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EAST-WEST ENERGY COOPERATION **AND ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR GEORGIA AND AZERBAIJAN**

David Aptsiauri, Amb., Prof.*
Head of Risk Management Service
JSC "International Bank of Azerbaijan—Georgia"
Tbilisi, Georgia

The development of east-west energy cooperation in the Caspian region not only has involved a wide range of participants in the region but has promoted the development of infrastructure, the improvement of the macro-economic environment and the international integration of both Georgia and Azerbaijan into the international community. This development has especially benefited Georgia which is a transit country rather than a producer, but it has also been important for Azerbaijan which is both.

Thanks to Azerbaijan and contracts for the transit and supply of gas and oil for ten and twenty years respectively, Georgia has been the only country in the region without its own domestic supplies that has not been adversely affected by the energy crisis which hit in January 2009. Indeed, Tbilisi has been able to increase the export of electricity to its neighbors including both Turkey and Russia. But perhaps especially important, for the first time since gaining independence, Georgia has had a permanent and stable supply of electricity which has allowed its industries to operate with greater predictability and helped to ensure that economic reforms are irreversible.

The State and Oil Gas Company of Azerbaijan as represented in Georgia by its subsidiary entity SOCAR-GEORGIA is thus one of the largest contributors to the energy security of Georgia. The company's activities include the trading of oil products, importation of natural gas and fuel, and the construction of the refineries and patrol stations. From the very beginning, SOCAR-GEORGIA has assumed the leading position in energy sector of Georgia, and its investments in Georgia now stand at more than 470 million US dollars.

The gasification of Georgian regions is proceeding successfully. By January of next year, the number of new gas customers will reach 100,000. The company also plans to increase the number of patrol stations to 100 by the end of 2011. At the same time, SOCAR-GEORGIA allocates significant funds for charitable reasons contributing to the development of sport in Georgia and promoting the cultural cooperation between two neighboring countries.

In a related development, the positions of the Azerbaijani banks have been strengthened in the Georgian market. The activity of International Bank of Azerbaijan-Georgia, a subsidiary of the International Bank of Azerbaijan, has become a major component part of the banking sector in Georgia and is helping to finance such large-scale projects as the Baku-Akhalkalaki-Kars railway.

The benefits of east-west energy cooperation have been far broader than this because they have helped to strengthen the state independence of Georgia and Azerbaijan and have promoted market-oriented economic reforms. Revenues from oil and natural gas extraction and the transit of these commodities are creating a strong foundation for economic stability and even prosperity for majority of countries of South Caucasus and Central Asia. Indeed, significant financial flows have permitted governments in the region to support national educational programs and send their talented young people abroad to be trained on international standards, an absolute precondition for better integration into the world science and business community and successful completion of the reforms at home.

Given instability in the Middle East, the role of the Caspian basin as an energy supplier is only going to increase, because it represents the most secure and shortest supply route for the development of both the countries in the region and those further afield. In addition to the region's states and adjoining ones like Afghanistan, the development of the east-west energy corridor benefits Turkey not only by allowing it to expand on its traditional regional role, but by developing its own economy. And Turkey's growth will allow it to play a major role as a partner with the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

Other countries are benefitting as well. The United States has acquired new opportunities to influence this landlocked region, allowing that region to once again become a major crossroads for trade. In addition, the US, as a player on global energy market, is interested in appearance of new business opportunities since it has direct impact on world oil prices. In geopolitical and geo-economic terms, Russia and in certain degree Iran were forced to abstain from monopolistic domination on the market, nevertheless, the Western presence in the region had always been and still is a matter of their special concern.

Especially important is the role of this east-west energy cooperation for the countries of the European Union. The EU is very interested in ensuring a reliable flow of oil and gas to its population and thus works to minimize the risk that it will be dependent on Russia alone. As a general rule, the EU is valuable partner for all the countries of the region, because it represents a balancing factor in relations with Russia. That role increases the overall importance of the EU and opens the door to greater European involvement in the political realm, including on such contentious issues as conflict resolution.

