



Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy  
School of International Affairs and Business

**AZERBAIJAN IN THE WORLD  
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**A FINNISH PERSPECTIVE ON THE KARABAKH CONFLICT  
&  
EU'S ENGAGEMENT WITH AZERBAIJAN**

An Interview with Amb. Heikki Talvitie,  
Former Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, and  
Former Special Representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus

*Azerbaijan in the World:* You were at one point, indeed early in the process, a co-chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group. Could you tell a bit more on how the Minsk Group came to be and how the composition of its co-chairmanship has evolved over time?

*Amb. Heikki Talvitie:* When the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis unfolded in 1988, Western

states had no means available to influence the process. But after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the OSCE gradually developed an interest in crisis management in the post-Soviet region, including in the South Caucasus, and Moscow came to recognize that it could not manage the situation by itself as it had done earlier and gradually grew ready to have its efforts combined with those of the OSCE. Within the OSCE, Italy was very prominent at the initial stage of this process, and its foreign minister, Mario Rafaelli was the first chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group (in reality co-chairman, on par with Russia). Then Sweden, where the bourgeois government came to power, became interested in the region. After his brief tenure, Sweden's Foreign Ministry State Secretary Ian Eliason—a very energetic and charismatic figure in this sense—assumed chairmanship of the Minsk Group in 1993 and was in that post when the cease-fire was finally achieved in May 1994 (even though the latter was primarily the result of Russian efforts). Later that year, the government in Sweden changed again, and the Swedes started to look for a replacement in the Minsk group. The choice fell on Finland, where I served as Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs at the time.

At first, I was hesitant as to whether we should involve ourselves in a crisis involving Russia—a power so much bigger than Finland—so directly, but ultimately the decision was made that Finland would indeed assume co-chairmanship of the Minsk Group along with Russia, which we held in 1995-1996. What we did to balance Russia's influence was to enlist the support of the United States, the European Union, and Turkey. We failed to achieve much and began to think that Finland should be replaced as a co-chair by a larger power. In late 1996, the choice fell on the United States, which accepted the offer. Russia was in agreement as well. It was, however, not a simple process. For, during the OSCE summit in Lisbon in December 1996, the US stated they were no longer willing to assume co-chairmanship of the Minsk Group. France agreed to assume co-chairmanship instead, which it did immediately that month. Two months later, however, the US stated it was now ready to be a co-chair; consequently, the number of the Minsk Group co-chairs rose to three in February 1997 and has never changed ever since. Immediately after assuming co-chairmanship, the United States suggested—and Russia and France agreed—that they would leave the Minsk Group aside and that only the co-chairs would actively deal with the issue. The United States became increasingly active in the process, which led to the Key West conference in April 2001, which ultimately failed to solve the problem. Heydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan turned down the proposal. We never knew what Russians really thought about these US efforts, but, for whatever reason, they allowed Washington to go forward. During the Key West stage, there was not much talk about territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. But after the Key West failure and especially after Ilham Aliyev's assuming presidency in Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan firmly pushed for the re-introduction of the principle of territorial integrity into the negotiations over the future status of Nagorno-Karabakh. Then the French became active, something that resulted in a so-called Prague process, whereby the parties were working to develop the so-called principles for the resolution of the conflict. Unfortunately, the Georgian war in August 2008 largely ended these efforts. Following that conflict, however, it appears that the Russians felt that they had to do something on Karabakh and President Medvedev became very active.

*AIW:* Were the Russians really interested in achieving a settlement or did they only wish to appear to be interested in conflict resolution?

*Amb. Talvitie:* I think it was primarily to show their interest in the broader question.

But you cannot really facilitate unless you are in earnest. I think there was a lot at stake for the Russians at the time. So, I think it was a very serious effort by the Russian side. And negotiations at this stage were also revolving around the principles of conflict resolution. This Russian effort also collapsed, and the co-chairs of the Minsk Group were changed. That represented a change: Earlier, there would be a change of membership, but now the three co-chair states are there forever and they have to change people. And as it happens, it will take time before these new people come to develop a good sense of what is happening on the ground and, consequently, grow active in the process.

*AIW:* Many people in Azerbaijan and outside think that the keys to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict lie with Russia. Russia's latest initiative to prompt the resolution, however, failed to lead to a positive outcome. Does that mean that Russia does not in fact possess the leverage in the region that many think it does?

*Amb. Talvitie:* I do not think Russia can resolve the situation by itself. No outside power has that much leverage. It is up to Azerbaijan and Armenia to resolve the conflict, but they need the Minsk Group co-chairs to facilitate the process, and the international community is likely to step in again by offering its peacekeeping forces after an agreement. Azerbaijan's capacity and influence, both in the region and the world, is rising, and it could continue to restrict Armenia's room for manoeuvre. Indeed, Azerbaijan may succeed in using its economic power to pressure Armenia towards an ultimate resolution of the conflict. But at present, even though Armenia is indeed very isolated in the region, Yerevan does not seem more willing to compromise.

*AIW:* If you look back onto the 20 years of conflict resolution in the region, do you think there were missed opportunities in conflict resolution over this period? Could the conflict realistically have been resolved at any stage in the past?

*Amb. Talvitie:* Certainly not. Because you have to get deeply into the NK status problem and the Lachin problem, and you have not yet even touched on these issues. Unless you agree on what the status of the NK and Lachin is going to be, you cannot resolve the conflict in any somewhat sustainable way. I do appreciate how difficult that is, because it is not only a political question, but one that involves two whole societies.

*AIW:* What do you see as key obstacles in conflict resolution around Nagorno-Karabakh then?

