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School of International Affairs

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AZERBAIJAN AND POLAND

An Interview with H.E. Mr. Michal Labenda
Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to the Republic of Azerbaijan

January 25, 2011
Baku, Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan and the World: What do you see as the central core of relations between Azerbaijan and Poland?

Ambassador Michal Labenda: Like the relations between any two close, prospering and independent countries, the relationship between Poland and Azerbaijan involves many things. There is no one center of gravity. Of course, some areas attract more public attention, but that doesn't mean we neglect others. But what is especially

important is that the foundation of our very good and friendly relations is a similar history and understanding of the transformation process, even though not everyone in either country fully appreciates this.

In Poland, people have only a limited knowledge about Prometheanism, Warsaw's ideology and program of support for newly independent nations in the east in the early 1920s. But that approach is bearing fruit today. Like others, we Poles know what it means to be left to our fate in the hands of a cruel regime, and we are proud that the very first movement, *Solidarność*, directed at dismantling the Evil Empire was set up in Poland. Now, after a very successful two decades of transformation, Poland is in a position to be the very best advocate for Azerbaijan in the European Union. That is why our friendship and cooperation is so strong and why we work hard to strengthen both.

Our two countries have had a similar geopolitical and historical set of experiences. Owing to its complicated and tragic history, Poland understand the value of peace, something that is always better than war, and the importance of negotiations which are always more profitable than angry silence. At various points in our history, Poland has disappeared from the map of Europe. The last time—in 1939 (!)—was not so long ago. And at the Yalta Conference at the end of World War II, we lost a large segment of our territory, including some places of utmost important for Polish nationhood. So we understand the pain of nations at war and we also are certain that there is no other way to solve conflicts except within the framework of the international law.

AIW: How have the Azerbaijani-Polish relations evolved since 1991, and how would you describe their current status?

Amb. Labenda: Our bilateral ties were established in 1992 after both our countries regained their independence for the second time in the 20th century. We began our cooperation from scratch, but for Poland, the eastern dimension of our foreign policy has always been a matter of the highest priority. At the same time, Azerbaijan has always viewed Europe as near the top of its foreign policy priorities. In 1998, Poland opened an embassy in Baku, and since that time, we have been working hard to promote trade and cooperation in various sectors. This effort was especially visible during the presidency of the late Lech Kaczyński, who viewed Azerbaijan as a trusted and friendly partner in the region.

I would like to highlight one relatively new aspect of our relationship. Poland is one of the six largest members of the European Union and our voice counts, and—this being the case—its membership means that the Polish-Azerbaijani relationship can develop into something larger and interwoven with a larger set of global politics. Being part of the *Eastern Partnership* then opens a broad range of possibilities for Azerbaijan.

AIW: What do you think is the essential feature of the *Eastern Partnership* initiative your country and Sweden have advanced and what future do you see for it?

Amb. Labenda: The most important achievement of the *Eastern Partnership* in the short run should become a new perception of the six countries not only as our geographical and political neighbors but also as our close and friendly partners. Along with other European countries, Poland believes that only through such partnerships can we create a better international environment, one based on political

dialogue, a shared economic space, and truly friendly relations. We very much hope that the Polish Presidency in the European Council in the second half of 2011 will give us the opportunity for deeper cooperation and even faster development of the *Eastern Partnership* initiative as one of our priorities. The successful implementation of the *Eastern Partnership* project should—and no doubt will—lead us toward our ultimate goal, which is in prompting the formation of prosperous democratic countries in Europe's eastern neighborhood, ones with their economic and political systems fully compatible with the standards and values that Europe espouses.

AIW: What is the state of energy cooperation between Azerbaijan and Poland?

Amb. Labenda: I am always asked this question when I give interviews. It is important to note that energy cooperation often has less to do with bilateral relations than with multi-lateral arrangements because many states are involved in the extraction, transport, and consumption of energy. Obviously, some countries are more interested than others in promoting a diversified network of suppliers or export routes. Our bilateral cooperation involves both institutional and commercial dimensions.

The EU's *Eastern Partnership* initiative and specifically its third platform on energy security provides additional opportunities to realize such projects and boost energy cooperation between the European Union and the *Eastern Partnership* countries. At the same time, Polish companies have their own relations with their Azerbaijani counterparts via separately concluded agreements like one between Lotos and Socar, and bilateral trade in this sector reflects not only Azerbaijani exports of oil to Poland but Polish exports of oil products to Azerbaijan.

AIW: What are the other main components of trade and cooperation between Azerbaijan and Poland?