But despite all these positive developments, the situation in the east-west energy sphere is not without its problems. Russia continues to try to maintain its dominant position often beyond the limits of the permissible as with its actions against Georgia in August 2008. Moreover, the US role in regional energy matters has weakened in recent years despite the commitments of Washington and the need for reliable transit in support of the mission in Afghanistan. And the European Union has moved far more slowly than one might have expected in the region, apparently concerned that any rapid shifts could trigger an unwelcome Russian response. Moreover, both the current economic crisis around the world and natural disasters such as the one that hit Japan are slowing the kind of cooperation which the countries of the region had hoped for.

All these developments almost certainly mean that the countries of the region will be affected more by bilateral or trilateral agreements rather than multilateral partnerships, and that shift will change not only the economics but the politics and geopolitics of the South Caucasus in fundamental but still unknown ways.

** The above article is a summary of a speech delivered to the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy's Energy Summer School, July 15, 2011.*

ANKARA'S STRATEGIC DEPTH CONCEPT AND ITS APPROACH TO AZERBAIJAN

Nikola Zeljković
International Fellow
Caucasus Resource Research Center
Tbilisi, Georgia

Ankara's approach to the South Caucasus in general and Azerbaijan in particular reflects the concept of "strategic depth" that has been articulated by its current

foreign minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, who more than his predecessors has insisted that Turkey play a key role in the South Caucasus and more generally in international affairs. Davutoglu's concept is outlined in his book entitled *Strategic Depth*, where he argues that in the last two decades Turkey has emerged from its position as a forward base of NATO to become a regional and global actor and consequently must seek to end long-term hostilities with all of its neighbors (Sariibrahimoğlu 2009).

According to Davutoglu, Turkey is at one and the same time a Middle Eastern, Balkan, Caucasian, Central Asian, Caspian, Mediterranean, Gulf and Black Sea country. As a result, Ankara can simultaneously exercise influence in all these regions and claim a global strategic role. And because of that reality, he rejects the notion that Turkey should be viewed as a bridge between Islam and the West, because that conception would limit Turkey to being an instrument of others rather than an actor in its own right. Rather, he attributes to Turkey a unique geographic position as the "Heart of Eurasia" (Tanasković 2010, p. 37).

In *Strategic Depth*, Davutoglu calls for Ankara to adopt a balanced approach towards all important global players including the United States, Russia, European Union and China. Moreover, he specifies that Ankara must pursue six goals: a balance between security and freedom, zero problems with neighbors, proactive diplomacy in Turkey's surrounding regions, compatible global relations, active participation in all global and international issues, and active involvement in international organizations. [1]

Davutoglu lays particular stress on the importance of the multi-ethnic character of Turkish society and thus on the influence of diasporas on Turkish foreign policy: "There are more Chechens in Turkey than in Chechnya and more Abkhaz there than in Abkhazia. In Turkey live more Bosnians and Albanians than in Bosnia and Albania. Turkey is their safe shelter and their home. ... We will reintegrate Balkan, we will reintegrate Middle East and we will reintegrate Caucasus on the principles of regional and world peace, not only for us but on behalf of all humankind" (Tanasković 2010, p. 45).

Others have made a similar point. Bulent Aras (2005), for example, wrote that the Caucasian diaspora influences Turkish foreign policy towards the Caucasus in a number of ways. For example, the diaspora has established NGOs and foundations in order to pursue closer relations with states in the Caucasus. Ethnic Azerbaijanis, Abkhazians and Georgians have been the most active in this regard. Thus, Turkish foreign policy is influenced by Turkish diasporas from territories that Ottoman Turks once ruled and is led by sophisticated pragmatism and socio-cultural characteristics. The following part of the article specifically examines Turkish involvement in the South Caucasus and looks at the perceptions of South Caucasian populations towards Turkey and Turks.

The demise of Soviet Union provided Turkey with a unique opportunity to exercise its interests in the South Caucasus region. On a multilateral level, Turkey launched a regional initiative in 2008—the Caucasus Platform for Cooperation and Stability—in order to promote greater regional cooperation among Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan (Larrabee 2010, p. 107). Turkish foreign policy in the area has been shaped by both material and ideological factors. It is ideological in terms of socio-cultural links with Muslim populations and material since Turkey is one of the main investors in the region.