*Amb. Talvitie:* In 2008, I was also dealing with the Transdniestrian crisis, and I gradually came to realize there was no way the conflict could be resolved at that time. Why? Because the status of the Crimea and the status of Sevastopol were still open, and Ukrainian politics was in mess. There was no way for the Russians to agree on the resolution in these conditions, because any kind of solution had to involve all these issues. Today, I think the chances for resolution of the Transdniestrian problem are greater, because the issue of Sevastopol has been solved and Ukraine seems to be somewhat more stably balanced between Russia and the West. The Americans, in turn, have been very active in pressing the Russians to re-engage with the issue and the Russians seem to have agreed to start negotiations. The latter is a good sign, but I still don't think that the overall situation around Transdniestria has reached the point when one could expect a final resolution. The basic problem there is to reach a solution, which would re-unite

Moldova and Transdniestria in a single polity and have whatever single polity is to emerge accepted as an EU member, on one hand, and be acceptable to Russia, on the other. And this is a very tough question indeed.

Now, if we try to apply similar reasoning to the situation around Nagorno-Karabakh, what we have there today, for example, is very unstable Russian North Caucasus, which Russians are trying hard to control and something that influences to a great extent Russia's relations both with Georgia and Azerbaijan. (Indeed, many would argue that Azerbaijan currently enjoys better relations with Daghestan than Moscow does.) And the way Russia's relations with its South evolve will affect a great deal the nature of Russia's engagement with the Nagorno-Karabakh problem. This is only one of many issues at stake in the South Caucasus, and it is really very difficult to list all the factors which are important for an ultimate resolution to take place, including for those directly involved with the conflict resolution process, intra-regional and international parties alike. It is hard to understand, for example, what it is that Russia really wants, and I think the Russians themselves are often uncertain as to their goals. It is often as hard to see what kind of solution the EU or the United States would feel happy about, and Obama was not active in the region during his first term as President of the United States.

*AIW:* What is your view on the potential role of Iran in conflict resolution in the region, especially in light of its continuous exclusion by the West from any kind of political processes there?

*Amb. Talvitie:* When I was the EU Special Representative to the region of South Caucasus in 2003-2006, I would always meet Iranian ambassadors and very much wanted to follow up and pay a visit to Iran. I would regularly approach Solana regarding this issue, but he would always advise that, given a very tense international situation around Iran, it was not yet an appropriate time for me to do so. So, I never went, even though visiting Tehran was always part of my agenda as the EU Special Representative to the South Caucasus, and the Iranian also wanted me to come.

*AIW:* You mentioned your role as the EU special representative to the region of South Caucasus. And the time you assumed that position in 2003 was when the EU itself seemed to have finally developed a somewhat serious interest in the region, something that expressed itself in the EU's inclusion of the three states in the South Caucasus into its Eastern Neighborhood Policy. Why do you think this shift happened precisely then?

*Amb. Talvitie:* The key motivation—and I do not doubt it—was to ensure peaceful developments within the EU's eastern neighborhood, especially in view of the next wave of eastern enlargement in the making at the time. So, the overall opinion that reigned at the moment was that provided that the EU could influence the situation to this effect, there was no reason why it should not attempt to do so. But let me also mention that I think we made a mistake in the very beginning of our involvement with the region to the east of our borders, in that we stated that the inclusion into the EU's Eastern Neighborhood Policy did not necessarily imply membership in future, even though it did not necessarily exclude it either. That statement, now I clearly see it, does not make sense and we should have opted either for one or the other, so that the states we were dealing with had a clear idea of what there was to aim for. Combining the two does not say anything and makes the overall situation

even worse.

*AIW:* What is your opinion about the attitudes and approaches within the South Caucasus region to Euro-Atlantic integration?

*Amb. Talvitie:* As far as the states in the region are concerned, they are very different in terms of their approach and attitude toward the EU integration. Georgia, as we know, has been openly seeking both an EU and NATO membership, even though neither is likely to happen any time soon, particularly in view of the sense of “enlargement fatigue” in the EU, which only came to intensify with the recent economic and financial crisis. Armenia always tried to keep an EU membership prospect open, while limiting its interaction with NATO. Azerbaijan, as I often heard in Baku, is not really interested in membership with either, but is willing to actively cooperate with both. I always regarded Baku’s approach as your emphasis on your present-day capacity to develop your country and your society on your own, an effort you think you do not necessarily need EU and NATO programs for. On the other hand, Azerbaijan never wanted to isolate itself from this Euro-Atlantic stream. Hence, the nature of Azerbaijan’s interaction with the West as it currently is.

*AIW:* Do you think the EU speaks with a single voice in terms of the organization’s engagement with its Eastern Neighborhood in general and the South Caucasus in particular, or are there disagreements within the Union?

*Amb. Talvitie:* There certainly are differences within the EU as to what the latter’s approach towards the region should be, but I tried to balance these differences during my term as the EU’s Special representative to the region. At that time, I approached the European Commission (with which I developed close relations at the time) trying to make a point that while Azerbaijan was emerging as the most interesting country for the EU—in view of its energy resources—EU was having a full-fledged representation in Tbilisi, an affiliate in Yerevan, and nothing in Baku. The Commission even-handedly agreed with my reasoning, even though during my time, they always said that this was a problem of money. I cannot tell you what the real reasons were behind EU’s long-term reluctance to opening a representation in Baku, and I do not know who and why was really opposing the idea. Either way, we finally did see the establishment of the EU representation in Baku as well in February 2008 and the EU’s approach to the region has grown more balanced.