Amb. Labenda: Azerbaijan's rapidly growing economy has provided many opportunities for Polish companies, and over the past four years, we have organized two national exhibits in Baku, taken part in four sessions of the intergovernmental commission on economic issues, and assisted in visits by officials and business people in both directions. The results of this effort can be seen in statistics. In 2009, for example, nearly 60% of all Polish trade with Caucasus region was with Azerbaijan, and in the first half of 2010, Polish exports to Azerbaijan grew by 26 percent and imports from Azerbaijan grew by 112 percent compared to the year earlier. In addition, we have significantly extended our cooperation into investment and technical assistance projects.

AIW: What is the state of bilateral cultural and social cooperation?

Amb. Labenda: Promoting cooperation in this area is one of the priorities of the Polish Embassy in Baku. On the one hand, we support cooperation between the relevant ministries and cultural institutions. And on the other, we encourage artists and other individuals to establish and develop personal contacts and to carry out joint projects. We bear primary responsibility for ensuring cultural contacts between our two countries, and our experience in 2010 with the Chopin Year in Azerbaijan shows that there are many more opportunities in this area.

The Embassy also pays close attention to educational issues. Since its opening in 2006, the Polish Culture and Language Centre at the Baku Slavic University has been

conducting language courses for Azerbaijani students. Many of these students have taken advantage of exchange programs offered by Polish universities and some continue their career in Poland. Even more important, many of them use these experiences in Poland back in Azerbaijan. We are in process of creating an organization of these people to help them maintain ties with Poland. If anyone who has studied in Poland would like to join this effort, please contact our embassy. For more information on this and other activities, please go to our website at <http://www.baku.polemb.net>.

AIW: What in your view should be the next steps in relations between Azerbaijan and Poland?

Amb. Labenda: We need to build on what we have already achieved. Our bilateral contacts are quite frequent, and we are planning many new visits, including follow-up visits after the visit to Baku by our Deputy Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak in November last year. The Polish Presidency in the European Council in the second half of 2011, on the other hand, will add further momentum to bilateral relations between Poland and Azerbaijan.

AIW: Given your experience, what advice would you give young Azerbaijanis beginning their careers in diplomacy?

Amb. Labenda: They should learn as much as possible about different countries—their culture, traditions and language—because in order to have good relations, you need to understand others. That is the most important thing, and you can do it only by learning their culture, meeting people, and talking with them. Many people have a romantic view of diplomacy, but the truth is that it is an ordinary job like many others, with many documents to be read and boring meetings attended. What I like best about it is the knowledge it gives, about politics, about other countries and peoples, and about some behind-the-scenes mechanisms in the decision-making process.

**NOT JUST A QUESTION OF AUTHORSHIP:
A LITERARY EXCAVATION INTO 'ALI AND NINO'**

Paul Goble
Publications Advisor
Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy

Every nation has at least one piece of literature by which its people and others immediately recognize its nature. Russia has *Yevgeny Onegin*, the United States has *Huckleberry Finn*, and France has *The Red and the Black*. Azerbaijan has a similarly iconic novel through the pages of which everyone can view that nation, but unlike the others, its literary masterpiece has followed a more complicated path to its readers than have the others, a reflection of the complicated history of Azerbaijan in the twentieth century. That book is Kurban Said's *Ali and Nino*, a love story between an Azerbaijani youth and a Georgian princess set against the violent upheavals of revolutions in the Caucasus in 1920.

Originally published in German in 1937, the book has since appeared in more than 100 editions in more than 30 languages, attracting an audience around the world and causing Azerbaijanis to instantly recognize themselves and others to understand what Azerbaijanis are. While everyone knew that “Kurban Said” was a pseudonym—most but not all the editions helpfully pointed that out—few readers beyond the small expert literary community gave much thought to the author: the story was too true and whoever wrote it had both extraordinary literary talents and an amazing insight into the nature of Azerbaijanis and the remarkable world of Baku nearly a century ago.

That all changed six years ago when Tom Reiss, an American writer, published a book entitled *The Orientalist*, which argued that Lev Nussinbaum (1905-1942), who often used the pen name Essad Bey, was the creator of *Ali and Nino*. Reiss’s book attracted a great deal of attention in the West and also in Azerbaijan, where many had long believed that the author of the great novel was in fact Yusuf Vazir Chamanzaminli (1887-1942), a gifted Azerbaijani writer and diplomat who perished in Stalin’s GULAG. And challenged by Reiss’s claim, these people, who included aging relatives of the author and Azerbaijani literary scholars, spoke out in defense of Chamanzaminli.

