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**AZERBAIJANI NATIONAL IDENTITY:
FROM ETHNICITY TO STATEHOOD**

Javid Huseynov, PhD
Director General
Azerbaijani-American Council (AAC)

The study of national identity as a phenomenon of collective consciousness is crucial in understanding the development of any society. National identity is a compound term which, depending on the country, may involve one or more distinctive factors of collective mentality, such as ethnicity, language, culture, or religion (Smith 1993). This situational nature of ethnicity makes it prone to be used for rallying individual and collective interests both within the society in question and from without. Hence,

ethnic identity can be an instrumental factor in cultivating social differences with the aim of attaining political influence, creating and decomposing nations, waging wars, making peace and furthering interests on a broader geopolitical scale.

The development of Azerbaijani national identity presents a particularly colorful example in this regard. While not distinctly spelled out as such in the historical records prior to the end of the 19th century and despite being occasionally disputed by coercive neighbors, an authentically Azerbaijani identity with most of its contemporary trappings was already in the process of formation by the 11th century. This distinct identity further developed over subsequent centuries and was compounded by unique ethno-linguistic, cultural and religious characteristics that led to the establishment of the independent Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in 1918.

As was the case in neighboring Georgia and Armenia, the evolution of ethnicity into a conscious national identity and independent statehood in Azerbaijan had both natural and situational influences. Throughout history, Azerbaijani people had very mixed and diverse definitions of identity. Although since at least the 11th century, Turkic-speaking inhabitants on the northern and the southern banks of river Araxes had a more or less uniform ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity, it wasn't until the late 19th century when the first definitions of *Azerbaijani* as a distinct ethno-national factor appeared in scholarship.

The place name designation *Azerbaijan* can be traced back more than two millennia to the times of Alexander the Great. According to the most commonly accepted historical interpretation, the name originated from Atropates, the Achaemenid governor of Medes who upon Alexander's conquest of the region ruled it autonomously (Encyclopedia of Islam 2012). In later periods, the name of Atropatene (or Aturpatkan) evolved into Azerbaijan through Persian and Arabic linguistic influences. Apart from the ancient Medes-Atropatene, which mainly spanned the territory of modern Iranian Azerbaijan, another ancient state, Caucasian Albania (also known as Arran), formed the indigenous ethno-linguistic heritage to the north, on the territory of present-day Republic of Azerbaijan (Minorsky 1953, pp. 504-529). Despite the distinct Ibero-Caucasian identity of Caucasian Albanians, throughout their history, the ruling dynasties and diverse tribes of Caucasian Albania shared close cultural ties with their Georgian, Median, Parthian, Armenian, Khazar Turkic and Sassanid Persian neighbors.

Following the conquest of the region by Arabs and the spread of Islam under the Rashidun and Umayyad Caliphs in 7-8th centuries CE, identity differences between the north and the south of historical Azerbaijan started to fade away. The process was completed during the influx of Oghuz Turkic tribes and the rise of Seljuk Turkic Empire in the 11th century CE. Within a century, the foundation had been laid for a uniform ethno-linguistic identity on the territory stretching from Derbend in the north to Hamadan in the south. By the middle of the 12th century, Shamsaddin Ildeniz, a freed Qipchaq slave of Seljuk Turks, rose from Nakhchivan to establish the kingdom of Atabegs of Azerbaijan stretching north and south from river Araxes (Luther 1987).

By the late 14th century, the Turcoman tribal confederation of Qara Qoyunlu rose to control over the territory of historical Azerbaijan. It is important to note that Qara Qoyunlu were Muslim of Shia confession and their rule in Azerbaijan initiated the gradual integration of Shia religious thought into the core of Azerbaijani identity, a process further solidified during the Safavid era. The Qara Qoyunlu state of Azerbaijan reached its apogee during the rule of Jahan-shah (Minorsky 1954, pp.

271-297). The rule of Qara Qoyunlu and the subsequent Aq Qoyunlu tribal confederations further strengthened the domination of Turkic component in Azerbaijani identity. Perhaps, the most eloquent expression of Azerbaijani identity came with the rise of Shah Ismail Safavi who enthroned himself as a Shah of Azerbaijan (Tapper 1974, p. 324) in 1501, later extending his ambitious Shia empire over entire Iran. The Safavids were linguistically and politically Azerbaijani Turkic dynasty upon their rise to power in the beginning of 16th century. This unique identity was particularly strengthened by the fact of the overwhelmingly Turkic background of the Qizilbash tribes which swept Ismail Safavi to power, as well as the fact that, for the first time in history, the Azerbaijani Turkic dialect was elevated to the status of an official language of court and military in the Safavid Empire (Lockhart & Jackson 1986).