Speaking about the reasons underlying the differences within the EU as to the organization’s approach towards the South Caucasus, there are, for example, some old EU powers, which have some history behind their involvement with the region. In the case of Sweden, for example, the country’s relations with Azerbaijan trace back to the times of the Nobel brothers. Finland, in turn, used to be a part of the Russian empire between 1808-1917, which laid the basis for its historic connections with the South Caucasus, especially in view of very close trade and tourist relations between Finland and the South Caucasus at the time. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the OSCE and EU positions for Finland that came with it have heightened our overall interest in the region and now one could find quite many people within the Finnish foreign ministry and other official institutions of the sort who had by now developed quite an extensive expertise on the region. At the moment, we do not have a role to play in the region, and as it happens, this kind of knowledge quickly goes away if not applied.

Apart from Finland and Sweden, such countries as France, Germany, and Italy, as

well as the UK, are also very actively involved with the South Caucasus and had by now developed their particular positions towards each individual country in the region. While all these great powers certainly do have some competing interests in the region, these differences could easily be coordinated within the EU framework. But the differences are certainly there, including those rooted in history.

*AIW:* You mentioned some old EU states with a special interest in the South Caucasus. What about the new EU members from Eastern Europe?

*Amb. Talvitie:* Among this latter group of states, the Baltic countries have special relations with Georgia. Now, they are actively developing relations with Azerbaijan as well. As far as Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary are concerned, they were part of the Warsaw Pact during the Cold War and hence do certainly have this regional knowledge, but I think the domestic problems from which they currently suffer and must address in the first place limits the extent of their potential involvement with the region and ultimately the level of their interest. In this sense, the Baltic states—even though they also had difficulties in terms of their economic performance, particularly in view of the recent economic/financial crisis—do certainly have greater room for maneuver—and hence greater leverage—vis-à-vis their engagement with the South Caucasus.

*AIW:* Finally, what is your opinion on the future dynamics of Azerbaijan's relations with the EU, particularly in view of Azerbaijan's richness in energy and a lesser extent of its dependence on EU assistance?

*Amb. Talvitie:* I very much like the situation when you are not dependent on anything. I believe no one should be dependent in this sense. And I think that provided the overall situation around the Nagorno-Karabakh, on one hand, and Georgia's situation, on the other, could somewhat be eased, Azerbaijan would find itself in a very strong position, for you have developed the capacity to influence the course of many events, both regionally and internationally.

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**'WHEN ONE MAN CAN DO MORE THAN AN ARMY':  
REMEMBERING HEYDAR ALIYEV**

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On December 12, Azerbaijanis in Baku and around the world marked the ninth anniversary of the death of Heydar Aliyev, a man who led Azerbaijan both in Soviet and post-Soviet times and whose vision of that country's course continues to define its path. As is customary on such days, many people shared their memories of the late president, memories that because of the role of his ideas even now are critical to an understanding of where Baku is and where it is heading domestically and internationally. Some of these comments are offered below.

Polad Bul-bul ogly, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Moscow, served as Heydar Aliyev's minister of culture for ten years. He recalled that when Aliyev returned to lead

Azerbaijan in 1993, conditions were very difficult. "For months, we had not been able to pay even that miserly salary to our librarians, musicians, and cultural figures. Theaters were at the edge of closing. We all understood that this was a most difficult time." But Heydar Aliyev turned the situation around not only for high culture, but for Azerbaijan as a whole, the ambassador continued, thus demonstrating that there are "moments when one man can do more than an army," especially if he appears at "the right time and the right place" and takes "the correct decision." Such people "are very few in number," Bul-bul said, but beyond any doubt, "Heydar Aliyev belongs among their number." [1]

Another perspective was offered by Rasim Musabayov, currently a Milli Majlis deputy, but from 1972 to 1990 a Komsomol official in Moscow. When Aliyev was "first secretary, when he went to Moscow, he all the same remained the most significant factor in the life of Azerbaijan. Even when he was on a pension and lived in Moscow and then returned to Nakhchivan as a private person, he remained all the same at the center of life of Azerbaijan. Therefore, in a certain sense, Heydar Aliyevich and his life are the modern history of Azerbaijan."

One of the key moments in Aliyev's life, Musabayov recalled, was at the time of Black January, the period in early 1990 when Moscow introduced troops into Baku and killed more than 200 Azerbaijanis. When those events happened, Musabayov said, "there were very few members of the Politburo who raised their voices in protest. But Heydar Aliyevich had the bravery to do so." More than that, he went to the office of the representation of Azerbaijan in Moscow and declared that he was on the side of the Azerbaijani people and not on the side of the Soviet forces, an event that crystallized the commitment of Azerbaijanis to seek independence.

Today, it is often said, Musabayov continued, that, "a president or a prime minister is an administrator who takes over society in order to guide it. Perhaps, this definition is suitable for favorably situated countries like Denmark or Holland or even France and Germany, but at the head of a country which is at a revolutionary turning point, there needs to be not simply someone who has great experience and knowledge, but who has a sense of mission. Heydar Aliyevich had, besides experience and an iron will, a very deep understanding of his mission: a sovereign Azerbaijan must be built, it must be protected from the storms during its first steps."

In all this, the Azerbaijani writer Chingiz Abdullayev observed on this memorial day, Heydar Aliyev stood in a long line of Azerbaijani leaders, men like Nariman Narimanov "who with sorry wrote Lenin and we hadn't expected what would occur in Azerbaijan after the arrival of the 11<sup>th</sup> [Red] army," like Mir-Jafar Baghirov, "who at one time did not allow the resettlement of all the Tatars and the Azerbaijanis were then called to the other side of the Caspian" and who suffered mightily when the decision was taken to withdraw Soviet forces out of Southern Azerbaijan.

