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School of International Affairs

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AZERBAIJAN AND BULGARIA

An Interview with H.E. Mr. Vasil Kalinov
Ambassador of Bulgaria to Azerbaijan

April 14, 2011
Baku, Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan in the World: What do you see as the focus of relations between Azerbaijan and Bulgaria?

Ambassador Kalinov: The most important thing is that after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the entire Eastern bloc, Azerbaijan entered on the path of independent development. And we view Azerbaijan both as an independent state striving to define itself in terms of its new post-Soviet identity and to strengthen its

sovereignty and independence. We have great respect for Azerbaijan and look forward to a mutually profitable partnership.

In the history of our states there is much in common since Bulgaria also in the course of 45 years was under the influence of the Soviet Union and was part of various political and economic structures created and controlled by Moscow after World War II. As a result, for Bulgaria just as for Azerbaijan, the period immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union was a period of self-definition and finding one's place in the system of international relations.

Despite this similarity in our histories, there are serious differences between us. Azerbaijan for us is a very wealthy country with various natural resources, while Bulgaria on the contrary is a state which does not have such broad possibilities. Nevertheless, we have defined our path toward European integration and have become a member of the European Union and NATO. Hence, while there is much in common between our two countries, there are also differences.

Most importantly, we have friendly relations and our peoples have common mentalities. Both our peoples are very hospitable. Both Bulgaria and Azerbaijan have populations of approximately eight million, both states are striving to the institutionalization of democratic principles of state formation and good neighborly relations. At the same time, we understand that each country has its own path of development. We know that Azerbaijan is in conflict with Armenia, as a result of which the latter occupies part of the territory of Azerbaijan and that the government of Azerbaijan is expending much effort and energy to achieve the liberation of its lands.

AIW: What is the level of energy cooperation between Azerbaijan and Bulgaria?

Amb. Kalinov: Already during the times of Heydar Aliyev, good relations were developed between our two countries. Agreements on cooperation were signed, and diplomatic missions were opened both in Baku and in Sofia. When the question arose about European energy security and when Azerbaijan began to look beyond Russia regarding the export of its natural resources and the question arose about the construction of corresponding oil and gas pipelines, the energy question became part of the strategic relationship between our countries.

Bulgaria shares the view of official Baku that diversification is the most powerful instrument of strengthening the real sovereignty of the state. And I consider that the basis of our relations is the fact that the direction of relations is defined by the market and not by a monopoly. When the market is the defining factor, there is little place for voluntaristic decisions. If and when Azerbaijan finds it profitable to sell energy to the East, it will sell them to the East; if and when it will be profitable for Azerbaijan to sell to the West, it will do that. And for us, as a European country, this is the defining factor. For that reason, Bulgaria shows great interest in all energy projects being developed by Azerbaijan.

There are three such projects in which Bulgaria is directly involved. First, this is Nabucco, a European project to which Bulgaria devotes enormous importance and which has a great future and one which, on the other side, will allow Azerbaijan to strengthen its independence to a still greater degree. I am certain that the Nabucco project at the end of the day will be realized despite the existing economic and political difficulties.

The second project in which Bulgaria has a direct interest is the Turkey-Italy-Greece interconnector which is expected to have a branch going into Bulgaria. And the third such project on which for two years a joint Azerbaijani-Bulgarian working group has been operating concerns the transport of compressed natural gas from the Georgian port of Kulevi, which Azerbaijan currently rents, and the Bulgarian port of Varna. This project is complicated since it would be the first project in the framework of which compressed methods will be used. I hope that in this year, the working group will complete its work and we will witness progress in this area as well.

While it is directly involved in these three projects, Bulgaria also supports all projects of Baku involving diversification, including the AGRI project with Romania. And in principle, these three projects which I have enumerated form at the present time the heart of our relations.

AIW: What are the main components of trade and areas of cooperation between Azerbaijan and Bulgaria, apart from energy?

Amb. Kalinov: At present, we are living through a period of developing the potential for cooperation in many other sectors as well. The first of these is a wide range of cooperation between various state institutions. We have already prepared for signing a number of such cooperation agreements. We also, for example, have a great readiness for cooperation in science and education, in disaster response, in the protection of confidential information, ecology, transportation, and other important areas. A key moment in this will be, I consider, the session of the inter-governmental commission which is to take place in the first half of November of this year in Baku where there will be a push toward the finalization of all these accords and the beginning of their realization. Thus, in this year and in the next, we expect the signing of inter-governmental accords in all areas of cooperation, a serious achievement which shows that our relations are growing and reaching a new level. I also hope that we in the near future will achieve a high level of cooperation between civic structures and the individual citizens of our countries. Thus, possibilities for tourism are developing. I have said many times and, using this opportunity, will again stress that Bulgaria offers broad possibilities for tourism. Why should Azerbaijani citizens spend vacation only in Turkey and Dubai? There is a beautiful sea with wonderful beaches in Bulgaria as well.