At the same time, the assertion of Twelver Shia faith as a state religion and forceful separation from the emerging Sunni Islamic identity associated with the neighboring nemesis of Safavids, the Ottomans, strengthened the distinct nature of Azerbaijani Turkic identity in a historical context. Although after Ismail, the following two centuries witnessed a general weakening of the uniquely Azerbaijani political influence within the Safavid Empire, particularly so under Shah Abbas Safavi and later the Qajar Turkic dynasty of Iran, the development of a dominant ethnic identity in Azerbaijan, as a whole, was not reversed. The next stage in its development came with the emergence of autonomous Azerbaijani khanates in South Caucasus upon disintegration of the Safavid Empire followed by a short-lived attempt by Nadir Shah Afshar to rejoin Safavid territories. Among these semi-independent kingdoms, the Karabakh khanate founded by Panah Ali-khan Javanshir circa 1750 with a capital in present-day Shusha played a primary role in reinforcing the uniquely Azerbaijani cultural identity (Bertsch 2000). The independence of the Karabakh khanate from the general Iranian domain was particularly emphasized by the 1805 Treaty of Kurekchay negotiated directly between the Khan and the Russian military commander Pavel Tsitsianov, making the Karabakh khanate a Russian protectorate (Bournoutian 1994).

After the Russian conquest of South Caucasus in the first quarter of the 19th century, the expressions of Azerbaijani identity started making their way into scholarship. Linguistic and literary works of Mirza Fatali Akhundov laid an important foundation in the process, while the explicit definition of *Azerbaijani* as an ethno-national factor emerged later in the 19th century in the works of a prominent Azerbaijani publicist Hasan Zardabi and his first Azerbaijani-language magazine *Akinchi (The Ploughman)* (Swietochowski 1985). The encyclopedic dictionary of Brockhauz-Efron published in St. Petersburg by 1890 already referred to the Turkic speakers inhabiting most of the "South and South-Eastern Caucasus and Russian Armenia" as *Azerbaijani Tartars* (Encyclopedia of Brokgauz and Efron, 1890-1907).

The start of the 20th century and the growing revolutionary processes in the Russian Empire prompted the evolution of the notion of Azerbaijani identity in socio-political terms. Massive development of oil deposits in the Absheron peninsula from 1870s quickly turned Baku into an industrial center of the Caucasus at the end of the 19th century. The economic development brought a major influx of skilled workers, traders, major industrial barons and Western-educated intellectuals from various parts of the Russian Empire and Europe. According to the 1913 imperial census, the number of Azerbaijanis in the city of Baku was already less than the number of other ethnic groups (Altstadt 1992), a dramatic change from a Muslim rural town into an ethnically mixed cosmopolitan city.

Defined by others at that time in a variety of ways—ranging from Caucasian Muslims to Azerbaijani Tartars and Turks—Azerbaijanis as a group lagged behind these developments due to the general absence of opportunities for the Muslim subjects, which were not treated equally with Christians by the tsarist authorities (Altstadt 1992). Following nearly a century of such a rule, Azerbaijanis faced the first challenge of national self-determination in 1905 when the first Armenian-Azerbaijani clashes erupted in various parts of South-Eastern Caucasus. This new interethnic tension, fueled in part by the Tsarist favoritism of Christian Armenians over Muslim Azerbaijanis (Fraser 1990, pp. 652-677), had purely socio-economic reasons.

The clashes of 1905 had a profound effect on the consolidation of ethnic identity, which led to demands for equal rights and opportunities by and for Muslim Azerbaijanis. The growing Azerbaijani intellectual elite embraced socialist ideals and brought about the cultural renaissance in the years before World War I, increasing the role of Azerbaijanis in economic and political life of Baku and its environs. At this time, Russian- and European-educated Azerbaijani intellectuals found inspiration in Turkism, viewing it as the basis for the unification of the Turkic-speaking Muslim subjects of Russian Empire to demand federalization and cultural autonomy (Smith 2001).

With the irredentist “myths of descent” spread by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) and demands for a greater social justice preached by Azerbaijani intellectuals, fueled by Russian favoritism for the former's cause, the Armenian-Muslim socio-economic tension gradually grew into a broader inter-ethnic conflict similar to the one already burning in the neighboring Ottoman Empire. The impact of this confrontation on Azerbaijanis, especially in the aftermath of 1908 Young Turk Revolution in the Ottoman Empire, was a growing awareness of a long-forgotten ethnic identity between Azerbaijani and Ottoman Turks. It is worth noting that this situational challenge to Azerbaijani identity also helped to overcome the confessional attitudes of Shia Azerbaijanis against Sunni Ottomans that evolved over 400 years after the bitter Ottoman-Safavid confrontation. Thus, the Armenian-Azerbaijani confrontation supplanted by the growing socialist tendencies assisted in the evolution of a predominantly Muslim religious identity of Azerbaijanis into the Turkic nationalist identity.

The spread of Turkism into the Ottoman Empire and the Young Turk Revolution moved the nexus of this ideology from imperial Russia to Istanbul. Subsequently, any autonomous nationalist sentiment by Turkic-speaking subjects of the Russian Empire was treated by the Tsarist authorities as an Ottoman ploy. Another fundamental feature of all nationalist and secessionist movements in the Russian Empire was their inherently socialist nature, which was also a cause for their persecution by the Tsarist authorities. Therefore, the first Azerbaijani socialist party, Hummet, followed by the nationalist and the oldest existing political party, Musavat (Equality), established in 1911, operated mostly undercover until the fall of the Tsarist establishment in 1917. Soon after the abdication of Tsar in St. Petersburg, Musavat conducted its first major Congress,^[15] emerging as the leading force to capture the historic opportunity for establishing an independent Azerbaijani homeland.

With the fall of Russia's imperial authority in 1917 amidst the ongoing World War I turmoil and the revolution, the interethnic strife in the Caucasus also intensified. Its culmination came along by the spring of 1918, in a standoff between Bolsheviks and

Musavat over the control of Baku. Seeking to eliminate the strong public support for Musavat from the Azerbaijani population in the city, despite the appeals from Lenin for diplomacy, the Bolshevik *Baku Soviet* led by Stepan Shaumyan, an ethnic Armenian, enlisted the support of Dashnak Armenian units in town. The result was a massacre of up to 12,000 Azerbaijanis (Smith 2001), which transpired between March 30 and April 3 of 1918. In modern Azerbaijan, these tragic historical events are called the *Soyqırım*, an Azerbaijani Turkic term for genocide.

Despite the defeat of Musavat, the March Days of 1918 strengthened nationalism and pro-Turkish sympathies in Azerbaijani society and thus created a fertile ground for independence. On May 28, 1918, upon disintegration of a short-lived defunct Transcaucasian Federation, the independent Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) was proclaimed in Tiflis with a temporary capital in Elizavetpol (Ganja). The new Azerbaijani government immediately requested military assistance from the Ottoman Young Turk government to help defeat the *Baku Soviet* and establish control over all of the Caucasian Azerbaijan. Being a passionate pan-Turanic idealist, the Ottoman triumvir, Enver Pasha, responded by dispatching an armed force under the command of his brother Nuri, to train Azerbaijanis and to mount an offensive against the Bolsheviks in Baku. That offensive resulted in liberation of Baku, which became the capital of ADR in September 1918.

Despite enlisting the support of the Ottomans, Azerbaijani elite did not endorse the idea of unification with the failing empire. Instead, ADR established a secular parliamentary democracy, the first of its kind in the Muslim and Turkic-speaking worlds, and further strengthened an independent national identity within the political boundaries that it defined for Caucasian Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani tri-color flag adopted by the ADR clearly pointed to the foundations of this contemporary identity: Turkism (blue), Modernism (red), and Islam (green). It was precisely this identity, albeit under cosmetically Soviet symbols, which continued to develop during the decades of Soviet rule and the re-establishment of independent Azerbaijani state in the post-Soviet period.

