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School of International Affairs

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2010 WAS A SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR AZERBAIJAN; 2011 PROMISES TO BE A CHALLENGING ONE

An Interview with Dr. Aleksandr Karavayev
Deputy Director General of the Information-Analytical Center at Moscow State
University
January 10, 2011
Baku/Moscow, Azerbaijan/Russian Federation

Azerbaijan in the World: Please give your review of the main achievements of Azerbaijan's foreign policy in 2010.

Dr. Karavayev: I would highlight the following cases where Azerbaijani diplomacy through the efforts of the foreign ministry and president as well as of others was able

to achieve major goals. First of all was Turkey's refusal to continue the policy of rapprochement with Armenia. Then was the acquisition of the S-300 defense systems—although this was never confirmed officially, it had a significant resonance in the media and signaled the existence of military-technical support from the side of the Russian Federation. Yet another important event was the decision of Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan not to go to the NATO summit. That too was a success for Azerbaijani diplomacy, albeit an indirect one.

One must also mention the spring resolution of the European Parliament (No. 2216) concerning the situation in the zone of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Its contents backed Baku's position which was especially significant given that it was adopted while elections were being conducted in the separatist enclave.

Sometimes international summits also can be considered as serious achievements of national diplomacy. In this connection, it is necessary to call attention to the Third Caspian Summit in Baku and the world inter-religious summit which took place last spring and was organized by the Administration of Muslims of the Caucasus with the support of the Russian Orthodox Church. That event included the visit to Baku of Garegin II, the Catholicos of All Armenians.

Finally, one should also note the significant strengthening of relations with neighbors in the former USSR, with Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

AIW: Please list what you see as the main shortcomings of the foreign policy of Azerbaijan in 2010.

Dr. Karavayev: There were probably certain technical and cadres shortcomings, but for me, in any case, they were not notable. At the strategic level, Azerbaijan's diplomacy developed correctly as it attempted to include in its arsenal an ever greater quantity of means and to develop all main directions. Let us assume there were indeed some shortcomings: the weak relations with the countries of South America and with South East Asia and China, but these are not so much deficiencies as only the first steps in the correct direction.

AIW: How do you assess the progress achieved in 2010 in the process of resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict?

Dr. Karavayev: There is still no progress. That the powers in their joint declarations (G-8 and otherwise) have spoken of the necessity of the withdrawal of Armenian forces from the occupied districts is difficult to call progress. It did not lead to any practical movement. Nor did two major attempts, one by Turkey and the other by Russia, to push the process off its current stalemate bear any fruit.

AIW: How do you assess the energy diplomacy of Azerbaijan in 2010 and what in your view are the prospects in this regard for the future?

Dr. Karavayev: Let us see what the results from the visit to Baku of European Commission President Barroso will be. If one talks about prospects, then Azerbaijan has adopted a correct approach by promoting the export of liquefied natural gas through Georgian and Turkish ports, the broadening of foreign investments by the State Oil Company in the network and development of pipelines. Of course, it is also important to develop for export oil distillates as produced by Azerbaijani refineries.

AIW: How do you assess the dynamics of relations of Azerbaijan with its nearest neighbors—Russia, Iran and Turkey—in 2010 and what in your view are the prospects for the further development of these relations in 2011?

Dr. Karavayev: The relations of Azerbaijan with Russia and Turkey of course have their own dynamic, but they are brought closer together by a common interest in, and the existence of, an atmosphere of political stability which supports the development of business. Of course, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has an impact on both sets of relations, but Baku at a practical level divides its foreign policy moves in such a way that the Karabakh impasse does not block the development of political contacts and the rest of the spectrum of relations with other international subjects. Therefore, in my view, mutually profitable stability will be preserved on both these lines.

As in the past, relations with Iran will continue to be unsettled. It is a difficult neighbor, and for Azerbaijan, not to have major problems with Iran or with the Western coalition because of cooperation with Iran is already an accomplishment, something Baku has been able to achieve through its skillfully effected multi-vector foreign policy.

AIW: How do you assess the dynamics of relations of Azerbaijan with the United States in 2010 and what in your view are the prospects for the further development of these relations in 2011?