That debate has now been chronicled, expanded and, in the minds of many settled, as a result of the work of the indefatigable efforts of Betty Blair, the editor of *Azerbaijan International* in the current issue of that magazine. [1]

Drawing on the memories and insights of dozens of Azerbaijanis, ranging from surviving relatives of Chamanzaminli to literary experts to ordinary people concerned about the fate of their nation, Blair concludes that behind the pseudonym Kurban Said was a composite person just as complicated as Azerbaijani history has been: that the basic story was written by Chamanzaminli but that Nussinbaum/Essad Bey or someone else had added many parts to the novel before it reached its readers.

Such a both/and rather than either/or approach may not satisfy the extreme partisans on either side, but it is almost certainly the most just. On the one hand, as the articles and memoir materials in *Azerbaijan International* make clear, Chamanzaminli had both the literary technique and the personal experience in Baku both generally and with interethnic families to allow him to come up with this story; while on the other hand, Nussinbaum/Essad Bey left Baku as a teenager and wrote a series of books which showed great skill in attracting publicity but often featured passages that do not square with reality.

Many people are likely to read this issue of *Azerbaijan International* only for the information it casts on this dispute, but that would be a mistake. This excavation of Azerbaijani literary life in fact provides an insight into the history of Azerbaijan, both at the time the novel is set and in the years since, including the period after the recovery of independence in 1991. This issue is filled with information not only on the authors involved but rather on the entire range of life in Baku nearly a century ago and on the nature of Azerbaijaniness and the Azerbaijani experience.

At one point in the issue (page 20), Betty Blair provides a summary which is far more precise than any this writer could give. She says of the issue that “the result [of her efforts and those of the others involved in this volume] is insight—not only into the authors under investigation—but into the world in which the novel was set, Azerbaijan and Europe in the early 20th century, characterized by the chaos brought

on by the collapse of empires, the rise of authoritarian systems, and the desperation of confused, impoverished refugees and citizens, struggling to survive.”

Consequently, just like *Ali and Nino*, this issue of *Azerbaijan International* must be required reading for all those who care not only about Azerbaijan but about the human condition in our time.

Notes

[1] “Ali and Nino, The Business of Literature, Who Wrote Azerbaijan’s Most Famous Novel?”, *Azerbaijan International* 15:2-4, 2011 [364 pages].

A GREAT DESIGN WITH POOR PERFORMANCE

A Review of
Charlotte Hille
State Building and Conflict Resolution in the Caucasus
(Brill Academic Publishers, 2010)

Fareed Shafee
Independent Researcher

This book deserves praise for collecting and organizing various themes on the history of the Caucasus, north and south, but it resembles a textbook rather than a research effort, lacks sufficient reserves and the kind of deep analysis one would hope for. In short, one can say it is a great design but a poor performance.

Charlotte Hill focuses on the history of state building in the Caucasus beginning in the early twentieth century. She describes the connection between statehood building process with local cultures and the brief experience of state independence in the aftermath of World War I, a brief period of independence that has had profound consequences for the more recent period of independent statehood.

One of the book’s strongest features is that many important and little known facts are brought together. The reader discovers the existence of the Araz Republic, the South-Western Caucasian Republic, and the Confederation of North Caucasus Republics in a period between the collapse of Russian Empire and the creation of the Soviet Union.

Moreover, subtopics in chapters trace the development of statehood and conflicts in the Caucasus. For example, in chapter about Georgia between 1918 and 1921 Hille highlights the following events: Brest-Litovsk Treaty, Conference in Trabzond, Georgia Turns to Germany for Help, Georgian-German Agreement, Treaty of Batumi, and the like.

Hille also describes the role of foreign powers such as Ottomans, Russia, and Germany in 1917-1921, and Russia, the United States, Turkey, and Iran today. As an important internal factor in the development of statehood, as well as in the

emergence of conflicts in the region, Hille points to the role of clans and an interaction between the organization of the state and the clan, noting that “the clan takes more power when the state withdraws” (p. 21). And as a specialist on international law, Hille discusses with intelligence self-determination, territorial integrity and related issues.

Unfortunately, the book’s treatment of historical and scholarly sources about conflicts in the Caucasus is superficial. In the chapter on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Hille extensively uses pro-Armenian sources—works of Chorbajian, Hovannisian, and Minassian—without providing an equivalent discussion of an Azerbaijani perspective

The section on the conflict resolution in the South Caucasus draws heavily on the source and opinion of international organizations and NGOs, but fails to include academic discussions of these events. Other chapters unfortunately suffer from similar shortcomings.