Despite the expansion of ties with Georgia and the tentative opening of conversations with Armenia, Azerbaijan remains Turkey's closest ally in the region. This reflects some similar socio-cultural features, and it helps to explain Turkey's support for Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. "One nation-two states" has been a popular motto of Azerbaijani and Turkish leaders since Azerbaijan gained independence in order to promote close ties between the states (Ismailzade 2005). Data from the Caucasus Barometer 2010 show that this is a two-way street: Azerbaijanis have the most positive attitudes toward Turks compared to a large list of other national/ethnic groups. [2] For instance, 87% of Azerbaijanis approve doing business with Turks, while 67% approve of doing business with Russians. 54% of Azerbaijanis approve of an Azerbaijani woman marrying a Turkish man, which was the highest rated result for the question. This was followed by much lower approval rates for marriage with other groups and higher rates of disapproval, from 74% disapproval of marriage with Iranians to 98% disapproval of marriage with Armenians.

Nevertheless, relations between both Turkic nations have not been without occasional problems. The most serious strain in relations was in 2009 when Turkey increased diplomatic activities with Armenia. Baku expressed reservations about these activities which were perceived to be "developing at the expense of Azerbaijan" (Kardas 2009). Azerbaijan has been the most important and only source of Turkish oil and gas from the Caspian region (Kramer 2010, p. 21).

Moreover, since the Turkish geo-strategic position is crucial for European energy security in order to decrease its dependency on Russia, one of the goals of Turkish foreign policy is to become a crossroad of pipelines from the Middle East and Caspian regions toward Europe. To this point, it is necessary to stress the significance of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline and possible Nabucco project, which is planned to link Caspian gas deposits with Europe via Turkey.

Turkey is thus an ascending power and therefore is likely to have more intensive political, economic and social engagement with the region. However, Turkey will have to compete with other powers in order to exercise its influence, especially that no power in this multi-polar world will have the capacity to be a hegemon in the South Caucasus.

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Notes

[1] Speech made by Turkish Foreign Minister at Harvard University (sponsored by the Kokkalis Program), 28 September 2010, available at <http://www.kokkalisfoundation.gr/page.ashx?pid=5&aid=385&cid=25&qcid=77> (accessed 27 July 2011).

[2] Every year the Caucasus Barometer asks Armenians, Azerbaijanis, and Georgians to indicate how much they approve or disapprove of: 1. doing business with, and 2. women of their ethnic/national group marrying people from a long list of other groups. For 2010, this list of groups included: Turks, Iranians, Germans, Russians, Georgians, Kurds, Italians, Ukrainians, Americans, Indians, Greeks, Jews, Chinese and Armenians.

AZERBAIJAN GRAPPLES WITH VISA ISSUES

Paul Goble
Publications Advisor
Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy

As is the case for most countries, visa issues present a series of complex challenges for Azerbaijan. On the one hand, Azerbaijan is naturally and vitally interested in asserting its sovereignty and exercising control over those who apply to visit it. But on the other hand, Azerbaijan has an interest in reducing visa formalities not only to facilitate tourism and business travel into the country, but also to make it easier, when other countries reciprocate in eliminating or simplifying visa procedures for Azerbaijani nationals.

Azerbaijani tourism officials and businessmen currently are pressing for the introduction of an electronic visa system so that foreign applicants will be able to apply online and get an answer within 15 days, a reform that if implemented will make it far easier for any foreigner seeking to visit Azerbaijan to know whether he will receive a visa or not and one that other countries are likely to copy for the citizens of Azerbaijan, thus facilitating travel by Azerbaijanis as well. [1]

But however that may be, the question of visa-free travel between Azerbaijan and two of its neighbors came to a head this month in a way that highlights the particular problems Baku faces in easing or eliminating its visa regime. Both Iran and Turkey want to eliminate the visa requirement for Azerbaijanis who want to visit one or the other of these countries, Ali Hasanov, the head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, pointed out during the course of a visit to Ankara, but he continued, for that to happen, Azerbaijan must do the same for both, something that it is not yet prepared to do "from a technical point of view." [2]

According to Hasanov, the border crossing points on the Azerbaijani-Iranian and Azerbaijani-Turkish border and the crossing point in Nakhchivan "are still not ready for a massive flow of citizens" that a visa-free regime would make possible. "The system of checking citizens at border points also are not prepared for this," and Azerbaijan has good reason for making sure that it controls its borders.

Hasanov told Turkish journalists that "for a long time, the United Nations and other international structures have informed that narcotics from Afghanistan pass through the territory of Iran into Azerbaijan, and from there, they are carried to Russia and other countries." In addition, he said, "there is the problem of the supply of narcotics to Iran from the territory of the Nagorno-Karabakh," which is occupied by Armenia and thus is not currently controlled by Azerbaijan.

Therefore, the presidential advisor said, both from the point of view of security and the regulation of immigration flows, Azerbaijan is still not ready for the liquidation of the visa regime with Turkey and Iran.

Notes

[1] See <http://news.day.az/society/280328.html> (accessed 28 July 2011).

[2] See <http://news.day.az/politics/279478.html> (accessed 28 July 2011).

A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

President Ilham Aliyev tells visiting Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan that "Azerbaijan either by peaceful or by military means will restore its sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh" (<http://news.day.az/politics/280633.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev tells visiting Polish President Bronisław Komorowski that "Azerbaijan is ready to play its role in providing for the energy security of the European continent" (<http://news.day.az/politics/280098.html>).

Kamran Aliyev, the head of the Administration for the Struggle with Corruption in the Prosecutor General's Office, says that "international organizations highly rate the anti-corruption struggle carried out in Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/society/278865.html> and <http://news.day.az/society/278860.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

Štefan Füle, EU commissioner for enlargement and European Neighborhood policy, says that the European Union wants to increase its involvement in the process of resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and is ready to provide the necessary financial means for supporting such a resolution and the restoration of the region (<http://news.day.az/politics/279867.html>).

Vladimir Dorokhin, Russian ambassador to Baku, says that former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev "made a mistake on the Karabakh question" and that "Azerbaijan deserves to know more about this" (<http://news.day.az/politics/279658.html>).

Revaz Gachechiladze, former Georgian ambassador to Yerevan, says that "one must not compare the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with the conflict in Abkhazia or the conflict in Abkhazia with the conflict in South Ossetia. Georgia will never resolve the Karabakh question behind the back of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Nor will Russia, the US, or Western Europe do this" (<http://news.day.az/politics/279608.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

July 31

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan says that his recent visit to Baku demonstrated "that unity in positions" between the two countries "which reflects our historical solidarity and fraternal ties" (<http://news.day.az/politics/281256.html>).

July 30

Polad Bulbuloglu, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Moscow, hosts a meeting on expanding cooperation between his embassy and other Azerbaijani representations in Russia with the Azerbaijani diaspora there (<http://news.day.az/politics/281182.html>).

Elkhan Suleymanov, head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of Euronest, says that his group's primary efforts are directed toward the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/281132.html>).

Rabiyyat Aslanova, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "Azerbaijan shows the international community that it is a poli-ethnic state" (<http://news.day.az/politics/281115.html>).

Bayram Safarov, president of the Azerbaijani Community of Nagorno-Karabakh Social Organization, says that "the latest declarations of the Armenian president show the world the position of this country," positions that include "a policy of conquest, terrorism and the murder of peaceful residents" (<http://news.day.az/politics/281150.html>).

Azerbaijan has provided a credit of 300 million US dollars to the Belorussian enterprise Belaruskaliy (<http://news.day.az/economy/281122.html>).

July 29

Hafiz Pashayev, deputy foreign minister and rector of the Azerbaijani Diplomatic Academy, presents graduation certificates to diplomats from Africa and Asia on the completion of ten-day courses at ADA on the countries of the Caspian basin (<http://news.day.az/politics/281060.html>).

Khanlar Valiyev, the military procurator of Azerbaijan, says that his office investigating crimes against humanity and terrorism in the occupied territories has charged 287 people and has issued arrest warrants for them (<http://news.day.az/society/281080.html>).

Bahar Muradova, vice speaker of the Milli Majlis, says that the entire world community "should express its anger over the murder by the Armenian side of Azerbaijani children" (<http://news.day.az/politics/280996.html>).

Sabir Rustamkhanly, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the international community is "closing its eyes to the aggression of Armenia" (<http://news.day.az/politics/281055.html>).

Nizami Jafarov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that recent declarations by Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan "leave much to be desired" as far as their "intellectual level" is concerned (<http://news.day.az/politics/280965.html>).

The Congress of Azerbaijanis of Sweden has called on the international community to protest against "the aggressive declarations" of Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan (<http://news.day.az/politics/281009.html>).

The Moscow regional section of the All-Russian Azerbaijani Congress holds a meeting devoted to the results of the Third Congress of Azerbaijanis of the World (<http://news.day.az/politics/280910.html>).

Azerbaijani media report that anti-Azerbaijani and anti-Turkish caricatures were featured at an arts festival in the Iranian city of Tabriz (<http://news.day.az/politics/281059.html>).

Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc says that the declarations of Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan are infuriating Turkey and that this will give nothing positive to Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/280953.html>).

Philip Gordon, US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, says that "the OSCE must continue to play an immediate role in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and in the conflicts in Georgia and Moldova" (<http://news.day.az/politics/280956.html>).

July 28

President Ilham Aliyev signs a decree on the entering into force of the agreement on cultural, educational, and scientific cooperation between Azerbaijan and Slovenia signed in Ljubljana on July 9 (<http://news.day.az/politics/280889.html>).

Novruz Mammadov, head of the foreign relations department of the Presidential Administration, says that Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan will "answer for all the crimes he has committed" (<http://news.day.az/politics/280863.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that the meeting between Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President Ilham Aliyev "shows yet again that it is impossible" to split the two countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/280770.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that Freedom House had adopted a subjective and incorrect assessment of Azerbaijan and that the organization's president David Kramer has "assessed Azerbaijan, Russia and Belarus as almost the greatest threat for the West and spoken about the importance of adopting measures against them" (<http://news.day.az/politics/280794.html>).

The Foreign Ministry declares the recent statements of Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan to be "immoral" (<http://news.day.az/politics/280836.html>).

Malahat Ibrahimgyzy, a Milli Majlis deputy, calls on the international community to react and condemn the statements of Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan (<http://news.day.az/politics/280866.html>).

Bakhtiyar Sadykhov, a Milli Majlis deputy, predicts "the end of Armenian statehood" (<http://news.day.az/politics/280796.html>).

Members of Turkey's Grand National Assembly sharply condemn the latest statements of Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan (<http://news.day.az/politics/280881.html>).

July 27

Deputy Prime Minister Ali Hasanov receives Jose Antonio Duran, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Congress of the Kingdom of Spain (<http://news.day.az/politics/280670.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that it is investigating the illegal visit to the occupied territories by 35 people from seven countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/280540.html>).

Farid Shafiyev, Azerbaijani ambassador to Canada, visits the province of New Brunswick (<http://news.day.az/politics/280512.html>).

Tahir Rzayev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Europeans have yet to understand the nature of the Armenian threat from Yerevan's efforts to include in the EU-Armenian association agreement statements in support of "the principle of self-determination of peoples and the principle of the non-use of force" (<http://news.day.az/politics/280386.html>).

The Ministry of Education calls on Georgia to respond in a timely fashion concerning its needs for Azerbaijani language textbooks for Azerbaijani schools in that republic (<http://news.day.az/society/280606.html>).

Azerbaijan proposes to India that the two countries establish a cooperation council for entrepreneurial activity (<http://news.day.az/economy/280582.html>).

Azerbaijani entrepreneurs take part in the Dageshtan Economic Forum in Makhachkala (<http://news.day.az/economy/280661.html>).

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan says that Ankara "intends to develop still further relations with Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/280572.html>).

Turkish Foreign Trade Minister Zafer Chagliyan says that economic ties between Azerbaijan and Turkey have entered a new stage of development (<http://news.day.az/economy/280698.html>).

Egemen Bagis, Turkish minister for EU affairs, criticizes Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan's statements relative to the territorial integrity of Turkey (<http://news.day.az/politics/280666.html>).

Representatives of the Turkish and Azerbaijani diaspora in the United States protest a statement by Illinois Congressman Robert Dold who says that the US views the events of 1915 in Turkey as the Armenian genocide (<http://news.day.az/politics/280613.html>).

Koray Targay, a Turk, is named the new head of the Baku office of the OSCE (<http://news.day.az/politics/280573.html>).