Dr. Karavayev: This is quite a complicated and multifaceted issue. There are no obvious problems between the US and Azerbaijan. More than that, there is a large list of well-known lines of cooperation involving regional problems and Washington-sponsored initiatives. But at the same time, it appears that Washington, despite that, has ignored the growing ambitions of Baku. The impression is thus created that in Washington they do not know what line to follow and thus give contradictory signals. What line will dominate in the coming year is difficult to say.

AIW: How do you assess the activity of Azerbaijan in public diplomacy in 2010?

Dr. Karavayev: The soft power mechanism is not a discovery for Azerbaijani diplomacy, for in essence, any positive activity of the Azerbaijani diaspora in the world is a manifestation of public diplomacy and brings significant fruits in the task of forming a positive image of the country. But systematically and in an organized fashion, this diplomatic tactic has been employed relatively recently. Among the successful achievements of public diplomacy of Azerbaijan on the post-Soviet space, I would note the opening in Ulyanovsk of a general education school that was refurbished by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, something that no other foreign diaspora has done in Russia. Also noteworthy is the activity of the small Azerbaijani diaspora in Crimea. At one time, I conducted research on that subject and know the leader of the community. Without having serious financial and other means of influence on the local authorities, they have been able to attract attention to the destruction by vandals of a memorial complex to Soviet soldiers at Sapun-Gore in Sevastopol, where a large number of Azerbaijani soldiers died. Therefore, the restoration of this memorial is the direct result of public diplomacy of the local diaspora.

One also needs to recall the successes of the *Justice for Hojaly* program that has resulted in actions in many countries of Europe and in the United States.

However, one must not forget that public diplomacy to a significant degree is an element of inter-cultural dialogue. Politics in this case should play a secondary role. It is necessary to broaden the geography of exhibits of Azerbaijani artists and to develop its film industry in order to allow it to play a larger role in the world market. In this direction, there is a great deal of work to do. There is a need for greater inventiveness, and it would be wise to try in the major cities and capitals of the world to open a network of Azerbaijani cultural centers which could host exhibits, conduct forums and presentations, and serve as offices of national commercial brands of Azerbaijan, from tourist firms to producers of food products.

AIW: What challenges in your view stand before Azerbaijani foreign policy in 2011 and what actions should Azerbaijan undertake in response?

Dr. Karavayev: There is clearly a need for new approaches to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Baku needs to bring the Azerbaijani plan for the post-war reconstruction of the social and economic life of the currently occupied territories, including Nagorno-Karabakh, to the attention of world public opinion. And even if this project cannot be carried out in the near term, then at any case, it will become an additional argument for Baku's diplomacy. This concerns general strategy.

If one makes a prognostication about the practical development of the conflict, then in 2011 there is a growing chance of a major provocation by Armenia with the goal of drawing Azerbaijan into a major armed conflict and thus present it to the world as an unrestrained militarist power.

At the same time, and as usual, the main global challenges, connected with the situation around Iran remain important. In both cases, restraint is needed.

AZERBAIJAN AND THE EU EASTERN PARTNERSHIP: TOWARD A RELATIONSHIP OF EQUALS?

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The European Union and Azerbaijan have cooperated since the fall of the Soviet Union. Since July 16, 2010, the two sides are committed to discussing a future Association Agreement within the framework of the EU Eastern Partnership program. That agreement will build on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement the EU signed with Azerbaijan earlier as well as on the special relationship Azerbaijan enjoys with the EU thanks to its energy resources.

If the relationship between the EU and Azerbaijan has been strong in the energy area, bilateral cooperation in other fields including rule of law and economic diversification has been much less developed. Obviously, both the EU and Azerbaijan hope to broaden and deepen the level of cooperation, especially given the EU's Eastern Partnership project.

Because the EU has accepted many former socialist bloc countries as members, the Union is not completely united on how to approach the former Soviet republics. The new EU members support a differentiated approach to these countries given their variety, and they achieved a victory in November 2006 when they secured EU backing for the development of Individual Action Plans with each of the three South Caucasus states. Subsequently, these Eastern European EU members, led by Poland and Sweden, have pushed for a special relationship with each of the former Soviet republics.

