces of the aggressor" (<http://news.day.az/politics/216217.html>).

Aydin Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "the armed forces of Azerbaijan have won the image of the most disciplined and professional army in the region" (<http://news.day.az/politics/216211.html>).

25 June

The Azerbaijani representation at NATO together with the Azerbaijani embassy in Belgium hosts a reception on the occasion of the 92nd anniversary of the founding of the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/215951.html>).

Polad Bulbuloglu, Azerbaijan's ambassador in Moscow, hosts a reception to mark the 92nd anniversary of the creation of the Armed Forces of the Azerbaijan Republic (<http://news.day.az/society/216132.html>).

Azerbaijan's embassy in Kyiv organizes a reception to mark the 92nd anniversary of the establishment of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces (<http://news.day.az/society/216233.html>).

Finance Minister Samir Sharifov meets with his Iranian and Qatar counterparts, Shamsaddin Huseini and Yusif Husein Kamal (<http://news.day.az/economy/216131.html>).

Ali Ahmadov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "recognizing its weakening position in the negotiation process, Armenia is engaging in provocations on the line of the front" (<http://news.day.az/politics/216065.html>).

Ganira Pashayeva, an Azerbaijani representative to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that "instead of accusing Azerbaijan, the delegation of Armenia would be better off occupying itself with correcting the situation in its own country" (<http://news.day.az/politics/215984.html>).

Pedro Agramunt Font de Mora, a Spanish parliamentarian, and Joseph Debono Grech are the new co-rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe for Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/216096.html>).

Samad Seyidov, the head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that the discussion there of the report of the co-rapporteurs on Azerbaijan "showed that the number of people correctly analyzing the objective and real processes in Azerbaijan is gradually increasing" (<http://news.day.az/politics/215995.html>).

Thorbjørn Jagland, secretary general of the Council of Europe, says that his organization "considers the most rapid return of the body of the Azerbaijani soldier who died on the Armenian side of the line of the dislocation of forces to be important" (<http://news.day.az/politics/216030.html>).

Soufian al-Allaw, Syrian petroleum and mineral resources minister, calls for expanding cooperation with Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/topnews/216041.html>).

24 June

President Ilham Aliyev tells the Azerbaijani armed forces that they must "be ready to liberate the occupied territories at any time" (<http://news.day.az/topnews/215887.html>).

Prime Minister Arthur Rasi-zade receives Michael Spindelegger, the Austrian minister for European and international affairs (<http://news.day.az/politics/215790.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives copies of the letters of credence of the incoming Iraqi Ambassador to Azerbaijan, Heydar Shia Hubeysli al-Barraq (<http://news.day.az/politics/215912.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Gabriel Lansky, a member of the Austrain-Azerbaijani Chamber of Commerce (<http://news.day.az/politics/215882.html>).

Azerbaijan's State Commission for Military Prisoners, Hostages and Missing Citizens has appealed to the International Committee of the Red Cross to help secure the return of the body of the Azerbaijani soldier who died at the line of the front (<http://news.day.az/society/215911.html>).

Samad Seyidov, head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that Yerevan's opposition to the re-establishment of the subcommittee on Nagorno-Karabakh is evidence of "the unconstructive position of Armenia" (<http://news.day.az/politics/215857.html>).

Kanat Saudabayev, Kazakhstan foreign minister and chairman-in-office of the OSCE, says that "the question of the legal status of the Caspian awaits its resolution" (<http://news.day.az/politics/215933.html>).

Reinhold Mitterlehner, Austrian economy, sport and family affairs minister, says that Vienna "hopes for the rapid signing of contracts" for the purchase of gas from the Caspian region (<http://news.day.az/economy/215824.html>).

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan visits the occupied territories of Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/armenia/215935.html>).

Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Oganyan visits the occupied territories of Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/armenia/215885.html>).

23 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives UNIDO director general Kandeh Yumkella (<http://news.day.az/politics/215757.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Iranian Economic Affairs and Finance Minister Seyed Shamsedin Hosseini (<http://news.day.az/politics/215750.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Michael Spindelegger, the Austrian minister for European and international affairs (<http://news.day.az/politics/215749.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev tells the 35th annual session of the Islamic Bank of Development meeting in Baku that "Azerbaijan is a very favorable country for investing" (<http://news.day.az/topnews/215671.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that Baku can drop its "militant rhetoric only after the de-occupation of Azerbaijani lands by the Armenians" (<http://news.day.az/topnews/215657.html>).

Ganira Pashayeva, an Azerbaijani deputy to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that "intolerance against other peoples and ethnic cleansing have become the state policy of Armenia" (<http://news.day.az/politics/215788.html>). In other comments, she asks PACE to focus on shootings on the occupied territories by Armenian forces (<http://news.day.az/politics/215597.html>).

Rafael Huseynov, an Azerbaijani deputy to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, presents a document on Soviet political repression for consideration by that group (<http://news.day.az/politics/215642.html>).

Aydin Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenia's lack of natural resources and its territorial claims on neighboring countries is leading to that country's "political and economic collapse" (<http://news.day.az/politics/215723.html>).

Austria opens an embassy in Baku. Attending the ceremony for Vienna is Austrian minister for European and international affairs Michael Spindelegger (<http://news.day.az/politics/215759.html>).

Austrian minister for European and international affairs Michael Spindelegger says that "political cooperation with Azerbaijan is for us no less important than economic cooperation" (<http://news.day.az/politics/215667.html>).

Turkish Energy and Natural Resources Minister Taner Yildiz says that Ankara has increased security on the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline (<http://news.day.az/oilgas/215611.html>).

Ahmed Mohamed Ali, the president of the Islamic Bank of Development, says that "we want Armenia to liberate the occupied lands of Azerbaijan and observe the resolutions of the United Nations" (<http://news.day.az/politics/215752.html>).

Saed Ali Sagayan, Iran's ambassador to Armenia, says that "the proposal of Iran concerning mediation of the Nagorno-Karabakh resolution is still on the table" (<http://news.day.az/armenia/215710.html>).

22 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives Fikret Akchura, the new UN resident coordinator for Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/215495.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives the letters of credence from incoming Austrian Ambassador to Baku, Sylvia Meier-Kajbic (<http://news.day.az/politics/215573.html>).

Talat Aliyev, Azerbaijani ambassador to Kyiv, takes part in a ceremony on the reburial of the remains of 25 soldiers of the Soviet Army who died during World War II (<http://news.day.az/society/215768.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that an Armenian is "the guilty party" in the case of the violation of the ceasefire (<http://news.day.az/politics/215551.html>).

Elman Mammadov, a Milli Majlis deputy who serves on the security and defense committee, says that at some point in the future, the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities will be involved in discussions to overcome the results of the conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/213500.html>).

Rafael Huseynov, an Azerbaijani deputy to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, distributes a declaration on "the necessity of the intensification of the activity of the sub-committee on Karabakh" (<http://news.day.az/politics/215413.html>).

Samad Seyidov, the head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that Azerbaijani and Armenian deputies to PACE have had a meeting (<http://news.day.az/politics/215583.html>).

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenka approves the agreement with Azerbaijan on joint efforts to combat terrorism and fight money laundering (<http://news.day.az/society/215670.html>).

Peter Semneby, the special representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus, criticizes the violation of the ceasefire on the Azerbaijani-Armenian line and calls on the sides to take all measures to prevent a recurrence and to ensure that negotiations can go forward (<http://news.day.az/armenia/215494.html>).

Kanat Saudabayev, Kazakhstan foreign minister and chairman-in-office of the OSCE, expresses "serious concern" about the violation of the Azerbaijani-Armenian ceasefire (<http://news.day.az/politics/215511.html>).

Irfan Gunduz, a member of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, says that Ankara "is not interested in the resumption of military action" between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Any such conflict would "negatively affect the development of society and the country as a whole." Consequently, Turkey "will try to do everything so that events will not head in that direction" (<http://news.day.az/politics/215293.html>).

Armen Rustamyan, an Armenian deputy to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that Yerevan is "categorically" against the re-establishment of a subcommission on Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://news.day.az/armenia/215550.html>).

21 June

Justice Minister Fikrat Mammadov meets with Bilge Cankorel, head of the Baku office of the OSCE (<http://news.day.az/society/215407.html>).

Economic Development Minister Shahin Mustafayev says that Azerbaijan is one of the most attractive places for investment in the CIS (<http://news.day.az/economy/215267.html>).

The Defense Ministry says that the latest Armenian provocation will be met with "harsher measures" (<http://news.day.az/politics/215507.html>).

Kamil Khasiyev, Azerbaijani permanent representative to NATO, says that Azerbaijan and NATO have developed mutually profitable and dynamic relations (<http://news.day.az/politics/215325.html>).

Ayдын Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "the continuation of the Karabakh conflict puts under question the very existence of Armenia" (<http://news.day.az/politics/215235.html>).

Ganira Pashayeva, an Azerbaijani deputy to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe says that the Council of Europe should devote "particular attention" to the restoration of equal rights for Azerbaijani refugees and forced resettlers" (<http://news.day.az/politics/215384.html>).