While Hille’s book can serve as a helpful source with regard to the legal background of conflict related issues, unfortunately, it cannot be used as a historical reference.

A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN’S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan’s Foreign Policy

President Ilham Aliyev, while attending the Davos Conference, meets with his Ukrainian counterpart Viktor Yanukovich whom he tells that “relations between Azerbaijan and Ukraine are developing very actively and dynamically” (<http://news.day.az/politics/249928.html>).

Aydin Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the term, “Azerbaijani-Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh problem,” has been adopted as “a compromise” on the basis of proposals by the OSCE Minsk Group (<http://news.day.az/politics/250103.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that Azerbaijan, despite its diplomatic relations with Israel and an Israeli embassy in Baku, does not have an embassy in Jerusalem because it supports the existence of two states, Israel and Palestine (<http://news.day.az/politics/249511.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

The Russian Foreign Ministry says that the meeting of the foreign ministers of Russia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan on January 24 “testified to the intensity of work which is being conducted in this format” (<http://news.day.az/politics/250252.html>).

Thorbjørn Jagland, the secretary general of the Council of Europe, says that peace in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will be easier to achieve under conditions of the supremacy of law and the observance of human rights” (<http://news.day.az/politics/249944.html>).

Romanian President Traian Bășescu says that Romania “supports Azerbaijan in all spheres” (<http://news.day.az/politics/250219.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan’s Foreign Policy

31 January

Bahar Muradova, deputy speaker of the Milli Majlis, says that Armenian deputies have been doing everything they can to block the restoration of the PACE subcommittee on Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://news.day.az/politics/250779.html>).

Fazail Aghamaly, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that recent statements from Yerevan show that “the leadership of Armenia is in a psychically-moral stupor” (<http://news.day.az/politics/250516.html>).

Nikolae Ureche, Romania’s ambassador to Baku, says that “NATO welcomes its close cooperation with Azerbaijan” (<http://news.day.az/politics/250620.html>).

Maj. Gen. Carlos Branco, director of cooperation and regional security department of NATO international military staff, says that “cooperation between NATO and Azerbaijan is fruitful” (<http://news.day.az/politics/250617.html>).

30 January

The Azerbaijan government sends a plane to Cairo to evacuate Azerbaijani citizens from Egypt (<http://news.day.az/politics/250538.html>).

29 January

President Ilham Aliyev, while attending the Davos Conference, meets with his Ukrainian counterpart Viktor Yanukovich whom he tells that “relations between Azerbaijan and Ukraine are developing very actively and dynamically” (<http://news.day.az/politics/249928.html>).

Edolphus Towns, an American congressman, says that he joins the Azerbaijani people in keeping the memory alive of the victims of Black January 1990 (<http://news.day.az/politics/250494.html>).

28 January

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Veit Sorger, the president of the Federation of Austrian Industry (<http://news.day.az/politics/250279.html>).

The State Committee for Work with the Diaspora announces the formation of a Turkish-Azerbaijani Society in Germany (<http://news.day.az/politics/250399.html>).

Ganira Pashayeva, a member of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that PACE must develop “more serious mechanisms” to ensure that its decisions and resolutions” are implemented (<http://news.day.az/politics/250254.html>).

Samad Seyidov, a member of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that the PACE sub-committee on Nagorno-Karabakh is playing "an important role in bringing to world public opinion the truth" about Azerbaijan and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/250361.html>).

Aydin Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the term, "Azerbaijan-Armenia Nagorno-Karabakh problem," has been adopted as "a compromise" on the basis of proposals by the OSCE Minsk Group (<http://news.day.az/politics/250103.html>).

Peter Semneby, the European Union's Special Representative for the South Caucasus, says in Tbilisi that "it is necessary to work more intensively toward a resolution of the Karabakh conflict" (<http://news.day.az/politics/250414.html>).

Mehmet Ocakden, a Party of Justice and Development representative in Turkey's Grand National Assembly, says that a new military conflict in the South Caucasus would mean "self-destruction for Armenia" (<http://news.day.az/politics/250136.html>).

27 January

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that "Baku is prepared to use all means to achieve forward movement on the Karabakh question" (<http://news.day.az/politics/250098.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that Baku "hopes to achieve an accord with Tehran on the status of the Caspian" (<http://news.day.az/politics/250104.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that "one of the priorities of the foreign policy of Azerbaijan is strengthening ties with neighboring countries and in the first instance with Russia" (<http://news.day.az/politics/250101.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that Azerbaijan is prepared to increase exports of its natural gas (<http://news.day.az/politics/250120.html>).