The so-called Visegrad Group which consists of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia backed the Polish-Swedish proposal and argued that Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine and the South Caucasian states are part of "Eastern Europe," a view that not all the other EU members shared, but with the support of the United Kingdom, Poland and Sweden submitted a proposal for the establishment of an Eastern partnership to the European Commission in May 2008, and despite some reluctance the Commission ultimately agreed.

This process accelerated after the Russian-Georgian war in August 2008. During the extraordinary European Council of September 1, 2008, which convened to address this conflict, the European member-states strongly reiterated their support for the Eastern Partnership and underscored that they did not wish to leave their Eastern neighbours facing Russia alone. As a result, the Eastern Partnership Program was launched on May 7, 2009, at the EU Prague Summit.

In addition to this bilateral approach which calls for the elaboration of Association Agreements with each of the six countries, the Program calls for the creation of a multilateral framework encompassing the relationship between the EU and its six partners that will ultimately allow for the establishment of an Economic Community for the Neighborhood.

Until 2003, the EU did not define Azerbaijan or its neighbors in the South Caucasus as a neighbor of Europe. Baku was added to that category only then, and that became the basis for the talks that have occurred since that time, talks that have focused on energy issues more than anything else given Azerbaijan's natural wealth.

Taking advantage of the institutional turmoil generated by the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, DG Energy from the European Commission has decided to take the lead in policy-making towards Azerbaijan. It knows that this country is the only one that in the short run, that can provide gas to the South Corridor project and is thus willing to build a special partnership between Baku and Brussels. In this perspective, Roland Kobia, who previously worked with former Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs, was appointed as the new head of the EU delegation in Baku in October 2009.

The future Association Agreement could break this energy dominance in the Azerbaijani-EU relationship. First of all, Baku hopes that Brussels will take into account its domestic evolution. The Azerbaijan the EU used to deal with in the mid-1990s is very different from the Azerbaijan it is negotiating with today. In the 1990s, it was one post-Soviet state among others, struggling to promote its interests abroad. Now, it is a wealthy country that uses its enormous oil revenues to build a coherent and consistent foreign policy in the Caspian and the South Caucasus. It has proved its ability to sustain external pressures from great powers.

Second, Baku hopes the EU will take into account Azerbaijan's role as a regional economic leader. The Azerbaijani oil company SOCAR is now the largest taxpayer in Georgia, where it controls all the gas distribution system. Azerbaijan also funds the Georgian section of the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad, which may be an important axis of transportation across the South Caucasus in the next decade. Moreover, the role of Baku in the energy field in Turkey is also becoming increasingly important. Thus, in the economic sphere at least, Azerbaijan is becoming a major player in the South Caucasus.

Brussels does want the Association Agreement to update its relationship with Azerbaijan. Such an agreement is firmly needed insofar as the EU lacks leverage over Baku given that Azerbaijan does not want to join the EU. Thus, Brussels needs to find other incentives to build a strong partnership with Azerbaijan. The Association Agreement is intended to provide such an opportunity. At the very least, it may help Baku and Brussels revise their economic and political dialogue. On the one hand, the EU needs Azerbaijan to be a door opener in the South Corridor project, and on the other, Baku needs the EU to play a stronger role in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The Association Agreement could lead to a win-win situation, but for that to happen, both the EU and the Azerbaijani government will have to work hard to turn these hopes into realities.

AZERBAIJAN TO TAKE LEAD IN SUPPLYING EUROPE WITH NATURAL GAS

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Just as it earlier took the lead in promoting the construction of new pipelines to carry Caspian basin oil to the West, now Azerbaijan has committed itself to supply "substantial volumes" of its own natural gas production to the European Union, something that will boost Baku's standing with that powerful economic group, thus building upon Azerbaijan's drive to become a major player in an ever broader region and lessen the EU's current dependence on the flow of natural gas through the Russian Federation, a development that could complicate relations between Baku and Moscow—even though Russia's Gazprom has committed itself to purchasing more Azerbaijan gas next year.