Some seven million tourists from various countries such as France, the UK, Germany, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, the Scandinavian countries and others visit Bulgaria. Why shouldn't Azerbaijani tourists also come to vacation in my country, especially since there should not be a language barrier as the overwhelming part of the population of Bulgaria understands Russian which as I know a majority of Azerbaijani citizens do as well?! In this connection, there are also no transportation problems as flights between our countries connect through Istanbul and are only 3.5 hours long. If tourist ties will deepen, then there will be no problems for developing direct flights between our two countries, especially since there were preliminary negotiations about this about two years ago. Then, there was not an economic basis for this, but if we are able to increase the flow of tourists, then this question can be taken up again. An agreement of this kind, for example, was already reached between Georgia and Bulgaria, and in a short time, direct flights between them will begin.

Another sphere in which there are possibilities for the broadening of cooperation is education. Why should Azerbaijani young people not come to Bulgaria for their higher education? The diplomas of all the institutions of higher education of Bulgaria are recognized throughout Europe. Bulgarian institutions offer a broad selection of educational programs in various languages, including English, German and French. The broadening of cooperation in this sphere will create opportunities for the broadening of cooperation and interaction between the young people of our countries. Thus, I appeal to the youth of Azerbaijan that they not view Bulgaria as a country they know little about: Bulgaria is a friendly European state where the young people of Azerbaijan can acquire a good education. At present, 12 Azerbaijanis are studying in Bulgaria, and this figure can and must increase, all the more so because thousands of students from countries like Turkey, Romania and Greece are already studying in Bulgaria. Students can apply to these universities directly through their websites, but the embassy is also happy to help in arranging the necessary contacts.

In addition, Azerbaijanis can acquire in Bulgaria very good real estate. Citizens of Romania, Ukraine, Russia and Belarus are very actively buying property in Bulgaria. Why should not Azerbaijani citizens turn their attention in this profitable direction?! Property in Bulgaria is less expensive than in Baku. Besides this, Azerbaijanis can purchase property in the best resorts of Bulgaria. Having bought property in Bulgaria, Azerbaijani citizens can acquire favorable conditions for visas which they can receive for periods up to three years. This offers a good chance for spending time in Bulgaria.

The next potential direction of cooperation involves trade. Bulgaria can offer an enormous variety of high-quality production of food, including wines, and medicines which can find their place in the corresponding markets of Azerbaijan. We have invited Azerbaijani wine experts to Bulgaria and they have given high marks to Bulgarian wine. Why not develop this? I hope that businessmen in both countries will make the efforts for this cooperation to be achieved. Two years ago, we organized an Azerbaijani-Bulgarian business forum and I hope that the participants will devote more efforts for the realization of the initiatives which were discussed at that meeting. At present, there is movement in the area of the food industry and pharmaceuticals, but a lot more needs to be done in this direction.

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

Amb. Kalinov: Earlier this month, Abulfaz Garayev, the culture minister of Azerbaijan, and his Bulgarian counterpart signed an agreement about cooperation in this area. Next year, Bulgaria will host an Azerbaijani cultural festival and soon after that I hope there will be a similar measure for Bulgarian culture in Azerbaijan. So that in this direction, one can say that the necessary steps are being taken right now.

AIW: What is the state of cooperation between the two countries within the Eastern Partnership framework?

Amb. Kalinov: Bulgaria positively supports the initiative of Poland and Sweden. We understand that the more active participation of Azerbaijan in this initiative in a multilateral format is complicated by the ongoing conflict of this country with its neighbor Armenia. We very well understand the position of Azerbaijan on this issue. Moreover, we positively evaluate any initiative in which Azerbaijan is ready to participate or which Azerbaijan itself initiates. In the framework of the Eastern

Partnership, Bulgaria cooperates with Azerbaijan in the area of legislation and legal activities.

In addition, speaking in concrete terms, we want to cooperate in the area of ecology. We had a meeting with your ecology minister Bagirov who with very great respect invited his Bulgarian counterpart to visit Baku, a visit which could give a definite push forward for the development and signing of a corresponding agreement on ecological cooperation. The construction of ecological stations and the development of renewal sources of energy are very popular in Bulgaria. The most important thing for us is that Azerbaijan define for itself the priority directions which it wants to develop in the framework of the Eastern Partnership. The existence of such understanding would broaden the possibilities for bilateral cooperation within the Eastern Partnership, but at the present moment, we consider that there are good possibilities for cooperation in the area of ecology.

AIW: Some Eastern European states, because of their experience in the Soviet bloc and now in the EU, seek to position themselves as a bridge between the former Soviet states and the West. Does Bulgaria also define itself in this way and envisage such a role for itself?

Amb. Kalinov: I do not consider that this position is correct. A democratic approach by definition rejects pressure from the outside. No one in Bulgaria will ever attempt to impose something on Azerbaijan or to speak in some way as an intermediary for Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan does not need such intermediaries; it is a sufficiently solid international partner and a sovereign state with a quite developed political system.

Of course, there are directions in which Azerbaijan should still be developed on the path to democratization, but is there any state in the world about which that could not be said? In all countries, further democratization is necessary. We look at Azerbaijan with understanding, knowing the inheritance and baggage it has and with what difficulties a country encounters in the building of a sovereign state practically from zero. At the present moment, Azerbaijan has already restored its production and political stability; the people has received the opportunity to develop and the government has guaranteed the development of education, health and cultural development. Thus, we view Azerbaijan as a modern developed European state. Being a European country itself, Bulgaria supports democratic values, but on the other hand, we understand that democracy is a process. For us the main thing is to ensure continuing and effective dialogue between Azerbaijan and Bulgaria.