Elnur Aslanov, the head of the political analysis and information support department of the President's Office says that Azerbaijan is "a supporter of the peaceful resolution of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the restoration of the internationally recognized state borders of the Azerbaijan Republic by peaceful means" (<http://news.day.az/politics/250131.html>).

Ganira Pashayeva, a member of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that Azerbaijan "devotes great importance to dialogue between religions and cultures" (<http://news.day.az/politics/250223.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, a Milli Majlis deputy and deputy executive secretary of the ruling *Yeni Azerbaijan* Party, says that the final report of the OSCE Bureau on Democratic Institutions and Human Rights on elections in Azerbaijan is "not objective" (<http://news.day.az/politics/250144.html>).

The Azerbaijan embassy in Cairo calls on Azerbaijanis in Egypt to be careful and to the extent possible not to leave their homes during the times of mass demonstrations there (<http://news.day.az/politics/250123.html>).

Ali Ahmadov, the deputy chairman of the ruling *Yeni Azerbaijan* Party, condemns as "anti-Azerbaijani propaganda" coverage of Azerbaijan on the first channel of Tehran television (<http://news.day.az/politics/250117.html>).

Vahdat Sultanzade, Azerbaijani ambassador to Ashgabat, is awarded the gold medal of the Dede Gorgud Foundation (<http://news.day.az/politics/250088.html>).

Malahat Ibrahimgyzy, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "the declarations of Armenian politicians [on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict] do not have any basis" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249983.html>).

The remodeled Consulate General of Azerbaijan in Batumi formally reopens (<http://news.day.az/politics/250028.html>).

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopts a declaration labeling the Hojaly events of February 1992 an act of genocide (<http://news.day.az/politics/250172.html>).

Jean-Paul Costa, the president of the European Court of human rights, says his body "is not an international court of justice" but that it is prepared to hear cases brought by those who have suffered as a result of international conflicts (<http://news.day.az/politics/250148.html>).

Joseph Shagal, the president of the Israel-Azerbaijan International Association, says that "a time of decisive actions is approaching in the Karabakh question" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249915.html>).

Turkish Justice Minister Sadullah Ergin says that cooperation between Turkey and Azerbaijan in the area of justice is taking place at the highest level (<http://news.day.az/politics/250029.html>).

26 January

Economic Development Minister Shahin Mustafayev says that Baku plans to open trade representatives in a number of European and CIS country capitals (<http://news.day.az/economy/249922.html>).

Rafael Huseynov, a member of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, distributes a report on "the mutually profitable results and prospects of the decade of membership of Azerbaijan in the Council of Europe" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249925.html>).

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili receives Azerbaijani Transportation Minister Ziya Mammadov and Turkish Transportation and Communications Minister Binali Yildirim (<http://news.day.az/economy/250119.html>).

Husein Yildiz, a National Movement Party deputy in Turkey's Grand National Assembly, says that unless Armenia abides by international agreements and moves to resolve the conflict with Azerbaijan, "military actions over Karabakh will restart" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249718.html>).

Movlud Chavushoglu, the president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, receives the Azerbaijani delegation to that body (<http://news.day.az/politics/250003.html>).

Isaac Matin-Barberro, economic and commercial counselor at the Spanish embassy in Baku, says that "Spain supports Azerbaijan in its relations with the European Union" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249979.html>).

Norica Nicolae, a Romanian deputy in the European Parliament, says that "Armenia must free the occupied territories" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249914.html>).

25 January

The Foreign Ministry asks Azerbaijanis to refrain from travelling to Tunisia because of unsettled conditions there (<http://news.day.az/politics/249770.html>).

Polad Bulbuloglu, Azerbaijani ambassador to Russia, says that there were no Azerbaijani citizens among the victims at the Domodedovo airport terrorist action (<http://news.day.az/society/249651.html>).

Samad Seyidov, head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that Baku is opposed to the appointment of a PACE rapporteur on political prisoners in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/249824.html>).

Samad Seyidov, head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that "parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan are a step forward on the path to democracy" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249641.html>).

Ganira Pashayeva, a member of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, calls on PACE to use effective measures to restore the rights of Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced persons (<http://news.day.az/politics/249634.html>).

Tahir Rzayev, a member of the Milli Majlis committee on regional issues, says that Iran is trying "under the cover of religion" to create problems inside Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/249774.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, deputy executive secretary of the Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that the decision of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to declare Hojali an act of genocide represents a serious defeat for Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/249757.html>).