On January 13, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and European Commission head Jose Manuel Barroso signed a joint declaration committing themselves to the joint development of several pipeline routes that are collectively called "the southern corridor." Barroso celebrated the signing as "a major breakthrough" because President Aliyev committed Azerbaijan to provide "sufficient gas" to make the corridor an attractive place for investment and an important diversification of gas flows out of Central Asia and the Caspian to Europe.

As part of the program outlined in the declaration, the European Union will provide much of the funding for the Nabucco route which is to carry gas from the Caspian

basin through Turkey to Austria. Azerbaijan has agreed to provide most of the initial flow, although other countries, including Turkmenistan, will eventually come on stream. But the declaration also makes reference to the far more ramified network of pipeline projects in the southern corridor, without specifying which of these will receive priority in the immediate future. Consequently, the January 13 declaration marks the beginning of a new stage of competition among projects even as it does commit both Brussels and Baku to the expansion of the southern corridor, although everyone involved is hopeful that gas will flow westward two or three years from now.

Because debates about these various routes are certain to continue, many will be likely to dismiss the rhetoric around the January 13 event. If one focuses only on the question of pipeline routes, that may be appropriate given that the exact routes, despite this agreement on Nabucco, could change during the coming months. But the geopolitical consequences of this accord are enormous, possibly even larger than the oil-based “Deal of the Century” of more than a decade ago, and certain—or at least as certain as anything can be in what is an increasingly fluid international system.

Three consequences clearly will flow from this accord. First, Azerbaijan’s standing and influence in Europe is going to rise. Brussels is increasingly going to view Baku as the regional power, not only in the South Caucasus but as the key intermediary between Europe and the countries of Central Asia and especially Turkmenistan, potentially one of the largest suppliers of natural gas in the world. That will change the balance of power between Azerbaijan and Turkey at least in the eyes of Europe, and it will mean that Azerbaijan will find its positions, including on Nagorno-Karabakh and the occupied territories, enjoying increasing support among European states. Indeed, the last several months have provided a great deal of evidence on that point.

Second, because the southern corridor by definition represents a challenge to Russian control of the gas flows to the West, Moscow is likely to view it as a threat to its power and influence on the continent. That will create a potentially delicate situation in which Azerbaijan will have to navigate carefully as the Russian powers that be use both carrots—more gas purchases and pressure on the Armenians—and sticks—greater Russian support for Yerevan and various efforts to block investments in the southern corridor project.

And third, this accord along with other events of the past year confirm the wisdom of President Ilham Aliyev’s balanced foreign policy and particularly his push for a dramatically expanded Azerbaijani diplomatic and business presence abroad. That policy and that push have now yielded some real dividends. But they have another consequence, one that Azerbaijani officials and commentators are going to be wrestling with in the coming months. Given its new power and influence, Azerbaijan is certain to be judged by others by different standards than it has been in the past. In some cases, this will lead Europeans to be less critical of aspects of Azerbaijani life they have been critical of, but in others, it will mean that because of the increased attention Azerbaijan can now expect to receive, others, including some governments and many NGOs, are likely to become increasingly critical of exactly the same things. Navigating that, too, is going to be a challenge.

But however any of these developments do work out singly or in combination, January 13th was truly a red letter day for Baku, an announcement to the world that

Azerbaijan has arrived and is ready to play in much bigger leagues politically and economically than many had thought possible only a few months ago.

A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

President Ilham Aliyev says that "the restoration of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan" must be the basis of any resolution of the conflict with Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/247996.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev says that "the Southern Gas Corridor has strategic importance for us" (<http://news.day.az/politics/247838.html>).

The Foreign Ministry issues its annual report on Azerbaijan's diplomatic activities for 2010 (<http://news.day.az/politics/246838.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says that Moscow will continue to work through the OSCE Minsk Group to seek a resolution of the Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/247725.html>).

Anatoly Tsyganok, a Russian military expert, says that "Moscow has agreed to the withdrawal of Armenian units from five districts around Karabakh" (<http://news.day.az/politics/246677.html>).

Lithuanian Foreign Minister Audronius Azubalis, chairman-in-office of the OSCE, calls on the members of that organization to intensify their efforts to resolve prolonged conflicts such as that over Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://news.day.az/politics/247759.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

14 January

President Ilham Aliyev receives Marius Vizer, the president of the International Judo Federation (<http://news.day.az/politics/247999.html>).