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

Amb. Kalinov: In general, I do not like to give advice, but I would like to stress that for young diplomats, at the basis of diplomacy and all diplomatic life there should be a love for their motherland. They must be true to Azerbaijan and believe in the path of development of Azerbaijan. And secondly, let young diplomats know that between our countries there exist good friendly relations and that Bulgaria is a state that is one of the most friendly toward Azerbaijan.

BAKU HOSTS 'CULTURAL DAVOS'

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Azerbaijan, whose leaders and people have long been proud of its reputation as an example of ethnic and religious tolerance, organized a three-day World Forum on International Dialogue in Baku in order to use that reputation in order to help build bridges across the ethnic and religious divisions of the world and thereby to advance itself as an international leader in this often-neglected sector of international relations. Indeed, in the words of one Azerbaijani analyst, this meeting, if it becomes a regular affair, will make Baku session "the cultural-political analogue to the Davos Economic Forum."

Welcoming some 500 officials and experts from more than 20 countries, President Ilham Aliyev said that Azerbaijan, as a country at the crossroads of the world east and west and north and south in which "no national or religious confrontations have existed," can serve as "an example to the world of tolerance and cultural cooperation." [1] And First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, in her remarks to the delegates, made Azerbaijan's intentions in this regard even more explicit when she noted that "inter-cultural dialogue has already passed the limits of a purely culturological problem and has become a problem of big politics." [2]

The April 7-9 meeting was organized by the Azerbaijani government with the backing of the Council of Europe, the North-South Center, the UN Alliance of Civilizations, UNESCO and ISESCO. Cultural ministers and academic specialists at the forum's sessions echoed the views of President and Mrs. Aliyeva, noting that Azerbaijan was an especially appropriate place to hold such a meeting and that such forums, even if they cannot solve every problem, can help build the kind of bridges between peoples that make solving other "more political" problems easier. (For a fuller listing of these comments, see the Chronology in this issue of *Azerbaijan in the World*).

In a commentary on the Forum, Azerbaijani political scientist Asif Usubaliyev argues that the bringing together of so many people from so many countries means that for Azerbaijan, this meeting "without any doubt can be called the political event of the year." That is because, he argues, Azerbaijan is using its national characteristics to promote itself as an actor that can help promote reconciliation in conflicts around the world. [3]

By so doing, Usubaliyev continues, Azerbaijan is effectively inserting itself into international political life "far beyond the borders of [its own] region" even as it uses this initiative to gain additional support for "the peaceful regulation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" on the basis of international respect for the territorial integrity of states and for inter-cultural and inter-religious tolerance.

"The strengthening of the position of [Azerbaijan]," he writes, "in influential international organizations, the support for democratic principles of state-building, global propaganda of humanitarian values, an adequate understanding by the international community of the cultural values of the Azerbaijani people, international

recognition of the potential of the country and much else taken together is in fact nothing other than indirect pressure or diplomatic influence on Armenia.”

But the Baku forum is more than that, he suggests, because by organizing it, Baku is in a position to present itself as “the capital of international dialogue” and to have the forum become “the cultural-political analogue to the Davos Economic Forum,” a place where peoples can come together, exchange ideas, and promote cooperation across divisions that many fear cannot be overcome.

“Considering the character of contemporary international relations and also the processes which are taking place in the world,” Usubaliyev continues, “one can assert that the importance of cultural policy and the significance of supporting the principles of inter-cultural dialogue is today for the world of equal importance to accord on the struggle of states with the global economic crisis, terrorism, and the drug trade. [Indeed,] inter-cultural dialogue is becoming a political-ideological value of the contemporary world.”

That is a position with which Azerbaijan’s Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov fully agrees. In his remarks to the forum, he argued that it is important both to draw on the basis of inter-ethnic and inter-religious tolerance that Azerbaijan has achieved over the course of centuries and to use them to develop new forms of cooperation around the world. And he said that recent events around the world show that “the role of culture in the improvement of understanding is one of the most important,” adding that he “truly believes that we in Azerbaijan have achieved cultural multiplicity and the peaceful coexistence of people of various confessions and nationalities.” That is something needed in many other places, he suggested, and Azerbaijan looks forward to helping promote dialogue on these issues. [4]

Notes

[1] See <http://news.day.az/politics/260885.html> (last accessed 13 April 2011).

[2] See <http://news.day.az/politics/261074.html> (last accessed 13 April 2011).

[3] See <http://news.day.az/society/260328.html> (last accessed 13 April 2011).

[4] See <http://news.day.az/politics/260939.html> (last accessed 13 April 2011).

HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN AZERBAIJAN: THE ROLE OF ACCELS

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Country Director
ACCELS, Azerbaijan

American Councils is proud to be part of the many organizations working in partnership with the government of Azerbaijan to help increase access by Azerbaijani

citizens to educational and cross-cultural learning opportunities and thus increase human capital development of the country.