And a *Day.az* commentary on this anniversary added some important details. It underscored that Heydar Aliyev never was a simple bureaucratic leader, but rather "a leader who was able to transform" the situations he was in, whether in Soviet or post-Soviet times, to the benefit of Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis. [2]

Before 1991, he was able to "transform the model Soviet method of administration into one that reflected the strategic interests of Azerbaijan and promoted the future well-being of that republic." Indeed, the commentary continues, it is worth recalling that he viewed Azerbaijan as "independent 20 to 30 years before this happened. In

1973, the news agency pointed out, Heydar Aliyev created an officer training school in Baku, the first one in the USSR not in the Russian Federation, Ukraine or Belarus and thus a clear violation of "the unwritten rule" that such places could be only in Slavic republics.

In April 2003, then-President Heydar Aliyev said that he had taken this step, because he saw no reason that Azerbaijan should not be the equal of other republics and have its own army, adding that, "when we created this school, I could have never thought that I would be celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary" and see the officers that it has provided for an independent Azerbaijan.

After returning to power in 1993, President Aliyev was often criticized by the opposition for his approach to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Many wanted a renewal of the conflict, but Heydar Aliyev was committed to a peaceful resolution of the conflict as the only way to protect the Azerbaijani people and their land. As a realist rather than a romantic, he agreed to the 1994 ceasefire, and he was invariably focused on promoting the well-being of the more than one million Azerbaijanis who were forced to flee their homes because of Armenian intervention. In this and in so much else, he was "far from populism," but rather was animated by a deep patriotic love of his country and its people.

The author of these lines would like to conclude this brief summary by recounting an exchange he was privileged to have had with President Heydar Aliyev in 1996. At that time, President Aliyev made clear that he was prepared to think outside the box to reach a settlement on Karabakh that would allow all Azerbaijanis to have a better future. But he raised a question that suggested he was not sure whether others were prepared to think in so broad a fashion. "How long," Heydar Aliyev asked me, "was the West going to refer to Azerbaijan as a new independent state and not a country like any other?"

I replied that I did not know how long it would take, but I hoped it would take place soon, so that Azerbaijan could assume its rightful place in the world. Now, 16 years later, it is clear that Azerbaijan is a state without any slighting adjective and the man primarily responsible for that was Heydar Aliyev himself.

#### Notes

[1] See <http://www.vestikavkaza.ru/articles/Pamyati-Geydara-Alieva.html> (accessed 14 December 2012).

[2] See <http://news.day.az/politics/368845.html> (accessed 14 December 2012).

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## **A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY**

### **I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy**



President Ilham Aliyev says that the decision of the European Olympic Committee to award Baku the 2015 European Games is "an historic event" (<http://news.day.az/politics/371795.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says the lack of a joint declaration by the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs after their Dublin meeting reflects "the unconstructive position of Yerevan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/371271.html>).

Ramiz Mehdiyev, the head of the Presidential Administration, says that he opposes the formation of the Russian Union of Azerbaijani Organizations, because it "has no ties with the diaspora functioning in the regions" and that there is no indication that its members represent anyone except themselves (<http://news.day.az/politics/370203.html>).

## **II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and French European Affairs Minister Bernard Brech issue a joint statement as the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries urging Azerbaijan and Armenia to show "the political will needed for reaching an agreement" on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/371075.html>).

Thomas Melas, an advisor to the US secretary of state on democracy, human rights and labor, says that Washington is "concerned by the violation of the rights of Azerbaijanis who have been driven from their native lands as a result of war" (<http://news.day.az/politics/372051.html>).

Mohsen Pakayin, Iran's ambassador to Baku, says that "Iran is the second home for the Azerbaijani people and that Azerbaijanis can always travel to Iran" (<http://news.day.az/politics/372434.html>).

## **III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy**

15 December

Asim Mollazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Baku will seek to reclaim what property the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic acquired during its relatively short existence (<http://news.day.az/society/372792.html>).

Russian Deputy Defense Minister Oleg Ostapenko says that Moscow's decision to end its rental of the Gabala radar station in Azerbaijan "will not influence the security" of Russia (<http://news.day.az/politics/372846.html>).

14 December

Deputy Prime Minister Abid Sharifov says that Baku intends to continue its fruitful cooperation with the World Bank (<http://news.day.az/economy/372750.html>).

Eynulla Madatli, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Kyiv, writes the preface to a new book just released in Ukraine on twenty years of diplomatic relations between Ukraine and Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/372759.html>).

Azar Huseyn, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Tbilisi, meets with Georgian Defense Minister Irakly Alasaniya (<http://news.day.az/politics/372741.html>).

Valeh Alasgarov, deputy chairman of the Milli Majlis, receives Susan Combs, finance chief of the US State of Texas (<http://news.day.az/politics/372674.html>).

Nizami Jafarov, chairman of the Milli Majlis committee on culture, says that, "the transition to a single Latin script of writing has begun in all Turkic language countries" (<http://news.day.az/society/372727.html>).

Elkhan Suleymanov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says, citing research done in the United States, that Armenia has inflicted 431.5 billion US dollars in damages on Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/372719.html>).

Farhad Taghizade, deputy head of the State Border Service, says that newly introduced rules will allow those living along the border of Azerbaijan and Iran to cross it if they are in possession of passports and corresponding documents (<http://news.day.az/politics/372670.html>).

Camil Cicek, speaker of Turkey's Grand National Assembly, says that future relations between Ankara and Yerevan depend on the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/372605.html>).

Erling Shonsberg, Norway's ambassador to Baku, signs a cooperation agreement with the Baku Higher Petroleum School (<http://news.day.az/economy/372637.html>).