Industry and Energy Minister Natic Aliyev signs a protocol with EU Commissioner for Energy Guenther Oettinger on the Southern Gas Corridor (<http://news.day.az/economy/247976.html>).

José Manuel Barroso, the president of the European Commission, says that "cooperation between the European Union and Azerbaijan will make both sides stronger" (<http://news.day.az/politics/247945.html>).

Zakir Hashimov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Astana, says that relations between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan will reach a new, higher level in 2011 (<http://news.day.az/politics/247851.html>).

Elin Suleymanov, Azerbaijan's consul general in Los Angeles, speaks on Azerbaijan to a conference at Stanford University (<http://news.day.az/politics/247897.html>).

Zahid Oruj, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the liquidation of ASALA must be a priority (<http://news.day.az/politics/247756.html>).

Azerbaijani prosecutors say that "part of the materials in the case connected with the January 20th tragedy has not been returned by Russia" (<http://news.day.az/politics/247940.html>).

Latvian President Valdis Zatlers says that "Latvia favors the strengthening of relations between the European Union and Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/247852.html>).

Ali Ryza Alaboyun, a member of Turkey's Grand National Assembly, says that Armenia's recent statements and actions "can lead to a renewal of military actions over Karabakh" (<http://news.day.az/politics/247836.html>).

The European Union announces that it will transfer 122.5 million euros to Azerbaijan over the next three years for institution-building (<http://news.day.az/economy/248044.html>).

13 January

President Ilham Aliyev and European Commission President José Manuel Barroso sign a joint declaration about the construction of the Southern Gas Corridor (<http://news.day.az/politics/247832.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Pier Luigi Malesani, the chairman of the supervisory board of *Euronews*, and Philippe Cayla, the executive director of that channel (<http://news.day.az/politics/247731.html>).

Milli Majlis Vice-Speaker Ziyafat Askarov receives Sven Alkalaj, the foreign minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina (<http://news.day.az/politics/247800.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov meets with his Italian counterpart in Rome, Alfredo Mantika (<http://news.day.az/politics/247777.html>).

Fazail Aghamaly, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that certain "radical Islamist forces" are attempting to threaten the constitutional order in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/247840.html>).

Bakhtiyar Sadykhov, a member of the Milli Majlis defense and security committee, notes that ASALA was "created by Armenian nationalists" (<http://news.day.az/politics/247609.html>).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says that Moscow will continue to work through the OSCE Minsk Group to seek a resolution of the Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/247725.html>).

Sven Alkalaj, the foreign minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, says his country is considering opening an embassy in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/247761.html>).

Vladimir Dorokhin, Russian ambassador to Baku, says that with their border accord, "Azerbaijan and Russia came to a unique compromise," one that reflects their standing as strategic partners (<http://news.day.az/politics/247702.html>).

Orkhan Erdem, a member of Turkey's Grand National Assembly, says that if the war for Karabakh begins again, Turkey will support Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/247550.html>).

12 January

President Ilham Aliyev receives Sven Alkalaj, the foreign minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina (<http://news.day.az/politics/247612.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Iranian Oil Minister Seyid Masoud Mir-Kazemi (<http://news.day.az/politics/247590.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives copies of the letters of credence of incoming Swedish Ambassador to Baku Sabina Pulman (<http://news.day.az/politics/247576.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives copies of the letters of credence from incoming Turkmenistan ambassador to Baku, Toili Komekov (<http://news.day.az/politics/247625.html>).

Ambassador Agshin Mehdiyev, Azerbaijan's permanent representative to the United Nations in New York, says that Baku may distribute to the members of the UN copies of the field report of the OSCE Minsk Group concerning its visit to the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/247488.html>).

Eldar Ibrahimov, deputy head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, says that "the failure of the OSCE summit in Astana" to make progress on the Karabakh conflict is evidence of serious problems in that organization (<http://news.day.az/politics/247491.html>).

Rafael Huseynov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the actions of Armenia are "leading to a military solution of the Karabakh conflict" (<http://news.day.az/politics/247413.html>).