Human development, as Paul Streeten points out, concerns expanding the choices people have to lead [healthy and productive] lives that they value (Streeten 1994, pp. 232-237). Human capital is the wealth that a nation has in its population; the skills and knowledge held by citizens allowing them to perform labor so as to produce economic value. Consequently, human capital development is about increasing the knowledge and skills of citizens as well as the choices available to them on how to use their expertise and contribute positively to the economy of the country. International education programs contribute to this.

A wonderful thing about human development is that it can always increase. There is no limit to human potential, and it is exciting to be working in a country where trends are moving upwards. According to the 2010 UNDP Human Development Report, Azerbaijan is now in the category of "high human development." Indeed, over the past five years, Azerbaijan has achieved the most rapid development among the 169 countries covered by the UNDP's report. Azerbaijan ranked 67 in 2010, up from 101 on the Human Development Index (HDI) in 2005. [1] This is a great achievement, but it also indicates that future development in Azerbaijan will no longer be dependent on access to food, education and healthcare, but increasingly on providing greater choices for citizens concerning how they want to live their lives.

American Councils for International Education (ACTR/ACCELS) has been operating in Azerbaijan since 1993. During the past 17 years, we have developed a network of over 1000 alumni who have participated in numerous US Government and independent educational programs. Our mission is to advance scholarly research and cross-border learning through the design and implementation of educational programs. Among its programs are: the Future Leaders Exchange Program (FLEX), sponsored by the US Department of State, which sends between 40-45 high school students to the US each year; the Open World Program which provides short-term study tours sponsored by the US Library of Congress; the Junior Faculty Development Program (JFDP), sponsored by the US Department of State, which provides a one semester professional development program for faculty. We also recruit students to attend the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG).

Other programs administered by American Councils in Azerbaijan provide language learning and research opportunities. We also administer standardized tests, including the SAT, GRE, LSAT and the paper-based TOFEL. Among the most important ways American Councils works is to increase awareness of educational choices available to Azerbaijani citizens through the State Department-funded *Education USA Program*. American Councils works with our partners, the Baku Education Information Center (BEIC), *Kemal Vetandash* in Ganja, and the Sumgayit Education Center to offer basic advising services on higher education opportunities in the United States.

While our programs focus on managing international education experiences, the impact of these exchanges on the human capital development of Azerbaijan is through the work of alumni. We manage our own alumni program, while at other times partnering with organizations such as the US Educated Azerbaijan Alumni Association, IREX, BEIC, and the US Embassy. Through email list serves and social media, we seek to keep in touch with the alumni community, share information

about professional development trainings, events, job opportunities and social engagements.

Another way we help to transfer an international exchange experience into human development is through the *Exchanges to Internship Program*. Funded by the US Embassy in Azerbaijan, this program places outstanding alumni of the FLEX Program in four-month internships in Azerbaijan government ministries and agencies to give alumni professional experience and to encourage alumni to consider careers in the public sector.

Our alumni fall in two categories: FLEX Alumni and professional alumni. The FLEX alumni return to Azerbaijan just as they are about to enter university. With over 800 members, they are a large and diverse group studying in various universities and working in government, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector in Azerbaijan and abroad. Some achieve high positions at a young age while others struggle to find a place they fit in their local community and seek work or further education abroad. The experience FLEX students have in the US is not about building technical skills but rather about personal development. The professional alumni, on the other hand, are already leaders in their fields and usually continue their careers at universities or their original place of employment.

ACCELS seeks through these various programs to encourage entrepreneurship, eliminate corruption in the educational system, and expand the range of choices for students, all building blocks in the development of human capital. Azerbaijan already has great wealth in the population—human capital. Every day when I work with students and professionals I am inspired by the talents they have and their visions for the future. As the world becomes more globalized and economies more linked, Azerbaijan needs to continue to foster innovation and mobility among the population to maintain the upward trajectory on the Human Development Index. International education programs, like those at American Councils, are part of this process.

Reference

Streeten, Paul (1994) "Human Development: Means and Ends", *Human Development* 84:2, May.

Note

[1] UNDP Human Development Index, available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>.

A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

President Ilham Aliyev says in a message to the 14th Eurasian Economic Summit that "Azerbaijan has always devoted particular importance to such forums which create additional opportunities for the development of international economic and

political cooperation and the strengthening of the ties of friendship and brotherhood among peoples" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261785.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov tells the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue that "tolerance in Azerbaijan is one of the achievements which have been acquired over centuries" (<http://news.day.az/politics/260939.html>).

Asim Mollazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "Azerbaijan by its traditions of tolerance and secularism is possibly one of the best models for the Islamic and Turkic world" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261139.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan says that the main condition "for the realization of the Turkish-Armenian protocols is the liberation by Armenia of occupied Azerbaijani lands" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261993.html>).

Kristina Ojuland, former Estonian foreign minister and currently member of the European Parliament, says that acknowledgement that Nagorno-Karabakh belongs to Azerbaijan "must find expression in all initiatives of international organizations" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261150.html>).

Vladimir Dorokhin, Russia's ambassador to Baku, says Russia feels a particular responsibility for helping to resolve the Karabakh conflict and will act on that in the future (<http://news.day.az/politics/260807.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

15 April

Economic Development Minister Shahin Mustafayev says that Turkey occupies "first place in extent of investment in the non-petroleum sector of Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/economy/262405.html>).