Govhar Bakhshaliyeva, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan is trying to avoid facing reality by his recent statements about Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://news.day.az/politics/249475.html>).

Elman Mammadov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Azerbaijan "has the right to restore the territorial integrity [of the country] by military means" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249413.html>).

Asef Hajiyeu, a Milli Majlis deputy, predicts that Yerevan will undergo "a Tunisian scenario" if it does not change course (<http://news.day.az/politics/249497.html>).

Rafael Huseynov, a member of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that the Armenian side is blocking the renewal of work of the PACE sub-committee on Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://news.day.az/politics/249642.html>).

Abbas Abbasov, co-chair of the committee of the Inter-Religious Council of the CIS and former first vice prime minister of Azerbaijan, says that "the Russian state must strengthen its prophylactic work to prevent terrorist attacks" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249761.html>).

Turkish President Abdulla Gul says that "Turkey wants to see the Caucasus as an arena of security" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249739.html>).

Cecilia Malmstroem, the European Union internal affairs commissioner, says that the beginning of talks on a simplified visa regime for Azerbaijan and Armenia will begin before summer (<http://news.day.az/politics/249802.html>).

24 January

President Ilham Aliyev receives Peter Semneby, the special representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus (<http://news.day.az/politics/249563.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev confirms the protocol on the cooperation agreement between the Azerbaijani and Bosnia-Herzegovinian foreign ministries of January 12 (<http://news.day.az/politics/249628.html>).

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva is described as "the most active and contemporary first lady" in the region on the *Ekho Kavkaza* site (<http://news.day.az/politics/249584.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with his Russian and Armenian counterparts, Sergey Lavrov and Edvard Nalbandyan in Moscow (<http://news.day.az/politics/249640.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that no one will be able to change the borders of Azerbaijan by force (<http://news.day.az/politics/249494.html>).

Economic Development Minister Shahin Mustafayev says that "political stability in Azerbaijan attracts foreign investors" (<http://news.day.az/economy/249589.html>).

Elmar Mammadov, the representative of the Azerbaijan State Committee on Work with the Azerbaijanis Living Abroad, tells a meeting in Ankara of the Turkish-Azerbaijani Circle (TAD) that it is important to combine the work of the Turkish and Azerbaijani diasporas because as President Ilham Aliyev has said, "one nation must not have two diasporas" (<http://news.day.az/society/249591.html>).

Elkhan Suleymanov, a Milli Majlis deputy, published a book entitled *Azerbaijan: Ten Years in the Council of Europe* (<http://news.day.az/politics/249526.html>).

Azerbaijani and US officials begin consultations in Baku on overcoming the consequences of floods and other natural disasters (<http://news.day.az/society/249577.html>).

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili takes part in the ceremonial opening of the first segment of the gas pipeline built by SOCAR Georgia Gas, a daughter company of the Azerbaijan State Gas Company (<http://news.day.az/economy/249587.html>).

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu says that the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will bring peace and stability to the entire South Caucasus (<http://news.day.az/politics/249627.html>).

Peter Semneby, the special representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus, says that it is necessary to "intensify the ceasefire regime between Armenia and Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249554.html>).

Peter Semneby, the special representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus, says that human rights and media freedom are "the most important priorities in the relations of the European Union with Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249543.html>).

Movlud Chavushoglu, the president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that Yerevan is guilty of "political illiteracy" in its discussion of international documents on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/249549.html>).

Movlud Chavushoglu, the president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that during its decade of membership in the Council of Europe, "Azerbaijan has made significant achievements in the area of democracy. There is the possibility for still greater improvement in the situation in this sphere" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249542.html>).

Tadeus Ivinsky, a Polish deputy to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that the November 2010 parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan took place in peaceful circumstances and that this represents a step forward (<http://news.day.az/politics/249567.html>).

Ali Ahmadov, the deputy chairman of the *Yeni Azerbaijan Party*, receives Norwegian Ambassador Erling Skjonsberg (<http://news.day.az/politics/249540.html>).

Thorbjørn Jagland, the secretary general of the Council of Europe, says that "the acceptance of Azerbaijan into our ranks became for us also something very important" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249503.html>).

Audronius Ažubalis, Lithuanian foreign minister and chairman-in-office of the OSCE, says that "the OSCE will support efforts to intensify talks on Karabakh" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249506.html>).

The International Association of Anti-Corruption Organs has named an Azerbaijani rapporteur (<http://news.day.az/society/249630.html>).