The Bolshevik occupation of Azerbaijan in April 1920 did not alter the development of independent Azerbaijani identity, but only temporarily placed it in a new context, that of Bolshevik ideology. So despite its defeat, the ADR government initiated an irreversible process, that of redefining the Azerbaijani national identity in terms of statehood with political boundaries. The 1920s witnessed the consolidation of Azerbaijani linguistic and cultural identity in a Turkic context. In 1928, the Soviet authorities supported the decision to change the Turkic language script in Azerbaijan from Arabic to Latin (Altstadt 1992). However, the 1936 USSR Constitution sought to disassociate Azerbaijani ethnicity from its predominantly Turkic heritage, for Stalin feared that Azerbaijani Turks could be overly attracted to their ethnic kin in Kemalist Turkey. The new constitution coincided with Stalin's 1937-38 Great Purges during which over 120,000 Azerbaijani intellectuals were sent to death camps or executed (Altstadt 1992), many of them on charges of inciting pan-Turkic ideas. The official language of Azerbaijan SSR was renamed Azerbaijani, the ethnicity of "Turk" was changed in Soviet passports to "Azerbaijani," and the Latin script of Azeri Turkic was replaced by Cyrillic (Grenoble 2003).

Even while attempting to establish a non-Turkic Azerbaijani identity, the Soviet authorities did not include the non-Turkic minorities of Azerbaijan within this national definition, i.e. that applied only to the Turkic-speaking inhabitants of Azerbaijan. Indeed, during the Stalin era, Azerbaijani historians were encouraged to link the

Azerbaijani identity to the ancient Medes (Schendel & Zrcher 2001). The Soviet authorities sought to use the redefined Azerbaijani identity to intensify nationalist sentiment among the Azerbaijanis in Iran. In 1940s, this policy proved successful when Moscow and Baku managed to instill a secessionist movement in Iranian Azerbaijan, the latter culminating in the establishment of a short-lived Azerbaijan People's Government with its capital in Tabriz in 1945-46 (Swietochowski 1989, pp. 44-46).

Following Stalin's death and by early 1970, the Turkic role in Azerbaijani identity was rehabilitated as were millions of Soviet citizens who perished during the Great Purge. From then until 1991, official Azerbaijani historiography suggested that Azerbaijani identity had three sources: Caucasian (Albanians), Turkic (Oghuz) and Iranian (Medes-Atropatene) (Schendel & Zrcher 2001). The restoration of Azerbaijani statehood in 1991, in presence of the renewed Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over the Mountainous Karabakh, brought new situational challenges for the Azerbaijani identity, which had been weakened by decades of corrupt Soviet administration. Again as in 1918, the Turkic factor initially dominated the definition of post-Soviet Azerbaijani nationalism, particularly during the 1992-93 Azerbaijani Popular Front (APF) government. Upon their rise to power in 1992, the APF authorities renamed the official language of Azerbaijan to Turkic, thus placing an emphasis on close ethnic ties with Turkey. That move, however, disturbed the non-Turkic indigenous minorities in Azerbaijan, leading to brief secessionist activities in the north and the south in 1993, amidst the military insurrection and the Armenian onslaught on the Karabakh front.

Taking over what was almost a failed state in 1993, Heydar Aliyev managed to quell both separatist groups by reversing APF reforms and restoring the Soviet-era definitions of Azerbaijani identity. The official language was again renamed Azerbaijani in the Constitution and any explicit advertising of the Turkic identity was restricted to common cultural expressions and statements of fraternity with Turkey. Nonetheless, Aliyev was also remembered for his famous statement "Turkey and Azerbaijan are the two states of one nation." Despite being made under situational circumstances, this statement defined the path for the development of Azerbaijani ethno-national identity in a visible future.

To conclude, Azerbaijani national identity has deep roots extending back at least nine centuries prior to the formation of contemporary Azerbaijani statehood in 1918. Beyond doubt, the Turkic ethnic factor has been the dominant component of that identity in modern terms, but other factors were involved, all of them conditioned by geographic, historical, linguistic circumstances and by political, ideological and confrontational ones as well. Linguistic and cultural elements had the most profound impact among the natural roots and the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict and the unity of Azerbaijani and Turkish political interests played the major role in the formation of national identity and modern statehood.

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AZERBAIJANIS GO OVER TO THE OFFENSIVE ABOUT GENOCIDE

Paul Goble
Publications Advisor
Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy

Since recovering their independence in 1991, Azerbaijanis have often felt themselves to be on the defensive; not just because Armenian forces have occupied 20 percent of their country's territory, but also because Yerevan has engaged in an international campaign to elicit sympathy for Armenia vis-à-vis Azerbaijan by seeking international recognition of what some call the Armenian genocide in 1915.