Arzu Rahimov, head of the State Migration Service, meets with Turkey's Deputy Labor Minister Ahmet Zakterogullary to discuss bilateral cooperation on migration issues (<http://news.day.az/politics/262285.html>).

Allahshukur Pashazade, the sheikh ul-Islam and head of the Administration of Muslims of the Caucasus, receives Georgia's ambassador to Baku, Teymuraz Sharashenidze (<http://news.day.az/society/262413.html>).

Rasim Musabayov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the three co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group made their first trip to the occupied territories since 2005 in order to avoid the discussion of the situation in those territories at the UN General Assembly that Azerbaijan had asked for (<http://news.day.az/politics/262120.html>).

Rafael Huseynov, a member of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that "the Armenian occupation has deprived hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani women the opportunity to become mothers, to live a normal life, to dream, and to hope" (<http://news.day.az/politics/262273.html>).

The Milli Majlis confirms the new composition of the inter-parliamentary group for cooperation with Malta (<http://news.day.az/politics/262451.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, a Milli Majlis deputy who is also the deputy executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that the radical opposition inside Azerbaijan is serving the interests of foreign enemies of the country (<http://news.day.az/politics/262395.html>).

Ali Bilge Cankorel, the head of the OSCE Baku office, says that his organization welcomes the anti-corruption struggle being carried out in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/262321.html>).

Roland Kobia, the EU chief representative in Azerbaijan, says that the European Union supports Azerbaijan's anti-corruption efforts (<http://news.day.az/politics/262322.html>).

Nathalie Goulet, a member of the French Senate, says that suggestions that France is not playing as active a role in the resolution of the Karabakh dispute as those played by the two other co-chair countries are wrong (<http://news.day.az/politics/262288.html>).

14 April

Ali Ahmadov, the deputy chairman and executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that "if stability in Azerbaijan is destroyed, the one to benefit from this will be Armenia" (<http://news.day.az/politics/262249.html>).

Azerbaijani armed forces are taking part in an exercise near the ceasefire line and Defense Minister Safar Abiyev is personally observing them, according to the defense ministry (<http://news.day.az/politics/262097.html>).

Youth and Sports Minister Azad Rahimov gives an interview to Ukrainian television concerning youth policy in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/262187.html>).

Elin Suleymanov, Azerbaijani consul general in Los Angeles, tells an audience at the University of Washington in Seattle about Azerbaijan's relationship with the Turkic world (<http://news.day.az/politics/262091.html>).

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, at the urging of the Azerbaijani delegation, is demanding that Armenia cease construction of an airport in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/262247.html>).

The three co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group post on that organization's website a report on their visit to the occupied territories and their most recent meetings with the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/262199.html>).

Roland Kobia, EU chief representative in Azerbaijan, says that "cooperation between Azerbaijan and the European Union is actively developing in all areas" (<http://news.day.az/economy/262118.html>).

The Movement of National Awakening of Southern Azerbaijan says it is concerned by the arrests of Azerbaijanis in Tabriz by Iranian officials (<http://news.day.az/politics/262182.html>).

13 April

Samad Seyidov, the head of Azerbaijan's delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that Armenia's failure to recognize the decision of the bureau of PACE and to refuse to participate in the sub-committee on Nagorno-Karabakh "shows the essence of their policy" (<http://news.day.az/politics/262015.html>).

Ganira Pashayeva, a member of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, raises the issue of refugees and internally displaced persons in Azerbaijan at the spring session of PACE (<http://news.day.az/politics/262060.html>). At the same time, she raises the issue of the violation of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and Georgia (<http://news.day.az/politics/262037.html>).

At the invitation of Namik Aliyev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Tbilisi, the ambassador of Iraq, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Estonia and Japan accredited in Georgia visit northern portions of Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/262252.html>).

Elman Mammadov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says "the leadership of Armenia is leading [that] country into collapse" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261602.html>).

Zahid Oruj, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "the life of the Azerbaijanis of Georgia, to put it mildly, was never easy" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261846.html>).

Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė says that the OSCE must devote more efforts to resolve conflicts like the one over Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://news.day.az/politics/262021.html>).

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan says that the main condition "for the realization of the Turkish-Armenian protocols is the liberation by Armenia of occupied Azerbaijani lands" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261993.html>).

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu says that "the international community is not devoting sufficient attention to the fact of the occupation of Azerbaijani lands" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261865.html>). In other remarks, he accuses Armenia of engaging in provocations against Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/261863.html>).

The three co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group take part in a monitoring mission in the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/261925.html>).

The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group are presented with materials about the murder of an Azerbaijani child by an Armenian sniper (<http://news.day.az/politics/261978.html>).

12 April

President Ilham Aliyev says that "Azerbaijan is a very reliable country for foreign and domestic investors" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261850.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Jordanian Industry and Trade Minister Hani el-Mulki (<http://news.day.az/politics/261833.html>).

The Foreign Ministry calls in Roland Kobia, the EU chief representative to Azerbaijan, to protest the European Union's report "On the situation with regard to principles of fundamental freedoms in Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261790.html>).

The Foreign Ministry welcomes the latest resolution of the European Parliament for reconfirming the EU's recognition of the principle of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/261698.html>).