23 January

Peter Semneby, the special representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus, says that "the European Union recognizes the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249398.html>).

Today's Zaman, an English-language newspaper in Turkey, publishes an article entitled "Nagorno-Karabakh: More Dangerous than before" (http://www.todayszaman.com/columnistDetail_getNewsById.action?newsId=233227).

22 January

President Ilham Aliyev receives Taner Yildiz, the Turkish energy and natural resources minister and co-chair of the Joint Inter-governmental Commission (<http://news.day.az/politics/249353.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Sergey Naryshkin, the head of the Presidential Administration of the Russian Federation (<http://news.day.az/politics/249349.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev is named "Man of the Year" by the Romanian journal *Balcanii si Europa* (<http://news.day.az/politics/249360.html>).

Deputy Prime Minister Abid Sharifov signs an accord with Turkish Energy Minister Taner Yildiz on cooperation in the discovery and use of mineral resources (<http://news.day.az/economy/249323.html>).

Ramiz Mehdiyev, head of the President's Office, says that the opening of a Russian Information and Culture Center in Baku will promote "the strengthening of relations of the two countries which even now are developing very dynamically" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249297.html>).

Novruz Mammadov, the head of the foreign relations department of the President's Office, says that the upcoming Moscow meeting of the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan, Russia and Armenia, "must define the direction of talks" on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/249325.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Azerbaijan regrets the distortions that were introduced on the site of the European Commission concerning the statements of

the head of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barrosa when he was in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/249331.html>).

Asim Mollazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Iran has been trying "for many years" to provoke an Islamic revolution in Azerbaijan and in this way support Armenian aggression (<http://news.day.az/politics/249304.html>).

Sergey Naryshkin, the head of the Russian Presidential Administration, says that "the opening of the Russian-Azerbaijani center in Baku is yet another chance for the development of cooperation between the countries" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249328.html>).

Stefanos Stefan, the official representative of the government of the Republic of Cyprus, says that Cyprus "stands for observing the territorial integrity of states and supports the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by means of negotiations" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249274.html>).

21 January

President Ilham Aliyev signs a directive "On the 20th Anniversary of the Restoration of the State Independence of the Azerbaijani Republic" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249224.html>).

Agriculture Minister Ismat Abbasov takes part in the Third Summit of Agriculture Ministers in Berlin (<http://news.day.az/economy/249124.html>).

The Foreign Ministry announces that bilateral security consultations between Azerbaijan and the United States slated for February 7 have been postponed (<http://news.day.az/politics/249145.html>).

Zahid Oruj, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that various forces are "attempting to make the Caspian a subject of regional problems" (<http://news.day.az/politics/249161.html>).

Suat Kinikliuoglu, a Turkish representative to the Parliamentary Assembly of NATO and deputy chairman of the ruling Party of Justice and Development, says that Russia and Turkey plan a new initiative on Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://news.day.az/politics/248772.html>).

Fikret Akchura, the resident coordinator of the United Nations for Azerbaijan, speaks to the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy on the development of human capital (<http://news.day.az/politics/249213.html>).

Russia's Gazprom announces that it will increase its purchases of Azerbaijani gas in 2012 (<http://news.day.az/economy/249234.html>).

20 January

President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva lead Azerbaijanis around the world in marking the 21st anniversary of Black January. Many foreign

governments send messages of support for this commemoration (<http://news.day.az/politics/248887.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Belgian Ambassador Philippe Jottard on the occasion of the completion of his diplomatic assignment in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/248980.html>).

Bahar Muradova, the vice speaker of the Milli Majlis, says that the world "must know that military actions could be renewed at any moment" if the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is not settled (<http://news.day.az/politics/248928.html>).

Bakhtiyar Sadykhov, a member of the Milli Majlis security and defense committee, says that January 20th was both "a black day in the history of our country and a glorious page in the history of the struggle of the Azerbaijani people for its independence" (<http://news.day.az/politics/248943.html>).

Zahid Oruj, a Milli Majlis deputy, says, that "it is not worth hoping for international law [alone] in the resolution of the Karabakh conflict" (<http://news.day.az/politics/248953.html>).

Thorbjørn Jagland, the secretary general of the Council of Europe, says that a decision will be made shortly on the appointment of a new special representative for the South Caucasus (<http://news.day.az/politics/249037.html>).

19 January

President Ilham Aliyev receives incoming ambassadors Sabine Ulmann Shaban from Switzerland and Toyli Komekov from Turkmenistan (<http://news.day.az/politics/248832.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev confirms the December 2010 agreement between Azerbaijan and Turkey on military and financial cooperation (<http://news.day.az/politics/248829.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives his Georgian counterpart Grigol Vashadze (<http://news.day.az/politics/248799.html>).