Metin Kilci, a senior official of Turkey's energy and natural resources ministry, says that TANAP will be completed "far more quickly" than NABUCCO has (<http://news.day.az/economy/372694.html>).

13 December

President Ilham Aliyev receives his Ukrainian counterpart, Viktor Yanukovich (<http://news.day.az/politics/372291.html>).

Novruz Mammadov, head of the foreign relations department of the Presidential Administration, says that Ukraine as chairman-in-office of the OSCE in 2013 will ensure that that organization plays a more active role in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/372417.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that the Freedom House report on Azerbaijan is biased and inaccurate (<http://news.day.az/politics/372409.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, vice chairman and executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that the Freedom House report about Azerbaijan is "one-sided and biased" (<http://news.day.az/politics/372462.html>).

Polad Bulbuloglu, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Moscow, speaks on the role of Heydar Aliyev in history (<http://news.day.az/politics/372294.html>).

Akram Zeynally, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Bern, visits the Swiss canton of Turgau

(<http://news.day.az/politics/372346.html>).

Ayдын Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that there has never been a case when a state benefits over the long term from the seizure of the territory of another state (<http://news.day.az/politics/372092.html>).

Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Besir Atalay says that former Azerbaijan President Heydar Aliyev is "a symbol of friendship between Turkey and Azerbaijan and the strengthening of this friendship was a priority in his policies" (<http://news.day.az/politics/372419.html>).

Tehran sends a note to the Azerbaijan Foreign Ministry asking for an explanation of a speech by Milli Majlis deputy Sabir Rustamkhanly to a conference on "Links between the South and North of Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/372440.html>).

Rafael Harpaz, Israel's ambassador to Baku, says that his country intends to significantly increase bilateral trade with Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/economy/372488.html>).

Fedor Negoy, a deputy of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, apologizes for his recent remarks about Azerbaijanis (<http://news.day.az/politics/372374.html>).

12 December

Azerbaijanis around the world mark the ninth anniversary of the death of Heydar Aliyev, the former president and all-national leader of their country (<http://news.day.az/politics/368845.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Jacek Michalovsky, head of the Presidential Administration of Poland, Carl Bildt, the foreign minister of Sweden, and Nikolai Mladenov, the foreign minister of Bulgaria (<http://news.day.az/politics/372199.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that the European Union countries are interested in the further development of cooperation with Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/372206.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that Baku plans to form a commission to take inventory of the Gabala radar station (<http://news.day.az/politics/372191.html>).

Industry and Energy Minister Natig Aliyev receives Jean Marie Douger, vice president of GDF SUEZ to discuss energy cooperation between Baku and Paris (<http://news.day.az/economy/372260.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Mahmoud Mammadgulyev says that Baku will not cooperate with Armenia if it becomes a member of the World Trade Organization (<http://news.day.az/economy/372155.html>).

The Defense Ministry says that Azerbaijan intends to continue to cooperate with Russia concerning the Gabala radar station even though Moscow has not accepted Baku's latest proposals (<http://news.day.az/politics/372135.html>).

Maharram Aliyev, an official in the Presidential Administration with responsibilities for national defense, says that, "the Azerbaijani army is one of the strongest in the region and is ready to defend its land and liberate the occupied territories" (<http://news.day.az/politics/372104.html>).

Tofiq Abdullayev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Qatar, presents his letters of credence of Qatari Foreign Minister Haled bin Muhammed al-Attia (<http://news.day.az/politics/372106.html>).

Samad Seyidov, head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that a final version of the resolution on Azerbaijan's obligations has been approved by that body (<http://news.day.az/politics/372273.html>).

Asim Mollazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that there is no understanding of "the supremacy of law" in Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/372103.html>).

Bulgarian Foreign Minister Nikolay Mladenov says that any use of the Khojaly airport must correspond to international law (<http://news.day.az/politics/372257.html>).

Ilyas Umakhanov, deputy chairman of Russia's Federation Council, says that Moscow's decision to end its use of the Gabala radar station "cannot influence the friendly relations between Azerbaijan and Russia" (<http://news.day.az/politics/372213.html>).

11 December

President Ilham Aliyev receives Tomas Ayan, president of the International Athletics Federation (<http://news.day.az/politics/371970.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Iwo Rossier, Switzerland's deputy foreign minister (<http://news.day.az/politics/371995.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov is presented with an honorary diploma of the Romanian foreign minister by Romania's ambassador to Baku, Daniel Ciobanu (<http://news.day.az/politics/372024.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev says that Baku will participate in some CIS military activities, but that it "considers it impossible to take part" in others (<http://news.day.az/politics/371922.html>).

Agriculture Minister Ismat Abbasov receives Fahad ibn Ali al Dosari, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Baku, to discuss bilateral cooperation on agricultural issues (<http://news.day.az/economy/372044.html>).

Finance Minister Samir Sharifov receives Page Alexander, a USAID official, to discuss joint financing of projects for the development of the Azerbaijani economy (<http://news.day.az/economy/371960.html>).

Hafiz Pashayev, deputy foreign minister and rector of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, makes a presentation on ADA's international scholarship program (<http://news.day.az/politics/371804.html>).

Fuad Alasgarov, head of the law enforcement department of the Presidential Administration, takes part in a meeting of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (<http://news.day.az/society/372176.html>).

Ali Ahmadov, deputy chairman and executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that Russia's decision to stop using the Gabala radar station "will not have a negative influence on relations of that country with Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/371886.html>).