Economic Development Minister Shahin Mustafayev signs a cooperation accord with his Jordanian counterpart Hani el-Mulki (<http://news.day.az/economy/261731.html>). El-Mulki for his part says that "Azerbaijan is moving forward shoulder to shoulder with Muslim countries" (<http://news.day.az/economy/261722.html>).

Faig Bagirov, Azerbaijani ambassador to Ankara, says that "Azerbaijani-Turkish relations are at a higher level than relations between any two countries normally are" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261655.html>).

Rabiyat Aslanova, a Milli Majlis deputy and chairman of the parliament's human rights committee, says that Armenian insinuations about the Azerbaijani delegation to PACE are false and that Baku's representatives there "are one of the deputy groups which maintains the very highest ethical norms" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261795.html>).

Nizami Jafarov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "the interest of European structures in the Karabakh conflict is cyclical: sometimes it grows and then again it declines" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261598.html>).

Azerbaijan establishes diplomatic relations with Trinidad and Tobago at a meeting between Ambassador Agshin Mehdiyev, Azerbaijan's permanent representative to the United Nations, and his Trinidad and Tobago counterpart Rodney Charles (<http://news.day.az/politics/261649.html>).

The Egyptian authorities have announced plans to name one of the streets of Cairo for Azerbaijani diplomat Nijat Hojayevev who died during the recent turmoil there (<http://news.day.az/politics/261671.html>).

11 April

President Ilham Aliyev says that "Azerbaijan is counting on a more active approach by the mediators in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261190.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives incoming Ukrainian Ambassador Aleksandr Mishchenko (<http://news.day.az/politics/261617.html>).

Ali Ahmadov, the executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that a US State Department report on Azerbaijan contains "serious distortions of the realities of Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261508.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, a Milli Majlis deputy and deputy executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that the European Union's latest declaration on the social-political situation in Azerbaijan is not based on facts and that "the position of the EU is far from objectivity" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261507.html>).

The Milli Majlis names the heads of the inter-parliamentary working groups that body has with the parliaments of 74 countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/261551.html>).

Aytan Mustafayeva, a Milli Majlis deputy and director of the Baku Institute of Human Rights, says that Armenians are gearing up for an international effort to attract attention to the events of 1915 on April 24 (<http://news.day.az/politics/261511.html>).

A document prepared by the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe concerning the need to close the atomic energy station in Armenia is circulated to that body's members (<http://news.day.az/politics/261635.html>).

Ganira Pashayeva, a member of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, calls on that body to react to the murder of an Azerbaijani child by the Armenians (<http://news.day.az/politics/261590.html>).

Rasim Musabayov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the European Union is "concerned about the possibility of the renewal of war over Karabakh" even though it "does not participate directly" in the negotiations (<http://news.day.az/politics/261305.html>).

The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group announce they are continuing their investigation of the murder of an Azerbaijani child by an Armenian sniper (<http://news.day.az/politics/261503.html>).

Thorborn Jagland, the secretary general of the Council of Europe, says that the problem of unresolved conflicts, including the one between Azerbaijan and Armenia "is very disturbing" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261637.html>).

The International Civil Aviation Organization says that "without taking into account the official opinion of Azerbaijan, no airport on the territory of Karabakh can be put into operation" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261633.html>).

Movlut Chavushoglu, the chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that the World Forum in Baku on Inter-Cultural dialogue is "a very great success for Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261569.html>).

US Congressman John Zervas of Texas has distributed a declaration on the Day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis (<http://news.day.az/politics/261513.html>).

Walter Schwimmer, the former secretary general of the Council of Europe, says that "Azerbaijan is a factor of stability in a problematic region" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261471.html>).

The International Atomic Energy Agency is discussing nuclear research with Azerbaijan, Baku officials say (<http://news.day.az/politics/261486.html>).

10 April

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva condemns the burning of the Koran by an American pastor (<http://news.day.az/politics/261378.html>).

The US State Department human rights report acknowledges that "Armenian separatists with the support of the government of Armenia continue to hold the occupied territories of Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261387.html>).

9 April

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva says that "inter-cultural dialogue has already passed the limits of a purely cultural problem and become a problem of big politics" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261074.html>).

Olzhas Suleymenov, Kazakh writer and diplomat, says that the Baku World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue "cannot solve all problems, but it can help bring the positions of peoples closer together" (<http://news.day.az/society/261317.html>).

Officials and experts from the CIS and Turkic world assemble in Baku for a conference on "Traditions and Prospects of CIS Countries in Inter-cultural Dialogue: Culture, Education and Communication" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261318.html>).

The First Congress of the Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations, organized by UNESCO and ISESCO, opens in Baku (<http://news.day.az/society/261280.html>).

Shahin Abdullayev, Azerbaijani ambassador to Cairo, has issued a warning to Azerbaijanis in Egypt to take precautions given the possibility of the renewal of violence there (<http://news.day.az/politics/261360.html>).

Govhar Bakhshaliyeva, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "the Armenian side is occupied with the imitation of talks on the Karabakh conflict" (<http://news.day.az/politics/260405.html>).

8 April

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva receives Romanian Deputy Culture Minister Irina Jalal Marin (<http://news.day.az/politics/261198.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Rashida Dati, a French member of the European Parliament (<http://news.day.az/politics/261232.html>)

The Foreign Ministry says that the European Parliament resolution that was adopted does not contain any call for recognition of unrecognized republics despite what some Armenian spokesmen have said (<http://news.day.az/politics/261193.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev says during a meeting with his Turkish counterpart Vecdi Kenul that Azerbaijan is devoting "all its strength" in order that its armed forces will be ready to liberate Azerbaijani lands (<http://news.day.az/politics/261162.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev meets in Ankara with Ishik Koshaner, the chief of the Turkish General Staff (<http://news.day.az/politics/261049.html>).

Culture and Tourism Minister Abulfas Garayev says that the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue achieved great successes (<http://news.day.az/politics/261231.html>).

Culture and Tourism Minister Abulfas Garayev signs cooperation accords with Vezhdi Rashidov, his Bulgarian counterpart, and with Tariq Salim Masarwah, his Jordanian one (<http://news.day.az/politics/261177.html>).

Culture and Tourism Minister Abulfas Garayev receives his Montenegrin counterpart Branislav Micunovic (<http://news.day.az/politics/261142.html>).

Culture and Tourism Minister Abulfas Garayev receives his Czech counterpart Jiří Besser (<http://news.day.az/politics/261108.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov represents Azerbaijan at the CIS ministerial in Kyiv (<http://news.day.az/politics/260450.html>).

Ambassador Emin Eyubov, Azerbaijani representative to Belgium and the European Union, says that Armenian claims that the European Parliament's resolution on Karabakh contained a call for "the establishment of contacts with the *de facto* powers of unrecognized territories" are untrue (<http://news.day.az/politics/261048.html>).

Ambassador Eldar Guliyev, the former permanent representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations, says that "we can begin a war and win it" (<http://news.day.az/politics/260956.html>).

The delegations of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Turkey to the OSCE condemn the burning of the Koran by an American pastor (<http://news.day.az/politics/261146.html>).

Arzu Rahimov, the head of the State Migration Service, says that "citizens of Russia living in the village of Khrakhova of Khachmaz district have been warned about their illegal presence on the territory of Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261118.html>).

Asim Mollazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "Azerbaijan by its traditions of tolerance and secularism is possibly one of the best models for the Islamic and Turkic world" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261139.html>).

Dusen Kaseinov, the secretary general of TURKSOY, says that the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue made a contribution to international dialogue (<http://news.day.az/politics/261220.html>).

Mikhail Shvydkoy, the special representative of the Russian President for International Cultural Cooperation, says that the World Forum for Intercultural Cooperation in Baku "will become a notable event for the entire world community" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261184.html>).

Matthew Bryza, US ambassador to Baku, says opposition to his candidacy from the Armenian diaspora reflects the fact that "the US is a democratic state and everyone can express his position," even if it is not correct (<http://news.day.az/politics/261078.html>).

Zurab Dvali, the general producer of broadcast services for national minorities of Georgian radio and television, says that the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue can help promote "intercultural dialogue in the Transcaucasus and in the Caucasus more generally" (<http://news.day.az/politics/261210.html>).

Abdulaziz bin Othman al-Tuwaijri and Dusen Kaseinov, the secretaries general of ISESCO and TURKSOY respectively, sign a cooperation agreement in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/261120.html>).

Abdulaziz bin Othman al-Tuwaijri, the secretary general of ISESCO, calls on the international community to avoid "hypocrisy" on the issue of resolving the Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/261112.html>).

Matthew Bryza, US ambassador to Baku, meets with Asim Mollazade, the head of the Democratic Reforms Party, to discuss the social-political situation in Azerbaijan, US-Azerbaijani relations, and also the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/261067.html>).

7 April

President Ilham Aliyev welcomes the participants of the World Forum of Intercultural Dialogue and says that Azerbaijan as a crossroads of the world is an example to the world of tolerance and cultural cooperation (<http://news.day.az/politics/260885.html>). The meeting is attended by some 500 cultural, intellectual and political figures from more than 20 countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/261019.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Movlut Chavushoglu, the president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (<http://news.day.az/politics/260973.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Koichiro Matsuura, the former secretary general of UNESCO (<http://news.day.az/politics/260989.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Movlut Chavushoglu, the president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (<http://news.day.az/politics/261036.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev meets in Ankara with his Turkish counterpart Vecdi Kenul (<http://news.day.az/politics/260945.html>).

Justice Minister Fikrat Mammadov receives Hungarian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Zsolt Csutora to discuss a memorandum of cooperation between Baku and Budapest on legal affairs (<http://news.day.az/society/261041.html>).

Asim Mollazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "today in Armenia there is a very deep economic and social crisis" (<http://news.day.az/politics/260775.html>).

Jordanian culture Minister Tariq Salim Masarwah says "Azerbaijan is a bridge between different cultures" (<http://news.day.az/politics/260933.html>).

Egemen Bagysh, the chief Turkish negotiator with the European Union, calls on French politicians to ensure the return of occupied Azerbaijani territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/260854.html>).

Nathalie Goulet, a French senator, says that historians not politicians should be assessing historical events like the deaths of Armenians in 1915 (<http://news.day.az/politics/260944.html>).

US Congressman Jim Moran says that the events which took place in Baku in March 1918 were a tragedy (<http://news.day.az/politics/260920.html>).