Tahir Rzayev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that a second Karabakh war could begin in the near future (<http://news.day.az/politics/247380.html>).

The Azerbaijani consulate general in Yekaterinburg releases a second television program on Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/247592.html>).

Pope Benedict XVI wishes the Azerbaijani people peace, prosperity and enlightenment in his New Year's message which the Holy Father handed over to Elchin Amirbayov, the Azerbaijani ambassador to the Holy See (<http://news.day.az/politics/247546.html>).

Slovak President Ivan Gašparovič says that "Bratislava is interested in intensifying contacts with Baku" (<http://news.day.az/politics/247444.html>).

José Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission, says that "Azerbaijan is a key partner of the European Union" (<http://news.day.az/politics/247452.html>).

Iranian Oil Minister Seyid Masoud Mir-Kazemi proposes the creation of a joint Iranian-Azerbaijani energy bank (<http://news.day.az/economy/247602.html>).

11 January

Yashar Aliyev, Azerbaijani ambassador to Washington, discusses the further activities of the Azerbaijani diaspora in the United States with members of the leading organizations of that group (<http://news.day.az/politics/247234.html>).

Govhar Bakhshaliyeva, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that she has "great hopes" for the resolution of the Karabakh conflict in 2011 (<http://news.day.az/politics/247198.html>).

Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheik Naser al-Muhammad al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah tells visiting Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov that Kuwait wants to establish direct air ties with Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/247254.html>).

The European Court for Human Rights rejects the complaint of Azerbaijani opposition parties about recent elections (<http://news.day.az/politics/247294.html>).

10 January

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with Kuwaiti Crown Prince Sheik Nawwaf al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah and receives a letter from the Sheik's father addressed to President Ilham Aliyev (<http://news.day.az/politics/247079.html>).

Elin Suleymanov, Azerbaijani consul general in Los Angeles, says that "Yerevan's policies do not allow Armenia to become an independent state" (<http://news.day.az/politics/247040.html>).

Muharrem Varly, a member of Turkey's Grand National Assembly, says that "Armenia can disappear" (<http://news.day.az/politics/246882.html>).

8 January

The Foreign Ministry issues its annual report on Azerbaijan's diplomatic activities for 2010 (<http://news.day.az/politics/246838.html>).

Azerbaijanis living in the Russian Federation say that Russian firms are importing goods produced on the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/246934.html>).

7 January

Asim Mollazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "Armenia no longer has any alternative" but to agree to withdraw from the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/246746.html>).

Ahmet Deniz Bolukbashi, a member of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, says that recent diplomatic moves and the economic situation will "force Armenia to choose a wiser way out" of the current impasse over the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/246649.html>).

6 January

The Polish foreign ministry calls on its citizens not to visit the occupied territories without the prior agreement of the Azerbaijani government (<http://news.day.az/politics/246608.html>).

US Representative Virginia Fox of North Carolina says that the Republican majority in the House of Representatives will not allow consideration of the Armenian genocide resolution anytime in the next two years (<http://news.day.az/politics/246610.html>).

Sait Achba, a member of Turkey's Grand National Assembly, says that Armenia is in an ever more difficult position and will have to change its policies in order to get out of it (<http://news.day.az/politics/246497.html>).

5 January

José Manuel Barroso, the president of the European Commission, says that he expects the Nabucco project to be realized (<http://news.day.az/economy/246534.html>).

Redjai Yildizrim, a member of Turkey's Grand National Assembly, says that "Turkey can take Armenia by the throat" if need be and force it to withdraw from the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/246047.html>).

4 January

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that "eventually, Armenia will return the Azerbaijani territories" (<http://news.day.az/politics/246328.html>).

1 January

President Ilham Aliyev greets the Azerbaijani people on the occasion of the Day of Solidarity of the Azerbaijanis of the World and the New Year (<http://news.day.az/politics/246129.html>).

Note to Readers

The editors of "Azerbaijan in the World" hope that you find it useful and encourage you to submit your comments and articles via email (adabiweekly@ada.edu.az). The materials it contains reflect the personal views of their authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan.