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TEN YEARS OF AZERBAIJAN'S MEMBERSHIP IN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE: A LOOK BACK AND INTO THE FUTURE

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In January 2011, it will be 10 years since Azerbaijan has joined the Council of Europe (CoE) as a full member. On 17 January 2001, at its meeting the CoE's Committee of Ministers adopted a decision to admit the Republic of Azerbaijan to this Organization. Perhaps, 10 years are not too long from the historical point of view, especially given the fact that Azerbaijan's independence is only nearly 20 years old, but it is a

substantial period of time in terms of the membership in a highly reputable and authoritative international organization, such as the CoE.

Azerbaijan is a member of many international and regional organizations. But the membership in the CoE is of particular importance. The CoE is a unique pan-European organization, the adherence to which means that every member state should commit itself to the principles of protection and promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law as set up, first of all, by the European Convention on Human Rights, as well as other CoE instruments. In turn, the CoE has the necessary power and mechanisms to monitor the implementation of these commitments and to take actions if necessary.

The above raises a number of questions: Has Azerbaijan been able to meet the CoE's expectation and fulfill the commitments and obligations taken before this Organization during the past 10 years? Has the membership in the Council of Europe been beneficial for Azerbaijan? What will the future for Azerbaijan within the CoE look like?

The current paper seeks to find answers to these questions, none of which is as simple as a first glance might suggest. For this purpose, it is useful to consider the general situation with the development of human rights and democracy in Azerbaijan and to examine the recent reports in respect of Azerbaijan prepared by the CoE's main bodies, namely the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly.

Committee of Ministers' Ago Monitoring Group. In inviting Azerbaijan and Armenia to become members of the Council of Europe, the Committee of Ministers of the CoE decided to monitor, on a regular basis, the democratic development of these countries. To do that, it set up an *ad hoc* Monitoring Group (Ago Group) composed of the Permanent Representatives of 13 member states and asked it to carry out regular reviews of the two countries' democratic development. The objective of the Ago Group is to monitor the country's obligations before the Organization during the post-accession period. The Group focuses on issues requiring particular attention in the light of the specific circumstances in each of the two countries. Its methods combine questionnaires to the countries concerned with country visits to assess the situation and produce recommendations. In the light of the assessment made by the Ago Group, the Committee of Ministers then draws its own conclusions and makes recommendations to the authorities in question.

Since its establishment in 2001, the Ago Group has paid several visits to the region and prepared a number of reports on Azerbaijan. According to the most recent Report on the Ago Group's visit to Azerbaijan on 20-25 November 2009, the assessment of the general situation with human rights in the country reveals significant progress which has been made in Azerbaijan in many areas despite the uncertain regional context and complex economic environment. The Ago Group appreciated the reforms and measures taken by the authorities to strengthen the system of protection and promotion of human rights and encouraged them to continue this work.

The overall conclusion was that Azerbaijan had successfully co-operated with the CoE and fulfilled most of its obligations before the latter. At the same time, however, the Ago Group underlined that important structural reforms still needed to be carried out in several important sectors, such as elections, the functioning of the courts, the police and the prison system, freedom of expression and the media, freedom of

religion and the promotion of local self-government with a view to ensuring full compliance with the commitments undertaken by both countries. It was particularly emphasized that the constructive approach taken by the authorities of Azerbaijan to continue and even intensify cooperation with the Council of Europe to meet these challenges was welcomed and supported by the Organization (Council of Europe 2009).

Furthermore, in its Resolution of 4 February 2010 based on that Report, the Committee of Ministers also welcomed the progress made by Azerbaijan toward the fulfillment of its respective commitments and obligations before the Organization, in particular regarding the alignment of domestic legislation with the CoE standards and judicial reforms. It encouraged the authorities to make further progress, paying particular attention to structural reforms and their implementation which remained to be completed in such important areas as the election legislation and practice, the independence of the judiciary, the fight against corruption, media freedom, the democratic oversight of the police and local self-government.

At the same time, the Committee of Ministers called on Armenia and Azerbaijan to continue to abide by their joint undertaking at the time of their accession to achieve a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It encouraged the two countries' authorities to actively pursue the negotiation process, under the aegis of the OSCE Minsk Group with a view to a rapid solution to the problem, in the interests of the peace and stability of Armenia and Azerbaijan, and more generally of the region as a whole. It reaffirmed the CoE's readiness to offer its support, in order to contribute, within its competencies, to the creation of conditions for a peaceful settlement of the conflict (Council of Europe 2010).

Parliamentary Assembly's Monitoring Committee. The Parliamentary Assembly has established the Committee on the Honoring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (known as the "Monitoring Committee"). The Monitoring Committee is responsible for verifying the fulfillment of obligations assumed by member states under the terms of the Organization's Statute, the European Convention on Human Rights and all other CoE Conventions, as well as the honoring of commitments entered into by the authorities of member states upon accession to the CoE.

The Parliamentary Assembly may sanction persistent failure to honor obligations and commitments accepted, and/or lack of cooperation in its monitoring process, by adopting a resolution and/or a recommendation or by non-ratification of the credentials of a national parliamentary delegation at the beginning of its next ordinary session, or by the annulment of ratified credentials in the course of the same ordinary session in accordance with its Rules of Procedure. Should the member state continue not to respect its commitments, the Assembly may address a recommendation to the Committee of Ministers requesting it to take the appropriate action in accordance with Articles 8 and 9 of the Statute of the CoE.

Since the country's accession, as a result of intensive cooperation between the CoE and Azerbaijani authorities, a number of reports and resolutions in respect of Azerbaijan have been adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly. In its most recent Report of May 2010, the Assembly noted the overall progress achieved by Azerbaijan in honoring its obligations and commitments undertaken by the country while acceding to the Council in Europe in 2001. The substantial reforms in many areas, in particular judiciary, have been appreciated. Referring to the Report of the *ad hoc*

Committee on the observation of the 2008 presidential election and to the Report of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities on the 2009 Municipal elections, the Assembly noted that considerable progress had been made, particularly during the last presidential election in 2008 in meeting European standards (PACE 2010a).

Based on the above-mentioned 2010 Report's findings, on 24 June 2010 the Parliamentary Assembly adopted Resolution 1750(2010) in which it clearly acknowledged the country's progress in the human rights field since the accession to the Council of Europe. In particular, the Resolution stressed that the Parliament of Azerbaijan had reinforced its position *vis-à-vis* other state institutions and that the division of power between legislative, executive and judicial authorities had become more distinct and rigid. It also positively assessed cooperation of the Azerbaijani authorities with the Venice Commission in drafting important laws, such as the Electoral Code, the Law on obtaining information on activities of the courts, the Law on the status of municipalities, and the Law on normative legal acts.

At the same time, the Assembly noted with dissatisfaction that negotiations carried out under the OSCE Minsk Group to find a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict had so far brought about nothing. It stressed that the failure to resolve this conflict, which affected the country's territorial integrity, was still impeding the democratic reforms undertaken in the country (PACE 2010b). The continuing occupation of these territories and the presence of hundreds of thousands of refugees and IDPs in the country remain a challenge for the country.

Conclusion. Adherence by Azerbaijan to the Council of Europe has brought important challenges to the domestic political and legal systems of Azerbaijan. The country has become part of the European community, sharing its common human rights principles and humanitarian values and undertaken certain international commitments and obligations. When joining the CoE in January 2001, Azerbaijan opted for European standards with respect to democracy, the rule of law and human rights. And this was its way. Since then, Azerbaijan has always been loyal and faithful to this choice.

As seen from the above, the CoE, including the Committee of Ministers and Parliamentary Assembly with their post-accession monitoring mechanisms, has been closely following the developments in the country and played a crucial role in assisting the country in its efforts to bring about the realization of human rights and democratization of the society. As this article has highlighted, the Organization gives a high mark to the process of democratization in Azerbaijan and commends the government for its efforts and achievements.

Unfortunately, the unresolved conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan hinders the full realization of human rights and democratic processes in the region. The continuous occupation of the large Azerbaijani territories by Armenia and massive ethnic cleansing of the Azerbaijani population from those territories still remain the gross human rights violation. Ordinary people, especially refugees and IDPs, are the victims of failure of political negotiations and of an excessive delicacy and awkwardness of the international community in bringing the parties to the final solution.

Apparently, the role of the Strasbourg machinery is only subsidiary to the guaranteeing of European Convention on Human Rights at the national level. The monitoring mechanism of the CoE, whatever it is, is in any case a temporary

phenomenon and an effective recipe only for the country's post-accession period. But it cannot last forever. As soon as the country has basically fulfilled its commitments and obligations, the monitoring should be lifted and the country should be treated equally as all those member states that are not subject to the above-mentioned monitoring.

After all, there must be a solid legal basis accompanied by reliable human rights implementation mechanisms for the protection of human rights at the national level. Thus, the better the system of protection in the domestic legal system, both in securing the rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights and remedying violations of those rights, the more effective the implementation of international standards. And Azerbaijan has proved that it is doing just this and that it is on the right track.

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THE FORMATION OF CONTEMPORARY AZERBAIJANI SOCIETY: THE ROLE OF THE RUSSIAN CONQUEST IN THE RISE OF A NEW ELITE

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To understand contemporary Azerbaijan, one has to understand the rise of the native secularly educated intelligentsia that came into being after the Russian conquest and that has been the driving force behind every crucial ideological transformation in Azerbaijani society. Not surprisingly, this has become a subject of particular debate

in the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the restoration of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

There is an intense debate about who were the first messengers of the drastic changes that emerged after the Russian conquest. Some argue that poets and thinkers like Gasimbay Zakir, Mirza Shafi Vazeh or Seyyid Azim Shirvani introduced a new strand of critical thought, while others view them as part of an insignificant transitional episode. But it is not disputed that in comparison with these purely "Muslim-educated" literati, those who received a mixed Islamic and secular Russian or European education had a greater impact on Azerbaijani society than their predecessors and can be called the true founding fathers of a new kind of local elite.

For the first generation of Russified Azerbaijani intellectuals, Russian Imperial culture, the Russian language, and Russian schools were gateways to Western culture more generally. Having learned Russian, these new elites had access to Russian and Western culture. They became enamored of democracy, social justice, and the development of a secular national identity. They served as conduits of progressive thought.

Abbasgulu aga Bakikhanov, a descendant of the ruling dynasty and a nephew of the last khan of Baku, became the first representative of this new Westernized Azerbaijani intelligentsia. His mission of enlightenment was informed by both the traditional cultural values of the Muslim world and socially progressive European and Russian ideas, which is demonstrated by his choice of languages. In Bakikhanov's time, knowledge of Arabic and Persian were still considered crucial to a good education, but he chose to write some of his works in Russian and Azerbaijani (Aghayev and Hashimov 1989, pp. 187-188), thus symbolically taking the first step in the process of Westernization and national awakening.

Moreover, Bakikhanov wrote the first proposal for a Russian-style Azerbaijani school. Classes would be conducted in Russian, Azerbaijani and Persian. A Russian teacher would teach Russian, arithmetic, rhetoric, geography and history, while the Azerbaijani teachers would teach Persian and be responsible for religious education. Bakikhanov himself offered to teach a final fourth class, which would be devoted entirely to Arabic and "should be created only in order to show the people the government's goal to preserve in its purity Muslim law" (Aghayev and Hashimov 1989, p. 199). This strategy of making progressive ideas palatable to the general population by tying them to traditional elements of culture is one that the Azerbaijani intelligentsia has repeatedly employed.

The Azerbaijani intellectuals who followed Bakikhanov were much more radical reformers. Mirza Kazimbay studied Arabic, philosophy and Islamic law with the best teachers available; but already as a young man, he was attracted by Western currents of progressive thought. In 1823, he converted to Christianity, a step which sets him apart from all other Azerbaijani "enlighteners." He considered himself a member of Russian society and called for Russia to play a special role in civilizing the Muslim world (Kazimbäy 1985, pp. 380-381).

The key figure in the modernization and Westernization movement within Azerbaijan, however, was clearly Mirza Fatali Akhundzade (1812-1878). Born to a religious family in Shaki, Akhundzade spent his youth under the tutelage of Shia clerics. In 1834, he accepted a position with the Russian chancellery in Tiflis as the chief

translator of Oriental languages and remained with the Russian Imperial Army as a professor and translator of Oriental languages until his death.

Akhundzade's career had a wide-ranging influence on the Azerbaijani intelligentsia. His work was "an attack on... traditional customs and beliefs, arbitrary power, irrationalism, superstition, and [traditional] gender relationships" (Kia 1998, p. 5). His writings feature a clear dichotomy between reason and religion, as in his mid-century comedies—the first plays ever written in Azerbaijani—which focus on figures from traditional Islamic society failing to adapt to modernity. The focus of Akhundzade's satire are traditional Islamic practice and the social order it supports, one he characterized as being marked by backwardness, inequality, stagnation, and superstition. In contrast, Akhundzade begins his most important philosophical statement, *Three Letters*, [1] with a utopian vision of pre-Islamic Iran. He imagines it as a constitutional monarchy which was just and economically thriving and goes on to lament the loss of these great progressive achievements while railing against Islam and Oriental despotism, which pushed Iran into backwardness (Akhundzade 2005, p. 23).

Although Akhundzade was pessimistic about the possibility of reforming Muslim society, he expended more energy and did more to bring about reform than anyone of his generation. He introduced Western literary genres to Azerbaijan and Iran, was the first to propose alphabet reform, helped to open schools, and actively participated in public debate. And his influence continued well into the following century.

If the first Azerbaijani intellectuals were primarily theorists of enlightenment, the next generation included practitioners. Specifically, the latter generation set out to convince the Azerbaijani public of the advantages inherent in Western civilization over traditional Muslim civilization. They created outlets for the dissemination of their views: a progressive education system, a national press, a national theater, etc. Although they were enthralled by Western ideas, they were still well-versed in Islamic law and Muslim philosophy, a set of knowledge that gave them legitimacy and made them formidable ideological opponents of the conservative sections of Azerbaijani society.

One of the most prominent figures of the second generation was Hasanbay Zardabi. Born in 1842, he received a traditional Muslim education and then in 1861, went to study the natural sciences in Moscow. Upon his return to Azerbaijan, Zardabi began actively promoting Western science and progressive ideas. He opened the first Azerbaijani theater, wrote the first Azerbaijani science textbook, helped to open several schools and, most crucially, and began publishing the first independent newspaper in Azerbaijani, *Äkinçi* ("The Ploughman"). Founded in 1875, *Äkinçi* was written in a spoken dialect of Azerbaijani, not Ottoman Turkish. The issues discussed in the pages of *Äkinçi* ranged from dairy production to Russian and Ottoman politics to the latest scientific discoveries in the West. Zardabi published letters from his readers (including from Akhundzade), thereby creating the first forum for truly national debate on the most pressing issues of the time. The paper was published for only two years, and its circulation was never large (Badalov 2007), but its publication nonetheless marked a major step forward for the Azerbaijani intelligentsia.

As soon as the tsarist censorship permitted, more new newspapers appeared in Azerbaijan. Of these, the most impressive was the weekly satirical journal *Molla*

Nasraddin, whose publisher and primary author was Mirza Jalil Mammadguluzade. Mammadguluzade, born in 1866 in Nakhchivan, was one of the first graduates of the new Azerbaijani section of the Gori Pedagogical Seminary, which Akhundzade had helped to open and whose graduates included an entire generation of Azerbaijani enlighteners (Abdullayev 1966, p. 100). Mammadguluzade's weekly was dedicated more to agitation than education. It mocked the ignorance, corruption and backwardness: The cover of the first issue shows several sleeping Muslims whom Molla Nasraddin tries in vain to wake them up.