Zeyno Baran, the wife of the US ambassador to Baku, says that "it is very important that the World Forum is taking place in Azerbaijan, a country at the intersect point of various cultures" (<http://news.day.az/politics/260903.html>).

6 April

President Ilham Aliyev and visiting Greek President Karolos Papoulias speak at the Azerbaijan-Greece Business Forum in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/260724.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Walter Schwimmer, the former secretary general of the Council of Europe (<http://news.day.az/politics/260798.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Jean-Paul Carteron, the president and founder of the Crans Montana Forum (<http://news.day.az/politics/260840.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev speaks by telephone with Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev (<http://news.day.az/politics/260803.html>).

Prime Minister Arthur Rasizade receives US Ambassador Matthew Bryza (<http://news.day.az/politics/260810.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that if it is confirmed that representatives of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus visited occupied Karabakh they will be put on a black list and prevented from entering Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/260817.html>).

Asef Hajiyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "the Yerevan establishment is sacrificing its own citizens" (<http://news.day.az/politics/260538.html>).

Tahir Rzayev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says "Armenia is trying to provoke Baku" (<http://news.day.az/politics/260511.html>).

Ulvi Guliyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "the president of Armenia lies non-stop" (<http://news.day.az/politics/260614.html>).

Vladimir Dorokhin, Russia's ambassador to Baku, says Russia feels a particular responsibility for helping to resolve the Karabakh conflict and will act on that in the future (<http://news.day.az/politics/260807.html>).

Movlut Chavushoglu, the president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that the position of PACE on Karabakh is clear and is based on the

return of the occupied territories to Azerbaijan
(<http://news.day.az/politics/260841.html>).

5 April

President Ilham Aliyev receives Greek President Karolos Papoulias who says that "relations between Greece and Azerbaijan will broaden even further"
(<http://news.day.az/politics/260662.html>).

Ali Hasanov, the head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, calls on foreign representatives in Baku "not to interfere in the internal affairs of the country" (<http://news.day.az/politics/260598.html>).

Azerbaijani and Greek officials sign a wide range of bilateral accords during the framework of the visit of the Greek president to Baku
(<http://news.day.az/economy/260565.html>).

Polad Bulbuloglu, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Moscow, says that relations between Azerbaijan and Russia "go far beyond the framework of strictly diplomatic procedures" (<http://news.day.az/politics/260509.html>).

Rabiyat Aslanova, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the latest visit of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs may give "concrete results"
(<http://news.day.az/politics/260616.html>).

Jeyhun Osmanly, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that there would be an "end to untrue views concerning young people who have received education abroad"
(<http://news.day.az/politics/260533.html>).

Allahshukur Pashazade, the sheikh ul-Islam and head of the Administration of Muslims of the Caucasus, speaks at the inauguration of Chechen head Ramzan Kadyrov (<http://video.day.az/view=3sie8euz>).

Farouk Logoglu, former Turkish ambassador to Baku, says that Turkey has particularly heavy responsibilities for resolving the Karabakh conflict
(<http://news.day.az/politics/260630.html>).

4 April

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Konstantin Eroktopoulos, the new head of the Baku office of the Council of Europe
(<http://news.day.az/politics/260444.html>).

Rovnag Abdullayev, the president of the State Oil Company, says that Baku plans to conclude a long-term gas contract with Iran in the near future
(<http://news.day.az/economy/260308.html>).

Matthew Bryza, the US ambassador to Baku, says that Washington is satisfied with the position of Azerbaijan concerning flights over the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/260412.html>).

3 April

Nikolai Paskevich, Belorussian ambassador to Baku, says that "Belarus has never cast doubt on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/260257.html>).

2 April

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov says that talks on the delimitation of the Azerbaijani-Georgian border are continuing with two thirds of the border having been agreed to at the expert level (<http://news.day.az/politics/260149.html>).

Fikrat Akchura, UN resident coordinator for Azerbaijan, says that it would be illegal to open a new corridor for flights between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh without the permission of the International Civil Aviation Organization (<http://news.day.az/politics/260159.html>).

Fikrat Akchura, UN resident coordinator for Azerbaijan, calls on the international community to work more actively to ensure the fulfillment of the four UN Security Council resolutions on Karabakh (<http://news.day.az/politics/260150.html>).

1 April

Ali Ahmadov, the executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that the OSCE Minsk Group must not limit itself to promises and appeals (<http://news.day.az/politics/260061.html>).

Elnur Aslanov, the head of the political analysis and information support department of the Presidential Administration, reaffirms that "Khankandi is the territory of Azerbaijan" and that "Nagorno-Karabakh is an indivisible part of Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/260037.html>).

Rabiyat Aslanova, chairman of the Milli Majlis human rights committee, says that Baku is moving to simplify visa procedures for tourists and other short-term visitors (<http://news.day.az/politics/259967.html>).

The Ecology and Natural Resources Ministry says Armenian occupiers have been misusing the natural resources of the Kalbajar region (<http://news.day.az/politics/260001.html>).

Namik Aliyev, Azerbaijani ambassador to Tbilisi, meets with the staff and students of the Georgian University of International Relations (<http://news.day.az/politics/259916.html>).

Note to Readers

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