Azerbaijani and European Union officials have the first meeting of the joint technical talks within the framework of the Eastern Partnership (<http://news.day.az/politics/215409.html>).

Peter Semnebi, the special representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus, expresses concern about the recent developments in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/armenia/215375.html>).

Father Konstantin, the press spokesman for the Orthodox Eparchate of Baku and the Caspian, says that "the construction of any religious objects on the territory of Azerbaijan must be agreed to by the authorities of Azerbaijan," including those on the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/society/215280.html>).

The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group "decisively condemn the application of force" along the line dividing Azerbaijani and Armenian forces (<http://news.day.az/politics/215411.html>).

20 June

Mammad Musayev, the president of the National Organization of Entrepreneurs, takes part in the International Conference of Labor in Geneva (<http://news.day.az/economy/215150.html>).

19 June

The Defense Ministry confirms that there was a firefight between the armed forces of Azerbaijan and Armenia (<http://news.day.az/topnews/215118.html>). There are casualties and one dead among Azerbaijani forces (<http://news.day.az/politics/215117.html>).

18 June

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim al ash-Sheikh, chairman of the Consultative Council (Majlis al-Shura) of Saudi Arabia (<http://news.day.az/politics/214994.html>).

Tamerlan Garayev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to India, is given an award by the Indian government for his contribution to relations between the two countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/214978.html>).

Ali Hasanov, deputy prime minister and the chairman of the State Committee for the Affairs of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, says that "on the occupied territories of Azerbaijan are being established terrorist groups" as well as the preparation and distribution of narcotics (<http://news.day.az/politics/214873.html>).

Nicolae Ureche, Romania's ambassador to Azerbaijan and coordinator for development of ties with NATO, says that "the NATO mission has given a high rating to the realization by Azerbaijan of the plan of individual partnership" (<http://news.day.az/politics/214875.html>).

Austrian Minister for European and International Affairs Michael Spindelegger says that the opening of an Austrian embassy and Austrian library in Baku represents "a turning point" in Austrian-Azerbaijani relations (<http://news.day.az/topnews/214975.html>).

Krzysztof Krajewski, Poland's ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that he "believes that ties between our countries will continue developing further in the future" (<http://news.day.az/society/215002.html>).

Armenian Justice Minister Gevorg Danielyan visits the occupied territories of Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/armenia/214951.html>).

17 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives the three co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group in St. Petersburg. He also meets with his Russian and Armenian counterparts, Dmitry Medvedev and Serzh Sargsyan, in St. Petersburg (<http://news.day.az/topnews/214796.html>).

Deputy Prime Minister Ali Hasanov says that a new UN convention for the defense of the rights of internally displaced persons needs to be adopted (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/214694.html>).

National Security Minister Lt. Gen. Eldar Makhmudov receives outgoing Toon Vandenhove, the outgoing representative of the International Red Cross to

Azerbaijan, and Sherine Pollini, Vandenhove's replacement
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/214794.html>).

Emergency Situations Minister Kamaladdin Heydarov receives Robert Simmons, the special representative of the Secretary General of NATO for the South Caucasus
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/214724.html>).

A group of Milli Majlis receive a delegation of their Canadian counterparts
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/214769.html>).

Fuad Muradov, a Milli Majlis deputy, takes part in the 58th session of the Assembly of the West European Union at which a document on "frozen" conflicts is adopted
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/214777.html>).

Eynulla Madatli, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Pakistan, says that Pakistan is "one of the important countries" for Azerbaijan
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/214743.html>).

Hulusi Kılıç, Turkey's ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that "Turkey is dissatisfied with the situation existing around the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict."

The US State Department gives a positive assessment of Azerbaijan's efforts in combating human traffickicking (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/214767.html>).

16 June

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with his Pakistani counterpart Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi and tells him that Baku is interested in investing in his country (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/214474.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev receives Robert Simmons, special representative of the Secretary General of NATO for the South Caucasus
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/214466.html>).

Interior Minister Col. Gen. Ramil Usubov receives Robert Simmons, special representative of the Secretary General of NATO for the South Caucasus
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/214588.html>).

National Security Minister Eldar Makhmudov receives Robert Simmons, special representative of the Secretary General of NATO for the South Caucasus
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/214573.html>).

Elin Suleymanov, Azerbaijan's consul general in Los Angeles, says that "it is no accident that the US secretary of defense visited namely Baku"
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/214481.html>).

Peru through its Permanent Mission to the UN says that it does not recognize as legitimate the parliamentary elections in Nagorno Karabakh
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/214536.html>).

Note to Readers

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