Azerbaijan has won increasing international support for its view that international law requires that Armenia withdraw from the occupied territories, but Baku until very recently has remained on the defensive on what might be called "the genocide front." Azerbaijanis have consistently supported Turkey's position that what happened in Anatolia in 1915 was not a genocide as Armenians suggest—even when such support has deprived Baku of support in some countries. But only recently has Azerbaijan gone over to the offensive on the genocide issue, pointing out that Armenian forces committed genocide against Azerbaijanis both at the beginning and the end of the 20th century.

Azerbaijan's efforts in this regard have had two important consequences. On the one hand, they have made it far more difficult for Armenia to present itself as a uniquely victimized nation, thus depriving Armenia of the moral high ground it has sought. And on the other, these efforts have attracted expanded attention to the ways in which Azerbaijan itself, typically presented by the Armenians as an aggressor state, in fact has been a victim, too, of this most horrible crime against humanity.

Azerbaijan in the World has chronicled Baku's successful efforts to attract attention to the genocide committed by Armenian forces in Khojaly in 1992, but the full dimension of Azerbaijan's efforts in regard to the genocide against its people were outlined most fully on March 31, the date Azerbaijanis since 1998 have marked as the Day of the Genocide of the Azerbaijanis, an event that one Baku commentator pointedly suggested this year was to remind everyone that the Armenians "who present themselves as the victim of genocide are in fact those who have committed genocide against the Azerbaijanis." [1]

Azerbaijani historians see the roots of the Armenian genocide against Azerbaijanis in the 1813 and 1828 treaties between Russia and Persia that led to the beginning of the division of the historic lands of settlement of the Azerbaijanis, a division that was reinforced by acts of genocide against them. Under the protection of the tsarist

authorities, the Armenians advanced claims on and actively worked to expel Azerbaijanis from the region that they declared to be the Armenian oblast, part of what Armenian writers proclaimed as Greater Armenia.

During the 1905 Russian revolution, Armenian activists engaged in acts of genocide against the Azerbaijanis not only in the Armenian oblast, but throughout Azerbaijan, destroying hundreds of villages and killing and wounding thousands of people, Azerbaijani historians say. Tragically, in the years following the 1917 Russian revolution, Armenians worked closely with the Bolsheviks to "cleanse" even Baku gubernia of Azerbaijanis. At that time, a Baku commentator says, "thousands of peaceful Azerbaijanis were destroyed only because of their nationality. Armenians burned houses, burned people alive, destroyed the pearls of national architecture, schools, hospitals, mosques and monuments, leaving the greater part of Baku in ruin." [2]

During the period of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, its officials devoted attention to these events, and on March 31 in 1919 and 1920, Azerbaijanis marked this tragedy as a day of national sorrow, the first effort the Baku commentator says to give "a political assessment of the genocide of Azerbaijanis and the continuing occupation" of Azerbaijan. However, with the fall of the ADR and the beginning of Soviet occupation, both attention to the 1918 events and this commemoration was blocked by the communist authorities. Indeed, Soviet officials even assisted in further Armenian acts of genocide against the Azerbaijanis by backing Armenian claims to historic Azerbaijani territory and even calling, in December 1947, for the resettlement of Azerbaijanis out of Armenia to make way for ethnic Armenians returning from abroad.

The situation deteriorated still further when Armenians invaded and occupied Azerbaijani territories at the end of the Soviet period, and in one of the most cruel acts of genocide, Armenian forces in February 1992 destroyed the population of Khojaly and wiped that city off the face of the earth. Since that time, Azerbaijani historians and commentators have published research on these crimes, but that task is still far from complete, with many people around the world still convinced that in the South Caucasus, only the Armenians have been the victims of a genocide.

Today, Azerbaijan as the successor to the ADR "considers giving a political assessment of the events of genocide its responsibility." And in a message to world leaders, the country's ombudsman argues that the international community which "has set as its goal the struggle with international terrorism must finally give an objective political assessment of the continuing today use of force against Azerbaijanis." [3]

Notes

[1] See <http://news.day.az/politics/323946.html> (accessed 30 March 2012).

[2] See *ibid.*

[3] See <http://news.day.az/politics/323718.html> (accessed 30 March 2012).

**RUSSIAN-TURKISH RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SOVIETIZATION OF
AZERBAIJAN
AND THE SOVIETIZATION OF ARMENIA**

Part III (B).