Chingiz Huseynzade, head of Azerbaijan's National Olympic Committee, says Baku is ready to offer Armenia the opportunity to take part in the European Olympic Games to be held in the Azerbaijani capital (<http://news.day.az/politics/371857.html>).

The Milli Majlis passes amendments to existing laws concerning punishments for violations of international humanitarian law during periods of armed conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/371941.html>).

Namik Aliyev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Chisinau, speaks on international human rights day at a meeting of the Moldovan Academy of Public Administration (<http://news.day.az/politics/372280.html>).

Belorussian President Aleksandr Lukashenko calls on Armenia to withdraw from the Azerbaijani territories it has occupied (<http://news.day.az/politics/372047.html>).

The Russian Foreign Ministry confirms that Moscow will stop using the Gabala radar station (<http://news.day.az/politics/372055.html>).

The Iranian foreign ministry says that Tehran seeks to maintain relations with Azerbaijan at a high level (<http://news.day.az/politics/371882.html>).

Thomas Melas, an advisor to the US secretary of state on democracy, human rights and labor, says that Washington is "concerned by the violation of the rights of Azerbaijanis who have been driven from their native lands as a result of war" (<http://news.day.az/politics/372051.html>).

Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, secretary general of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, says that the OIC has always kept the Nagorno-Karabakh problem at the center of its attention (<http://news.day.az/politics/371906.html>).

10 December

President Ilham Aliyev says that the decision of the European Olympic Committee to award Baku the 2015 European Games is "an historic event" (<http://news.day.az/politics/371795.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Klaus Herhauser, head of the Central and Western Asia department of the Asian Development Bank (<http://news.day.az/politics/371763.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Thomas Melia, advisor to the US secretary of state on democracy, human rights and labor (<http://news.day.az/politics/371763.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Eric Fourine, head of the European

Department of the French Foreign Ministry  
(<http://news.day.az/politics/371679.html>).

Novruz Mammadov, head of the foreign relations department of the Presidential Administration, says that Baku does not see Russia's decision to stop renting the Gabala radar station as having any influence on bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Russia (<http://news.day.az/politics/371783.html>).

Siyavush Novruzov, deputy executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that Azerbaijan is "actively cooperating with NATO to promote peace and security throughout the world" (<http://news.day.az/politics/371637.html>).

Kamil Khasiyev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Zagreb, meets with Josip Leko, chairman of the Croatian Parliament (<http://news.day.az/politics/371831.html>).

The Azerbaijani embassy in Cairo says that it is continuing to function normally (<http://news.day.az/politics/371693.html>).

Govhar Bakhshaliyeva, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenia's deteriorating economic situation is the direct result of Yerevan's policies over the last 20 years (<http://news.day.az/politics/371389.html>).

Fuad Muradov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the elections in Armenia are taking place in "very difficult circumstances" (<http://news.day.az/politics/371381.html>).

The Union of Azerbaijani Youth in Ukraine condemns comments by Verkhovna Rada deputy Fedor Negoy as "racist" and demands a retraction (<http://news.day.az/politics/371723.html>).

The Congress of Azerbaijanis of Europe starts a petition drive to support the recognition of the Khojaly tragedy as genocide (<http://news.day.az/politics/371769.html>).

Roland Kobia, representative of the EU in Baku, and Pascual Meunier, French ambassador to Baku, host a meeting in the Azerbaijani capital on the occasion of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union (<http://news.day.az/politics/371767.html>).

Javanshir Akhundov, Iran's ambassador to Baku, says that Azerbaijan and Iran have been discussing joint projects in agriculture (<http://news.day.az/politics/371738.html>).

Camil Cicek, speaker of Turkey's Grand National Assembly, says that Armenian occupation of Azerbaijani lands has driven more than a million Azerbaijanis from their homes (<http://news.day.az/politics/371704.html>).

Arjen Peter Uytterlinde, the Netherlands' ambassador to Baku, says that 2012 has been "a good year" for bilateral relations between his country and Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/371645.html>).

9 December

Shahin Abdullayev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Khartoum, meets Ahmed Ibrahim el-

Tahir, speaker of the Sudanese parliament  
(<http://news.day.az/politics/371562.html>).

8 December

Nargiz Pashayeva, Azerbaijan's ambassador to the Court of St. James, participates in the annual Anglo-Azerbaijani Society dinner in the House of Commons Churchill Hall  
(<http://news.day.az/politics/371547.html>).

The 41<sup>st</sup> General Assembly of the European Olympic Games names Baku as the venue for the 2015 European competition (<http://news.day.az/sport/371441.html>).

Turkish Energy and Natural Resources Minister Taner Yildiz says several new pipelines are needed to ensure European energy security  
(<http://news.day.az/economy/371413.html>).

Two more US congressmen join the Azerbaijani Working group bringing the total number of members of 41 (<http://news.day.az/politics/371401.html>).

7 December

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says the lack of a joint declaration by the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs after their Dublin meeting reflects "the unconstructive position of Yerevan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/371271.html>).

Agriculture Minister Ismat Abbasov receives Mohsun Pakayin, Iran's ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/economy/371343.html>).

The Defense Ministry hosts a meeting of military attaches accredited to Azerbaijan  
(<http://news.day.az/politics/371272.html>).

Elin Suleymanov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Washington, hosts a meeting on the 94<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the parliament of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (<http://news.day.az/politics/371101.html>).

Vilayat Guliyev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Budapest, meets with Azerbaijani youth organizations in Hungary (<http://news.day.az/politics/371264.html>).

Mir-Khamza Efendiyev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to the Hague, presents his letters of credence to Queen Beatrice (<http://news.day.az/politics/371326.html>).

Galib Israfilov, Azerbaijan's permanent representative to the OSCE, says that "unfortunately" the group has again failed to respond to attacks directed against Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/371320.html>).

The GUAM council of foreign ministers meets in Dublin and agrees to present a joint project to the United Nations on "Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development"  
(<http://news.day.az/politics/371252.html>).

Eamon Gilmore, Irish foreign minister and OSCE chairman-in-office, expresses regret about violence in the Nagorno-Karabakh region and says that talks to resolve the conflict "must achieve progress" (<http://news.day.az/politics/371316.html>).

The European Union says in a statement that it is concerned by the lack of progress in talks about the Nagorno-Karabakh problem (<http://news.day.az/politics/371295.html>).

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu says that Ankara expects visible results from the talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/371175.html>).

6 December

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that, "talks about the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict had not had any results and will continue for a very long time" (<http://news.day.az/politics/370983.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that the Russian foreign ministry will not be talking about the Gabala radar station during the OSCE Ministerial in Dublin (<http://news.day.az/politics/370994.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Caspian became "one of the most significant geopolitical, geo-strategic and geo-economic regions" thanks to the work of former Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev (<http://news.day.az/politics/371074.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that Baku will continue to support TANAP (<http://news.day.az/politics/371076.html>).

Fuad Alasgarov, head of the law enforcement department of the Presidential Administration, says that Baku has made great strides in combatting corruption (<http://news.day.az/politics/371020.html>).

Elnur Aslanov, head of the political analysis and information support department of the Presidential Administration, says that, "Armenia must observe the norms of international law and withdraw its forces from Azerbaijani lands" (<http://news.day.az/politics/371082.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov says that the northern portion of the Caspian Sea is de facto delimited and that there are no problems there, but that in the south talks continue with Turkmenistan and Iran (<http://news.day.az/economy/371007.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov says that he expects agreement in 2013 on the delimitation of the remaining portions of the Azerbaijani-Georgian border (<http://news.day.az/politics/371014.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov says that Azerbaijan is in a position to play an important role in ensuring Europe's energy security both on its own and as a transit point for gas from Central Asia (<http://news.day.az/politics/370968.html>).

Chingiz Asgarov, Azerbaijan's permanent representative to the European Court for Human Rights, says that Baku and the Court continue to discuss a number of cases



(<http://news.day.az/politics/370995.html>).

Azay Guliyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that one cannot call Armenia or any other country a democracy if the government "kills people only because they go out into the streets and express their dissatisfaction" with conditions (<http://news.day.az/politics/370800.html>).

Ziyad Samadzade, chairman of the Milli Majlis committee on economic policy, says that 80 percent of Azerbaijan's economic potential is in the private sector (<http://news.day.az/economy/371025.html>).

Elshad Iskandarov, head of the State Committee on Work with Religious Structures, discusses Azerbaijan's tradition of religious tolerance at a meeting in Washington (<http://news.day.az/politics/370975.html>).

Rasim Bashirov, head of Azerbaijan's State Maritime Academy, signs a cooperation agreement with Gennady Kolesnikov, head of the Russian Shipping Register (<http://news.day.az/economy/370956.html>).

Rufat Mammadov, head of AZPROMO, says Italian business is increasingly interested in investing in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/economy/370936.html>).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and French European Affairs Minister Bernard Brech issue a joint statement as the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries urging Azerbaijan and Armenia to show "the political will needed for reaching an agreement" on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/371075.html>).

Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister Naji Koru says that Ankara "seeks peace, dialogue, and cooperation with the countries of the Caspian Region" (<http://news.day.az/politics/371043.html>).

Catherine Ashton, the EU supreme representative for foreign affairs and security policy, says that problems like the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict "limit economic development in the region" (<http://news.day.az/politics/370999.html>).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says Moscow will continue to press for a narrowing of differences between Armenia and Azerbaijan on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/370997.html>).

Richard Morningstar, US ambassador to Baku, says that human trafficking is "one of the forms of slavery" (<http://news.day.az/society/370932.html>).

The Kazakhstan Senate ratifies the agreement between Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan on land for diplomatic representations in the two countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/370889.html>).

The US House of Representatives International Relations Committee holds a hearing on the South Caucasus at which participants stressed "the positive role of Azerbaijan in the creation of a secure atmosphere in the region" (<http://news.day.az/politics/370890.html>).

5 December

Prime Minister Arthur Rasi-zade takes part in a meeting of the CIS Heads of Government meeting in Ashgabat during which he meets one-on-one with Turkmenistan President Gurbangulu Berdimukhammadov (<http://news.day.az/politics/370643.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets UK Foreign Minister William Haig in Brussels (<http://news.day.az/politics/370844.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says in a Wall Street Journal oped that, "Armenia... has a stake in peace with Azerbaijan. The country is isolated in the region largely because of [the Nagorno-Karabakh] conflict. It is excluded from all regional infrastructure and energy projects, such as the oil and gas pipelines passing from the Caspian Sea to Turkey and Europe via Georgia, as well as a new railroad line between Azerbaijan and Turkey through Georgia, to be inaugurated this year" (<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323401904578159323621521786.html>).

Labor and Social Security Minister Fizuli Alakbarov says, "the post-Soviet space is being transformed into a single labor market" (<http://news.day.az/economy/370674.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, deputy executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to Turkey will have a positive influence on the development of relations between Moscow and Ankara (<http://news.day.az/politics/370811.html>).

Deputy Culture and Tourism Minister Vagif Aliyev signs a memorandum of cooperation with Italy's Ronaldo del Bianco (<http://news.day.az/society/370837.html>).

Aslan Aslanov, director general of AzerTAj, receives Hong Tsuyin, China's ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/society/370828.html>).