When addressing his audience, Mammadguluzade always referred to them as "my Muslim brothers." Like the first generation of Azeri intelligentsia, Mammadguluzade saw Islam as the main component of his identity. Bakikhanov, Kazimbay and Akhundzade all knew Azerbaijani and Persian equally well. Their works were addressed equally to Caucasian Muslims, Iranians, and Ottoman Turks, who were all connected by a complex web of religious, cultural and linguistic ties. Azerbaijanis were Shia like the Iranians, and educated Azerbaijanis knew Persian. On the other hand, their native language was very closely related to Turkish, although Ottoman Turks were Sunni.

During this period of cultural and political awakening, identity issues were at the forefront of the intelligentsia's ideological battles. Influenced by European nationalist movements and particularly pan-Slavism, leading Azeri intellectuals began to see themselves as part of the wider Turkic-speaking world. Considering the anti-clerical stance of nearly all Azeri intellectuals, pan-Turkism was able to quickly replace Islam as the main component of Azerbaijani identity.

This ideological shift is vividly illustrated by the life of Ahmadbay Aghaoglu. After receiving a traditional Muslim education and then finishing a Russian gymnasium, Aghaoglu went to continue his studies in Paris. Immersing himself in West European Oriental Studies, he became a frequent contributor to various Orientalist publications. Aghaoglu "left Russian Azerbaijan with a religious-imperial identity, i.e. as a *Rus Mūsəlman*," [2] and forced to consider the question of his nationality by current intellectual trends in France, it was "easy to focus on Persia, the spiritual home of the religion which had always been one of his identifying affiliations" (Shissler 2003, p. 84). Aghaoglu became one of the leading proponents of Shia Muslim, i.e. Persian, identity among the Azerbaijani intelligentsia. Upon his return to the Caucasus, however, Aghaoglu began to reconsider this position. Many factors spoke in favor of promoting an ethnic, Turkic element as the main constituent of national identity.

By the beginning of the 20th century, Islam lost out as the primary source of revivalist ideology to the secularizing ideology of Turkic nationalism. Intellectuals like Alibäy Huseynzade still wanted to modernize their societies, but, unlike Akhundzade or Mirza Kazimbay, they were no longer content being ruled by Russia and assimilating to Russian or Western culture. Instead, they made it their mission to awaken the Turkic-speaking peoples of the Russian and Ottoman Empires to their common identity (Huseynova 2006, pp. 12-13).

In the 19th century, a newly formed generation of secularly educated individuals "evolved into the conscience of the nation" (Mostashari 1992, p. 129), overcoming initial resistance and ultimately defeating the Muslim clergy in the fight for moral leadership. The newly formed local intelligentsia launched attacks on the mullahs and sheikhs, portraying them as a source of the ignorance and backwardness of the

Muslim community. By targeting the religious in popular mass media, plays and poetry, singling them out as a hindrance to education and development, intellectuals like Akhundzade, Zardabi, Sabir and Mammadguluzade completely compromised the "spiritual leadership" of the local Muslim community and fashioned a "cult of the secularly educated man."

They also succeeded in transforming former "Shia Iranians" into "newly secular Azerbaijanis." In 1918, after the fall of tsarist regime, Azerbaijan briefly became independent, and yesterday's writers, doctors, teachers and lawyers became the new ruling political elite. But Sovietization significantly damaged the intelligentsia's moral authority, as it lost its previously undisputed independence in shaping its own agenda and democratic legacy. But, and this is crucial for today, the Azerbaijani Soviet intelligentsia (*ziyalilar* in Azerbaijani) were able to preserve several crucial ideological traditions of its pre-Soviet predecessors, which formed the foundation of a "powerful and sophisticated national movement" (Bennigsen 1979, p. 4). As a result, the Soviet Union's demise was not the ideological catastrophe for Azerbaijani intellectuals some had expected. Instead, Azerbaijani historians, orientalists, philosophers and philologists quickly cut their ties with the Communist past and launched the ongoing reexamination of their earlier national rebirth.

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Notes

[1] The full title reads as follows: "Hindistan şahzadəsi Kəmalüddövlənin öz dostu İran şahzadəsi Cəlalüddövləyə farsı dilində yazdığı üç məktubun və Cəlalüddövlənin ona göndərdiyi cavabın türki dilində tərcüməsi" ["An Azerbaijani Translation of the Indian Prince Kamaluddovla's Three Letters Written in Persian to His Friend the Iranian Prince Calaluddovla and Calaluddovla's answer to them").

[2] Russian Muslim.

ANOTHER TURN OF THE CAUCASUS KALEIDOSCOPE: GEORGIA PROPOSES A CONFEDERATION WITH AZERBAIJAN

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When Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev visited Batumi on July 20, his Georgian host Mikhail Saakashvili proposed that their two countries form a confederation in recognition of their extremely close ties and in order to promote even closer ones. Georgian officials, including both Saakashvili and his foreign minister, have repeated this call since that time, but Azerbaijani officials have been silent, and most commentators and politicians in Tbilisi, Baku, and Moscow have treated this proposal as a typically hyperbolic Georgian gesture rather than a meaningful proposal with any chance of being realized.

At the end of August, Georgian Deputy Foreign Minister Nino Kalandadze told the media that "technically Georgia has already given its agreement to the creation of a confederation with Azerbaijan." Although she conceded that "the form of this initiative will depend on diplomatic negotiations," Kalandadze said that "in the framework of a confederation, we will be able to define plans for the development of our relations which will serve the development of the entire region."

Her words implied that Georgian leaders were agreed on this step and that Azerbaijan had accepted the idea, neither of which is the case. Georgian officials and commentators have been outspoken in denouncing it as a dangerous absurdity, a step that will never be taken especially because both countries have territorial disputes and because confederation relations in the South Caucasus, when they have existed, have been imposed by outside powers such as Russia, Persia, or Turkey (Roks 2010).

Paata Zakareishvili, a leading Georgian political scientist, told *Nezavisimaya gazeta* that he "hopes declarations about a confederation are a bluff. In any case," he added, "in the new Constitution which is being discussed now there is no word about this." And he added that "if however the powers are seriously thinking about a confederation, then the new relations with Azerbaijan will present great dangers for Georgia."

At the very least, he continued, it would reignite the Javakhetia problem, the Armenian-populated district in southern Georgia, but more than that it would mean

that each country would become involved in and responsible for the resolution of the problems of the other, without gaining anything that each is not already gaining in either the economic or political spheres.

The only basis for considering the idea of a confederation seriously, he suggested, would be "if with its help it would be possible to resolve the territorial problems [of Azerbaijan and Georgia], but nothing will change only on the basis of an alliance of Baku and Tbilisi, and Yerevan of course will in no way be included" in such new arrangements.

Other observers, like Germany's Alexander Rahr, and Moscow's Aleksey Malashenko, are equally skeptical of this possibility with the two of them like many others suggesting that this is just the latest example of Saakashvili's often extravagant statements. And Azerbaijani Professor Rasim Musabayov agreed with all three, arguing that the Georgian president may be trying to compensate for his losses in the August 2008 Russian-Georgian war with an idea that even he must know is not going to be accepted by Azerbaijan.

Such comments appear entirely justified, and it is unlikely that this proposal is going anywhere. But at the same time, it needs to be considered in the context of several underlying changes in the South Caucasus, including closer Russian relations with Armenia as embodied in the extension of Moscow's lease on a military base there and tighter Azerbaijani relations with an increasingly influential Turkey. And consequently, even though such a confederation is unlikely ever to be adopted, the proposal reveals some interesting aspects of the geopolitics of the South Caucasus that might not have been highlighted by any other action.

The idea of a confederation obviously serves Saakashvili's own interests for at least three reasons. First, it would again upend the political system in his own country, putting the opposition on the defensive. Second, it would put in place a model for the possible recovery of the breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Third, it would guarantee Georgia's access to Azerbaijan's energy resources even as it would help solve the problems of its own Azerbaijani minority. Fourth, it would be a countermove to closer Russian-Armenian ties. And fifth, it would be yet another step toward a revived GUAM, an organization that Saakashvili hopes to expand to include Romania and Belarus and make into an anti-Russian bloc.

Those are all plausible reasons for putting forward what is an implausible idea, but in diplomacy, it is sometimes the case that an implausible idea if advanced precisely so that other issues can be raised or even so that it can be sacrificed in the pursuit of those interests. Consequently, what may appear stillborn is likely to have a long shadow, one that will affect the latest turn in the Caucasus kaleidoscope as all the players move forward.

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A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the President's Office, says that Azerbaijan does not intend to join either NATO or the Organization of the Collective Security Treaty until one or the other "condemns Armenia as an aggressor" (<http://news.day.az/politics/225352.html>).

Elchin Huseynli, an arms control expert at the Azerbaijani foreign ministry, says that Baku supports the convention against cassette weapons but cannot sign it because part of Azerbaijan is currently occupied (<http://news.day.az/politics/221832.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev says that to date "only the OSCE Minsk Group" has demonstrated its "effectiveness" in promoting the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/224648.html>).

The US State Department says in its annual report on terrorism that Azerbaijan "actively opposed terrorist organizations seeking to move people, money, and material through the Caucasus" and "demonstrated an increasing level of seriousness and urgency in taking steps to combat terrorist financing" (<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2009/140885.htm>).

The Russian Foreign Ministry in a survey of Russian-language media in the post-Soviet states says that the Russian-language press in Azerbaijan, consisting of 50 print titles and seven information agencies, "has preserved its influence and popularity and continues to play an essential role in the formation of public opinion in Azerbaijan" (<http://www.vestikavkaza.ru/news/politika/diplomatia/23962.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

31 August

Kanat Saudabayev, Kazakhstan foreign minister and chairman-in-office of the OSCE, announces that he has extended the mandate of Andrzej Kasprzyk, his personal representative on the conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference (<http://news.day.az/politics/226446.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives copies of the letters of credence from incoming Dutch Ambassador (<http://news.day.az/politics/226423.html>).

Asim Mollazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, publishes an op-ed in the Washington Times about US-Azerbaijani relations (<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/aug/30/the-us-needs-eurasia-and-vice-versa/?page=1>).

Bakhtiyar Aliyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that it is important for Azerbaijan to use discussions at the UN General Assembly to show the justice of Azerbaijan's position and the crimes Armenia is committing on the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/225960.html>).

Zhalya Aliyeva, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that it is impossible to speak about any opening of the borders with "an aggressor state" and consequently Turkey cannot open its borders with Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/225976.html>).

Ismatulla Irgashev, Uzbekistan's ambassador to Baku, says that "the position of Uzbekistan on the Nagorno-Karabakh problem remains clear and unchanged" in support of Azerbaijan's position on territorial integrity (<http://news.day.az/politics/226278.html>).

30 August

President Ilham Aliyev says that "Azerbaijan is already one of the leading sports powers of the world" (<http://news.day.az/politics/226180.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov discusses by telephone with his Russian opposite number Grigory Karasin the upcoming visit to Baku of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev (<http://news.day.az/politics/226261.html>).

Elman Mammadov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says Armenia is trying different maneuvers which "reduce to nothing" the value of the renewed Madrid Principles offered by the OSCE Minsk Group (<http://news.day.az/politics/225706.html>).

Dunyamin Khalilov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that because Karabakh is on Azerbaijani territory, the new agreement between Moscow and Yerevan will not lead Russia to intervene in the Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/225593.html>).

The International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent says that there are more than 4500 missing persons from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/226196.html>).

28 August

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov says that the Turkish-Armenian borders will not be opened for the NATO exercise (<http://news.day.az/politics/225980.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov says there is no need to be concerned by the extension of the Russian military base in Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/225982.html>).

27 August

President Ilham Aliyev directs sending an additional one million US dollars to help the victims of flooding in Pakistan (<http://news.day.az/politics/225774.html>).

Eynulla Madatli, incoming Azerbaijani ambassador to Kyiv, presents his credentials to Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich (<http://news.day.az/politics/225813.html>).

Shahin Abdullayev, incoming Azerbaijani ambassador to Cairo, presents copies of his letters of credence to Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit (<http://news.day.az/politics/225808.html>).

Otto Hauser, Azerbaijan's honorary consul in Stuttgart, says that "the number of deputies in the Bundestag who support Azerbaijan is growing" (<http://news.day.az/politics/225732.html>).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says that the St. Petersburg proposals call for signing a document under the aegis of the OSCE Minsk Group that specifies what the two sides have agreed to and what they have not yet agreed on (<http://news.day.az/politics/225851.html>).

26 August

Novruz Mammadov, head of the foreign relations department of the Presidential Administration, says that "if Armenia wants to drag Russia into a war in Nagorno-Karabakh, this is a major mistake" (<http://news.day.az/politics/225671.html>).

The Defense Ministry says that Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Oganyan's comment that "Russia will guarantee the security of Armenia regardless of where the threat to it originates" suggests that Oganyan views himself as Russian defense minister (<http://news.day.az/politics/225598.html>).

Musa Guliyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenia has confused what it wants with what is in its discussion of the St. Petersburg proposals on Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://news.day.az/politics/225472.html>).

Tural Rzayev, Azerbaijani ambassador in Kuwait, says that the Kuwaiti government "supports the territorial integrity and inviolability of the borders of Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/225506.html>).

Vasif Talybov, the head of the Supreme Majlis of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, receives Paulo Antonio Pepeira Pinto, Brazil's ambassador to Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/225497.html>).

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu says that Ankara will not open the Turkish border with Armenia even temporarily for the NATO exercises (<http://news.day.az/turkey/225676.html>).

Annamammad Mammadov, Turkmenistan's ambassador to Baku, says that Ashgabat is "interested in the establishment of firm and long-lasting trade ties with Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/economy/225568.html>).

25 August

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that Baku is studying the basing agreement between Russia and Armenia in order to determine whether it is consistent with the obligations Russia has undertaken as a signatory of various international agreements (<http://news.day.az/politics/225366.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that "the absence of a US ambassador in Azerbaijan is not affecting in a negative way the relations between the two countries" (<http://news.day.az/politics/225354.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that Azerbaijan does not intend to join either NATO or the Organization of the Collective Security Treaty until one or the other "condemns Armenia as an aggressor" (<http://news.day.az/politics/225352.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that "the opening of the borders of Turkey with the aggressor Armenia does not correspond to the interests of Turkey or of Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/225338.html>).

The Defense Ministry says that the agreement between Moscow and Yerevan to extend the life of the Russian base in Armenia gives reason "to call Armenia a dependent country" (<http://news.day.az/politics/225446.html>).

Interior Minister Ramil Usubov receives Iraqi Ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/225447.html>).

Fazil Mustafa, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that even a temporary opening of the Turkish-Armenian border would encourage the Armenian side (<http://news.day.az/politics/225457.html>).

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu says that "Armenia must end its occupation policy against Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/225466.html>).

A website for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic Language Countries goes online (<http://news.day.az/politics/225391.html>; <http://www.turk-pa.org/>).

24 August

Nazikh Gassub, Azerbaijani consul in Beirut, says that a group of Armenian visitors to the Lebanese capital did not have any meetings with officials (<http://news.day.az/politics/225242.html>).

Allahshukur Pashazade, the sheikh ul-Islam, secures Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill's agreement to help gain the return of the body of the Azerbaijani soldier who was killed by Armenian forces (<http://news.day.az/politics/225288.html>).

A Turkish foreign ministry official says that if Ankara does not agree to allow a NATO convoy to cross the Turkish-Armenian border, then the NATO exercises planned for mid-September, may be put off (<http://news.day.az/politics/225279.html>).

Turkey proposes to Azerbaijan that the two countries jointly produce military helicopters (<http://news.day.az/society/225302.html>).

The Iranian embassy in Baku calls on Azerbaijanis to send assistance to flood victims in Pakistan (<http://news.day.az/society/225222.html>).

Baku State University press officer says that the University is going to establish a Center for the Study of Ideological and Diversionary Activity of Armenia Against Azerbaijan and the Entire Turkic World (<http://news.day.az/politics/225239.html>).

23 August

Elin Suleymanov, Azerbaijani consul general in Los Angeles, publishes an op-ed in the Washington Post noting that "today, Azerbaijan is a non-ideological, pragmatic and independent player committed foremost to guarding its national interests. In terms of regional stability and long-term U.S. interests, such pragmatism is exactly what is needed" (<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/aug/23/us-should-court-a-changing-azerbaijan/>).

Nizami Jafarov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that what is important is that "the Armenian-Turkish borders will remain closed because of the occupation policy of Yerevan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/224979.html>).

Ali Bilge Cankorel, head of the Baku office of the OSCE, says that the large number of international observers who plan to come for the upcoming parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan are an indication of the success of the country (<http://news.day.az/politics/224980.html>).

22 August

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says in Salzburg that "unresolved conflicts are a major obstacle for the development" of the South Caucasus (<http://news.day.az/politics/224923.html>).

21 August

The Ecology and Natural Resources Ministry says that Armenia is destroying natural resources in the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/224809.html>).

Zahid Orudzh, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border in the framework of NATO exercise could bear negatively on Turkish-Azerbaijani interests" (<http://news.day.az/politics/224839.html>).

Vahid Erdem, head of the Turkish delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, says that "the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border is linked to a number of conditions. Without these conditions [being met], the opening of the border between the two countries is impossible" (<http://news.day.az/politics/224755.html>).

20 August

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov takes part in a Salzburg conference on the construction of ethical market economies (<http://news.day.az/politics/224541.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that "Baku hopes that Moscow will follow all the obligations it has taken on itself concerning the non-use [of its military base in Armenia] against Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/224637.html>).

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev says that to date "only the OSCE Minsk Group" has demonstrated its "effectiveness" in promoting the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/224648.html>).

Georgian Deputy Foreign Minister Nino Kalandadze says that Tbilisi has "no basis for being concerned" that Armenia working with Russia will threaten regional security (<http://news.day.az/georgia/224730.html>).

19 August

Azerbaijan and Turkey announce plans to hold a series of meetings on expanding cooperation in the defense industry sector (<http://news.day.az/politics/224490.html>).

Azerbaijan's Permanent Mission to the United Nations sends a letter to the UN Secretary General and the UN General Assembly concerning Armenia's military aggression against Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/224454.html>).

Gudrat Gurbanov, chief of the State Naval Administration, says that Baku will introduce by the end of September further monitoring and control over the national sector of the Caspian Sea (<http://news.day.az/society/224426.html>).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says that Moscow will never sell Azerbaijan or any other country in a region where this might lead to the destabilization of the situation S-300 air defense systems (<http://news.day.az/politics/224397.html>).

Mustafa Kabakçi, Turkish chairman of the Turkish-Azerbaijani inter-parliamentary group, says that "the resolution of the Karabakh conflict is a major issue not only for Azerbaijan but also for Turkey" (<http://news.day.az/politics/224542.html>).

18 August

Elchin Guliyev, head of the State Border Service, says that the situation along the Azerbaijani-Iranian border remains tense because of drug smuggling (<http://news.day.az/society/224214.html>).

A Milli Majlis delegation visits the Pakistani embassy to express their sympathies with regard to the Pakistani flood disaster (<http://news.day.az/politics/224355.html>).

Milli Majlis deputies say that if Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signs an agreement with Yerevan on extending the Russian base there, this will have "a negative influence" on security and stability in the South Caucasus (<http://news.day.az/politics/224309.html>).

17 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives Turkish President Abdulla Gul and tells him that "the possibilities of influence by Turkey and Azerbaijan [on events in the world] are expanding" (<http://news.day.az/politics/223913.html>).

Ogtay Asadov, Milli Majlis speaker, receives Arunas Valinskas, a member of the Lithuanian parliament and of the Lithuanian-Azerbaijan inter-parliamentary group (<http://news.day.az/politics/224133.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev receives Murad Bayar, an advisor on defense industry to the Turkish defense ministry (<http://news.day.az/politics/224046.html>).

Nasib Nasibli, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "Armenia does not represent for Iran [any] strategic interest and geopolitical significance" (<http://news.day.az/politics/223510.html>).

Yevgeniy Sloboda, head of the elections department of the CIS Executive Committee, visits Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/224151.html>).

16 August

The Azerbaijani government decides to send 100,000 US dollars in financial aid to Kyrgyzstan (<http://news.day.az/politics/223897.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev receives incoming Iraqi Ambassador (<http://news.day.az/politics/223868.html>).

Murad Najafbayli, Azerbaijani ambassador to Switzerland, says that the Swiss consider Azerbaijan "a reliable exporter of oil" (<http://news.day.az/politics/223848.html>).

Allahshukur Pashazade, the sheikh ul-Islam, receives visiting Turkish President Abdulla Gul (<http://news.day.az/politics/223984.html>).

The European Union has extended the mandate of Peter Semneby, its special representative for the South Caucasus, for another six months (<http://news.day.az/politics/223926.html>).

13 August

President Ilham Aliyev says that "the Azerbaijani state is a strong state" (<http://news.day.az/topnews/223405.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev confirms Azerbaijan's participation in the central plenipotentiary organ of the CIS for the struggle against terrorism (<http://news.day.az/politics/223625.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev confirms the agreement with Macedonia on customs cooperation (<http://news.day.az/society/223627.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev confirms the agreement with Morocco on cooperation concerning families, children and women (<http://news.day.az/society/223621.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives departing Dutch Ambassador Jan Lucas van Hoorn (<http://news.day.az/politics/223570.html>).

Yashar Aliyev, Azerbaijani ambassador to the United States, attends an Iftar given by US President Barak Obama at the White House (<http://news.day.az/politics/223640.html>).

Turkish President Abdulla Gul says that "Turkey will do everything necessary for the resolution of the Karabakh problem" (<http://news.day.az/politics/223581.html>).

Kanat Saudabayev, Kazakhstan foreign minister and OSCE chairman-in-office, says that "it is important to devote maximum effort for dialogue in the resolution of conflicts on the territory of the South Caucasus and [conduct a] search for a compromise between the competing sides" (<http://news.day.az/politics/223547.html>).

12 August

Ramiz Rzayev, the chairman of the Azerbaijani Supreme Court, receives Ernst Hirsch Ballin, the Dutch justice minister (<http://news.day.az/politics/223451.html>).

Lala Abbasova, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "there was never a normal army in Armenia, and Yerevan has always relied on the army of Russia" (<http://news.day.az/politics/223201.html>).

Mohammed Taghi Mohammed Ali, the new consul general of Iran in Nakhchivan, presents a copy of his letters of credence to Vasif Talybov, the chairman of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic Supreme Majlis (<http://news.day.az/politics/223338.html>).

Philippe Jottard, Belgian ambassador to Azerbaijan, reaffirms that Brussels supports the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/223391.html>).

11 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives the letters of credence from incoming Moldovan Ambassador to Azerbaijan, Igor Bodiou (<http://news.day.az/politics/223272.html>).

The Center of Strategic Studies in the Office of the President of Azerbaijan expands cooperation with the think tanks of Israel, its director, Elkhan Nuriyev, announces (<http://news.day.az/politics/223209.html>).

10 August

Milli Majlis speaker Ogtay Asadov receives Ernst Hirsh Ballin, the Dutch justice minister (<http://news.day.az/politics/223091.html>).

Azerbaijan sends Pakistan one million US dollars to help overcome the consequences of flooding there (<http://news.day.az/politics/223063.html>).

9 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives outgoing Dutch Ambassador Jan Lucas van Hoorn (<http://news.day.az/politics/222893.html>).

Justice Minister Fikrat Mammadov receives his Dutch counterpart, Ernst Hirsch Ballin (<http://news.day.az/politics/222960.html>).

Arzu Rahimov, head of the State Migration Service, receives Dutch Justice Minister Ernst Hirsch Ballin (<http://news.day.az/society/222942.html>).

Procurator General Zakir Garalov receives Dutch Justice Minister Ernst Hirsch Ballin (<http://news.day.az/politics/222947.html>).

Kuwait Emir Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah tells incoming Azerbaijani Ambassador Tural Rzayev that he welcomes the development of ties with Azerbaijan and is confident that they will expand in the future (<http://news.day.az/politics/222944.html>).

8 August

The Foreign Ministry says that Baku does not plan to suspend the work of the Azerbaijani embassy in Moscow or withdraw any of its diplomats because of the fires around the Russian capital (<http://news.day.az/politics/222722.html>).

6 August

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov speaks by telephone with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov (<http://news.day.az/politics/222549.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with his Turkish, Kyrgyzstani and Kazakhstani counterparts in Bodrum (<http://news.day.az/politics/222434.html>).

5 August

Ali Alizade, the incoming Azerbaijani consul general in Tabriz, says that the consulate there intends to expand its operations in that northern Iranian city (<http://news.day.az/politics/222390.html>).

Hulusi Kılıç, Turkey's ambassador to Baku, says that during his upcoming visit to Azerbaijan, President Abdulla Gul will focus on the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/222270.html>).

Halil Akinci, Turkey's ambassador to Moscow, says that Russia must intensify its role in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/222277.html>).

4 August

Milli Majlis speaker Ogtay Asadov receives the incoming Iraqi ambassador to Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/222254.html>).

The US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations postpones consideration of the nomination of Matthew Bryza to be ambassador to Azerbaijan until September (<http://news.day.az/politics/222092.html>).

3 August

Turkish transportation minister Binali Yildirim says in Baku that the opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway will "create conditions for the further strengthening of strategic cooperation among Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey" (<http://news.day.az/economy/221984.html>).

The Baku office of the International Committee of the Red Cross has appealed to Yerevan to return the body of Mubariz Ibrahimov, the Azerbaijani soldier who was killed in a clash along the ceasefire line (<http://news.day.az/politics/221993.html>).

2 August

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives copies of the letters of credence of incoming Moldovan ambassador Igor Bodiou (<http://news.day.az/politics/221854.html>).

The Foreign Ministry issues a warning to Azerbaijanis against visiting Pakistan in connection with the latest developments there (<http://news.day.az/politics/221888.html>).

Ramiz Mehtiyev, the head of the Office of the President of Azerbaijan, receives his Russian counterpart Sergey Naryshkin (<http://news.day.az/politics/221763.html>).

Alain Guidetti, Swiss ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that "Bern supports the supply of Azerbaijani gas to Europe" (<http://news.day.az/politics/221897.html>).

Germany's incoming ambassador to Azerbaijan arrives in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/221963.html>).

A Tajik military delegation visits the Heydar Aliyev Higher Military School in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/221765.html>).

Note to Readers

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