The Milli Majlis confirms the new composition of its delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the CIS. That 21-member delegation will be headed by Milli Mejlis Speaker Ogtay Asadov (<http://news.day.az/politics/248797.html>).

Farid Shafiyev, Azerbaijani ambassador to Ottawa, discusses Azerbaijani-Canadian relations with Marianne Matichuk, the mayor of Sudbury (<http://news.day.az/politics/248765.html>).

Shahin Abdullayev, Azerbaijani ambassador to Cairo, announces that Azerbaijan has been granted observer status in the African Union (<http://news.day.az/politics/248688.html>).

Elchin Amirbayov, Azerbaijani ambassador to Paris, publishes in *Le Monde* a response to an Armenian article about Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/248694.html>).

Igbal Agazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "those guilty of the events of January 20 [1990] should stand before the tribunal in the Hague" (<http://news.day.az/politics/248821.html>).

The Parliamentary Union of the Organization of the Islamic Conference adopts a declaration calling on the parliaments of all 51 member states to recognize Hojaly as a crime against humanity (<http://news.day.az/politics/248699.html>).

Hulusi Kılıç, Turkish ambassador to Baku, says that "the memory of the victims of January 20th will always live in our hearts" (<http://news.day.az/politics/248813.html>).

Mammadbaqir Bahrami, Iranian ambassador to Baku, expresses the sympathies of his people to the Azerbaijani nation on the occasion of the January 20th tragedy (<http://news.day.az/politics/248835.html>).

Kestutis Kudzmanas, the Lithuanian ambassador to Baku, visits the Center for Strategic Studies under the President of Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/248866.html>).

Mustafa Akinci, a member of the parliament of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, says that "unless the sides want to resolve the Karabakh conflict on the basis of mutual agreement, no one will be able to help or play any role in its resolution" (<http://news.day.az/politics/248791.html>).

18 January

President Ilham Aliyev receives Army General Necdet Ozel, the commander of the Turkish gendarmerie (<http://news.day.az/politics/248652.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Georgian Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze (<http://news.day.az/politics/248651.html>).

Ali Hasanov, the head of the social-political department of the President's Office, says that Azerbaijan's membership in the Council of Europe contributes to Azerbaijan's involvement in the world (<http://news.day.az/politics/248660.html>).

Bahar Muradova, Milli Majlis vice speaker, says that "Lithuania has promised to devote attention to the Karabakh issue" while it is chairman-in-office of the OSCE (<http://news.day.az/politics/248668.html>).

Allahshukur Pashazade, the Sheikh-ul-Islam and head of the Board of Muslims of the Caucasus, receives Russian Ambassador Vladimir Dorokhin who thanks him on behalf of President Dmitry Medvedev for his attention to issues of common concern (<http://news.day.az/politics/248482.html>).

Austrian President Heinz Fischer says that "deepening relations with Azerbaijan has great importance for Austria" (<http://news.day.az/politics/248567.html>).

Birgen Keles, a member of the Turkish delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan's comments about Turkey's relations with its neighbors as a precondition for

membership in the European Union are “an incorrect approach” (<http://news.day.az/politics/248457.html>).

A Bishkek publishing house issues in Russian the first volume of a work entitled *Ilham Aliyev—the New National Leader of Azerbaijan* (<http://news.day.az/politics/248613.html>).

17 January

President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva make an official visit to Latvia where they meet with the Latvian president and other leaders (<http://news.day.az/politics/248414.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev tells the Azerbaijani-Latvian Business Forum in Riga that “Azerbaijan and Latvia are fraternal countries” (<http://news.day.az/politics/248234.html>).

The Defense Ministry dismisses as baseless Armenian suggestions that Azerbaijan bears responsibility for the increasing number of violations of the ceasefire (<http://news.day.az/politics/248317.html>).

Aydin Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that “it is simply ridiculous to speak about the successes of Armenia” (<http://news.day.az/politics/247936.html>).

Azerbaijani diasporas announce that they will seek the repeal of national declarations of the events of 1915 as the genocide of Armenians (<http://news.day.az/politics/248366.html>).

The Armenian military conducts exercises on the occupied territories of Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/248410.html>).

Gustav Blinks, a Swedish parliamentarian, says that “it is necessary to involve Turkey in the resolution of the Karabakh conflict” (<http://news.day.az/politics/248285.html>).

Note to Readers

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