A delegation of the youth wing of the Liberal Democratic Party of Romania visits Baku at the invitation of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party (<http://news.day.az/politics/280694.html>).

July 26

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Christopher Pincher, a member of the British House of Commons and deputy chairman of the British Friends of Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/280422.html>).

Eldar Hasanov, Azerbaijani ambassador to Belgrad, says that the Azerbaijani government will reconstruct both an Orthodox church and a Muslim mosque in Serbia in fulfillment of an agreement between Baku and Belgrade reached during the July visit of President Ilham Aliyev to Serbia (<http://news.day.az/politics/280337.html>).

Tofiq Musayev, chargé d'affaires at the Azerbaijani Permanent Representation to the United Nations, distributes a letter of protest to the Secretatry General concerning the provocative actions and declarations of Armenia regarding Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/280504.html>).

Members of the Milli Majlis receive a delegation of the Congress of Deputies of Spain (<http://news.day.az/politics/280480.html>).

The Egyptian Embassy in Baku issues a statement saying that Cairo is interested in security and stability in the South Caucasus and supports the peaceful resolution of conflicts there within the framework of international legal principles and norms (<http://news.day.az/politics/280400.html>).

An Azerbaijani friendship group is established in the National Congress of Argentina (<http://news.day.az/politics/280320.html>).

July 25

President Ilham Aliyev tells visiting Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski that "Azerbaijan is ready to play its role in providing for the energy security of the European continent" (<http://news.day.az/politics/280098.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Russian Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov (<http://news.day.az/politics/280256.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev receives his Russian counterpart Anatoly Serdyukov and says that military cooperation between their two countries "is developing rapidly" (<http://news.day.az/politics/280170.html>).

Mammad Ahmadzade, Azerbaijani ambassador to Argentina, says that bilateral relations are developing rapidly on a variety of fronts (<http://news.day.az/politics/280119.html>).

Elin Suleymanov, Azerbaijani consul general in Los Angeles, speaks to a Chicago conference on the Silk Road about security issues in the Caspian basin (<http://news.day.az/politics/280177.html>).

Russian Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov tells his Azerbaijani counterpart Safar Abiyev that Moscow is ready to modernize the Gabala radar station (<http://news.day.az/politics/280211.html>).

Representatives of Azerbaijani government press services complete a visit to London that was organized by the British embassy in Baku and the OSCE (<http://news.day.az/politics/280136.html>).

Matthew Bryza, US ambassador to Baku, praises the level of religious tolerance in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/society/280151.html>).

Hassan Hami, Moroccan ambassador to Baku, visits Tovuz (<http://news.day.az/politics/280234.html>).

July 24

Matthew Bryza, US ambassador to Baku, opens a camp for young women in the Gabala district (<http://news.day.az/society/280148.html>).

July 23

Nizami Sadykhov, head of the executive authority of Agdam District, says that "every resident of Agdam can turn to international judicial agencies" to obtain compensation for the harm Armenia has inflicted on them (<http://news.day.az/politics/279999.html>).

Shahin Abdullayev, Azerbaijani ambassador to Cairo, calls on Egyptian entrepreneurs to support the development of trade between the two countries and to invest in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/280011.html>).

July 22

Elnur Aslanov, head of the political analysis and information support department of the Presidential Administration, receives a delegation of members of the US Truman Project on National Security (<http://news.day.az/politics/280022.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Valery Chechelashvili, the secretary general of GUAM (<http://news.day.az/politics/279862.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Caroline Brown, British ambassador to Baku, on the completion of her mission in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/279892.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that it will not interfere in the domestic affairs of Turkey or Armenia concerning the possible opening of an air connection between Yerevan and Van but will reserve the right to react if the national interests of Azerbaijan are in any way affected (<http://news.day.az/politics/279861.html>).

Khanhuseyn Kazimly, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenians are "always ready" to use any means to "blacken the reputations of Azerbaijan and Turkey" (<http://news.day.az/politics/279805.html>).

Ziyad Samadzade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenian media and experts often make statements that do not correspond to reality as when they say that Turkey and Georgia are guilty of imposing a blockade on Armenia in ways that contradict the obligations of these states to the WTO (<http://news.day.az/politics/279664.html>).

Asim Mollazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the Nagorno-Karabakh sub-committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe will function despite Armenian efforts to block its activities because it reflects the will of the PACE (<http://news.day.az/politics/279717.html>).

Allahshukur Pashazade, the chairman of the Administration of Muslims of the Caucasus, says that "Turkey will play an important role in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" (<http://news.day.az/politics/279782.html>).

July 21

Novruz Mammadov, head of the foreign relations department of the Presidential Administration, says that Armenian "duplicity and cunningness" has played a role in winning Yerevan support (<http://news.day.az/politics/279663.html>).

Hidayat Orujov, chairman of the State Committee for Work with Religious Structures, says that Baku respectfully relates to religions but "decisively struggle with propaganda of national extremism and intolerance" and against "the use of religion for political goals" (<http://news.day.az/politics/279647.html>).

Hidayat Orujov, chairman of the State Committee for Work with Religious Structures, says that Yerevan is distorting history by renaming Azerbaijani-Albanian sites in the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/279636.html>).

Asef Hajiyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that as long as territorial claims by Armenia against Turkey exist, there cannot be any talk of opening the border between the two countries as US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has urged (<http://news.day.az/politics/279514.html>).

Lamberto Zannier, OSCE secretary general, says that the South Caucasus has "great importance" for the security and stability of the entire region of the OSCE and that "today the Organization is active in the region as never before" (<http://news.day.az/politics/279615.html>).

Joao Soares, newly appointed special representative of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on South Caucasus, says that the Minsk Group can only succeed if the two parties to the talks agree (<http://news.day.az/politics/279629.html>).

Luca Volontè, chairman of the European People's Party and its representative in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that he is satisfied with the situation regarding religion in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/279673.html>).

July 20

President Ilham Aliyev tells a delegation from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe that "in Azerbaijan, political and economic reforms are being carried out in parallel fashion" (<http://news.day.az/politics/279571.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov says that there is now nothing to prevent the signing of a framework agreement on the legal status of the Caspian Sea (<http://news.day.az/politics/279512.html>).

Ayten Mustafayeva, a Milli Majlis deputy, says Turkish government declarations make clear that Turkey is and will remain a strategic partner of Azerbaijan and will

not take any steps without considering Azerbaijan's interests
(<http://news.day.az/politics/279410.html>).

An Azerbaijani-American military seminar on the subject of "Defense ministry and parliamentary relations" takes place in Baku
(<http://news.day.az/politics/279445.html>).

Eric Rubin replaces Tina Kaidanow as US deputy assistant secretary of state for Europe and Eurasia with responsibilities for the Caucasus
(<http://news.day.az/politics/279464.html>).

Jean-Pierre Tuveri, the mayor of Saint-Tropez, says that Azerbaijani First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva is devoting great attention to cultural questions as evidenced by her support for exhibitions on the cultural wealth of Azerbaijan
(<http://news.day.az/politics/279158.html>).

July 19

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov says that "Abkhazia and South Osetia have never been the subject of a trade between Russia and Azerbaijan as part of the resolution of the Karabakh conflict" (<http://news.day.az/politics/279224.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov says that Armenia must change its values if it is to flourish (<http://news.day.az/politics/279221.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov says that "Russia needs to change tanks for tankers in the South Caucasus" (<http://news.day.az/politics/279203.html>).

Ali Ahmadov, the deputy chairman and executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, tells officials of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe that Azerbaijan is important for the European region
(<http://news.day.az/politics/279310.html>).

The Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy hosts a delegation of the Youth Social Chamber of the Russian Federation (<http://news.day.az/politics/279436.html>).

Baku continues to press Kabul for information about the Azerbaijani airplane that crashed in Afghanistan (<http://news.day.az/politics/279220.html>).

Azerbaijani diaspora organizations adopt a joint declaration condemning the murder of a 13 year-old Azerbaijani girl by Armenian forces
(<http://news.day.az/politics/279337.html>).

Representatives of the Azerbaijani diaspora in the United States call on the US Congress to ensure that aid to Karabakh is also distributed to the Azerbaijani population there (<http://news.day.az/politics/279316.html>).

The Congress of Azerbaijanis of Sweden distributes a letter of protest concerning the murder of a 13 year-old Azerbaijani girl by Armenian forces
(<http://news.day.az/politics/279249.html>).

The Azerbaijani and Turkish diasporas in the US begin a campaign against racist declarations in Congress concerning Turkey (<http://news.day.az/politics/279246.html>).

The Armenian National Committee of America launches a new campaign against the confirmation of Matthew Bryza as US ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/279268.html>).

The first issue of *Caucasus International* is published (<http://news.day.az/society/279187.html>).

July 18

President Ilham Aliyev receives Nicolae Ureche, outgoing ambassador of Romania, in connection with the completion of his diplomatic work (<http://news.day.az/politics/279127.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Inayatullah Kakar, incoming ambassador of Pakistan (<http://news.day.az/politics/279127.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Zhong Shan, Chinese deputy commerce minister and co-chair of the Azerbaijani-Chinese inter-governmental commission on economic cooperation (<http://news.day.az/politics/279127.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov hands over to the Russian foreign ministry Baku's response to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's latest proposals concerning the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/279059.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that the facts of the murder of children do not contribute "to the restoration of trust between the sides in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict" (<http://news.day.az/politics/279056.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that relations between Azerbaijan and Russia are moving forward (<http://news.day.az/politics/279074.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov and his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov exchange documents on the ratification of the September 2010 border treaty between the two countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/279062.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that "journalists must be not only professionals but also patriots" (<http://news.day.az/politics/279142.html>).

The ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party calls on international organizations to condemn Armenian aggression and the murder by Armenians of a 13-year-old Azerbaijani girl (<http://news.day.az/politics/279040.html>).

Bakhtiyar Aliyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenia "has never displayed a constructive approach in negotiations on Karabakh" (<http://news.day.az/politics/278956.html>).

Samad Seyidov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says in commenting on the death of a 13-year-old Azerbaijani girl, that nothing could be more terrible than "the murder of a child by means of a toy" (<http://news.day.az/politics/278778.html>).

Azerbaijani and Chinese officials sign an agreement on technical-economic cooperation during the fourth session of the Azerbaijani-Chinese intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation in Baku (<http://news.day.az/economy/279119.html>).

The Azerbaijan Central Bank's financial monitoring service becomes a member of the Egmont Group (<http://news.day.az/economy/279073.html>).

David Velasquez Caraballo, Venezuelan ambassador to Baku, says that Caracas is interested in "the mutually profitable development of relations with Azerbaijan in all spheres" (<http://news.day.az/economy/279038.html>).

The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group release a declaration reminding the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia of the importance of reaching agreement on the basic principles for the final settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/279144.html>).

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton discuss in Ankara the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/279016.html>).

July 17

Otto Hauser, honorary consul of Azerbaijan in Stuttgart, marks the first anniversary of his appointment (<http://news.day.az/politics/278944.html>).

July 16

The Foreign Ministry says that Armenia, instead of investigating the murder of an Azerbaijani child by Armenians, is "putting its head in the sand" (<http://news.day.az/politics/278932.html>).

Yashar Aliyev, Azerbaijani ambassador to the United States, publishes a letter in the Washington Post criticizing that newspaper's coverage of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as biased (<http://news.day.az/politics/278852.html>).

Bahar Muradova, vice speaker of the Milli Majlis and head of the Azerbaijani delegation in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, sends a letter to the president of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and other OSCE officials concerning the murder of an Azerbaijani girl by Armenian forces (<http://news.day.az/politics/278929.html>).

Saber Mansour, Egyptian ambassador to Baku, says that since the beginning of 2011, trade between Egypt and Azerbaijan has achieved the record level of 100 million US dollars (<http://news.day.az/politics/278828.html>).

Robert Bradtke, the US co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, says that the US is strongly committed to the achievement of a peace agreement on the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/278889.html>).

Bernard Fassier, the French co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, says that while "any loss of life is a tragedy, the death of a child is a still greater one." He adds that "the murder of an Azerbaijani child yet again shows how useful it would be to have a mechanism for the investigation of incidents" (<http://news.day.az/politics/278879.html>).

Members of the European Parliament condemn the murder of an Azerbaijani girl by Armenians (<http://news.day.az/politics/278878.html>).

Note to Readers

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