Gudrat Gurbanov, chief of Azerbaijan's State Maritime Administration, participates in International Maritime Organization security committee meeting in London (<http://news.day.az/society/370794.html>).

Yagub Mahmudlu, director of the Baku Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences, announces that he has reached agreement with his Turkish counterparts to write a common Azerbaijani-Turkish history as the first step toward compiling a common Turkic history textbook (<http://news.day.az/society/370732.html>).

Fuad Iskandarov, Azerbaijan's permanent representative to the European Union, presents his letters of credence to Jose Manuel Barroso, the president of the European Commission (<http://news.day.az/politics/370637.html>).

Fuad Iskandarov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Brussels, presents his letters of credence to King Albert II (<http://news.day.az/politics/370944.html>).

Azerbaijan's border guard administration signs a cooperation agreement with its Iranian counterpart (<http://news.day.az/politics/370809.html>).

Rovshan Rzayev, a member of the Azerbaijani Community of the Nagorno-Karabakh Region, says people dialogue between the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of that Azerbaijani region is vitally important (<http://news.day.az/politics/370806.html>).

Aslan Aslanov, director general of AzerTAj, receives Hong Tsuyin, China's ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/society/370828.html>).

Baku hosts the fourth congress of the Council of the International Confederation of Railway and Transportation Construction Builders (<http://news.day.az/economy/370704.html>).

Bernard Tano-Bouchue, the Cote d'Ivoire ambassador to Baku, says his country wants to make use of Azerbaijan's experience in the oil and gas sector (<http://news.day.az/politics/370671.html>).

Inayatullah Kakar, Pakistan's ambassador to Baku, says that Islamabad is ready to pursue joint military industrial projects with Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/370661.html>).

Roland Kobia, EU ambassador to Baku, says the European Union supports the extension of a project on judicial reform in Azerbaijan until 2020 (<http://news.day.az/economy/370759.html>).

Peter Siyarto, secretary of the Office of the Hungarian Prime Minister, says in Baku that Hungary hopes to expand economic cooperation with Azerbaijan and will open its first international trading house there (<http://news.day.az/economy/370750.html> & <http://news.day.az/economy/370716.html>).

Russian Deputy Labor and Social Security Minister Tatyana Blinova says that Azerbaijan and Russia are preparing a bilateral accord on the defense of labor migrants (<http://news.day.az/society/370680.html>).

4 December

Industry and Energy Minister Natig Aliyev takes part in the celebration of Romania's national day at the Romanian embassy on the invitation of Ambassador Daniel Ciobanu (<http://news.day.az/politics/370596.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Armenia's occupation policy represents "the biggest threat to the security of the region" (<http://news.day.az/politics/370382.html>).

Rovshan Rzayev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says any talk about including Nagorno-Karabakh as a party to talks is "an Armenian provocation" (<http://news.day.az/politics/370409.html>).

Inayatullah Kakar, Pakistan's ambassador to Baku, speaks to a meeting of ASAIF (<http://news.day.az/society/370692.html>).

3 December

Ramiz Mehdiyev, head of the Presidential Administration, says that over the last 20

years, "Azerbaijan having strengthened its political and economic independence has developed its statehood and established its own economic model based on the principles of liberalism and democracy" (<http://news.day.az/politics/370149.html>).

Ramiz Mehdiyev, the head of the Presidential Administration, says that the declaration of the so-called Forum of the Intelligentsia does not represent the views of the intelligentsia in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/370221.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Alberto Jose Alonzo, the new charge d'affaires of the Argentina embassy in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/370321.html>).

Youth and Sports Minister Azad Rahimov signs a cooperation agreement with his Iraqi counterpart, Jasim Muhammed Jafari (<http://news.day.az/society/370204.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that, "Azerbaijan will never allow its territory to be used for attacks on a third country" (<http://news.day.az/politics/370257.html>).

Bahar Muradova, head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, says that no breakthrough decisions about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict are expected at the OSCE ministerial (<http://news.day.az/politics/370325.html>).

Khady Rajably, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenia has always lived on other people's money rather than earning its own way (<http://news.day.az/politics/369872.html>).

A Baku court sentences four Azerbaijanis who had been found guilty of preparing a terrorist attack in advance of Eurovision 2012 to lengthy terms of imprisonment (<http://news.day.az/society/370261.html>).

Azerbaijan's National Library signs a cooperation agreement with the National Library of Greece, bringing to 28 the number of foreign national libraries with which Baku has such accords (<http://news.day.az/society/370343.html>).

The Iranian foreign ministry says that Tehran recognizes the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and is a supporter of the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/370355.html>).

Salem al-Garfi, the ambassador of the UAE in Baku, says that trade between the two countries has risen by more than 50 percent over the last two years (<http://news.day.az/economy/370345.html>).

Roland Kobia, the head of the Baku office of the European Union, describes EU projects in Azerbaijan intended to counter the spread of HIV/AIDS in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/society/370229.html>).

2 December

The Energy Ministry says that the European Union is confident that the pipeline carrying Caspian basin gas to Europe will be a large one (<http://news.day.az/economy/370082.html>).

1 December

President Ilham Aliyev receives the letters of credence of Tekle Minassie Asgedom, the incoming Eritrean ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/369876.html>).

Ali Ahmadov, deputy chairman and executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, meets in Budapest with Peter Siharto, secretary for foreign relations and economics in the office of the Hungarian prime minister (<http://news.day.az/politics/370034.html>).

Jose Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission, says that the EU is ready to provide additional assistance to talks seeking to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/370035.html>).

### **Note to Readers**

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