“Don’t Get into a Conflict with the Turks on Behalf of the Dashnaks”

Jamil Hasanly, Dr.*
Professor of History
Baku State University

Beyond doubt, the Armenian-Turkish war that had begun and the serious military defeats of Armenia corresponded to the interests of Azerbaijan. However, even in this crisis situation, Armenia continued to advance demands for Nakhchivan, which had now been transformed—thanks to Russia—into a matter of dispute. As far as Soviet Russia is concerned, then it considered the Turkish advance as a historic chance for the communist seizure of power in Armenia. On October 13, 1920, G. Chicherin wrote to B. Legran: “Ordzhonikidze reports about a possible withdrawal by the Dashnaks. Report immediately on the internal prospects in Armenia and on the possibility of the transfer of power without pressure from outside, for we at the present time must refrain from any pressure and present ourselves as peacemakers ... Point to our sincere friendship to the Armenian masses and our desire to help them.” [1]

On October 11, B. Legran arrived in Erivan and three days later informed G. Chicherin that if the Turks give up their demands based on the Brest Treaty and the Batumi Accord, then the Armenians are ready to accept the mediation of Soviet Russia on the Turkish question. In the same telegram, B. Legran added that “the Armenians complain about the replacement in the disputed regions of Red forces by local partisan detachments and Azerbaijani units and about the presence in Nakhchivan of Turkish regular forces with which they are at the present time in a state of war.” [2] The Armenian government tried hard to relate its conflicts with Turkey to Azerbaijan. In negotiations with the representatives of Soviet Russia, the Armenians made the immediate recognition of Zangazur and Nakhchivan as part of Armenia a categorical condition for their allowing transit to Turkey through Armenia. [3]

During this period, foreign radio stations broadcast reports suggesting that Soviet representative B. Legran had presented the government of Armenia with an ultimatum. Therefore, G. Chicherin advised him that, “We must not speak with threats ... The current situation of our forces in the Transcaucasus also does not allow us to speak in a threatening manner. Stress that we are peacemakers, declare to the government and in the press that we do not represent a threat. Stress that we have no alliance with the Turks, but that we desire to use our influence for making peace. At the same time, we demand from Armenia an end of the alliance with the Entente, but not in the form of an ultimatum or threat.” [4]

Despite the serious resistance by the Armenians, the Turks on October 30, 1920, occupied Kars. As a result nothing remained to the Armenians except to withdraw to Gyumri. The liberation of Kars by the Turks further intensified pressure on Armenia

to agree to the mediation of Russia. However, the conditions they put for the mediation included the return by diplomatic means of territories they had lost on the field of battle. Under the terms of the first condition, Armenia was to gain Zangazur and Nakhchivan and Russian forces there were to yield their positions to Armenian units. In this case, Armenia would voluntarily give up its claims on Karabakh. The second condition of the Dashnaks was that 25 percent of all arms transferred through Armenia to Turkey would remain in Armenia. The third condition involved the giving to Armenia a credit of 2.5 million in gold. In addition, Turkey must have stopped military actions, withdraw its units to the borders of 1914 and give an undertaking that its units would be directed to points not closer than the Trabzon-Erzurum-Mush-Bitlis line. [5]

B. Legram considered the conclusion of a treaty with Armenia on the basis of these conditions possible if an agreement with Azerbaijan on the disputed territories could be reached. In his opinion, such an arrangement would not please the Kemalists, but would be profitable for Armenia by freeing it from the role of a tool in the hands of the Entente and even lead to the formation of a Georgian-Armenian union, which would secure the strengthening of the position of Russia in the South Caucasus. "As concerns Azerbaijan," B. Legran wrote, "I am certain that if You adopt a firm position, we will be able to push Azerbaijan toward the desired decision." In connection with the arrival of I. Stalin in Baku at the beginning of November 1920, B. Legran also intended to go to Baku in order to discuss this question with "the Baku comrades." And finally, he warned that "the Dashnaks in Armenia are still in a strong position and the communists now do not represent a force. To liquidate the Dashnaks would only be possible by the occupation of the territory by Turks or ourselves." [6]

On November 4, 1920, at a joint session of the Central Committee of the AKP(b) and the Caucasus Bureau of the Central Committee of the RKP(b) in the presence of I. Stalin, the situation in Armenia and Georgia was discussed in detail. The day before, G. Chicherin had sent a telegram to the Foreign Ministry of Turkey, in which he had expressed the desire of Soviet Russia to serve as a mediator between the Turks and Armenians. A. Sheynman, the Russian representative in Tiflis, spoke about the situation in Georgia. He suggested that for clarifying relations with M. Kemal-pasha L. Stark should be sent to him as an ambassador. But I. Stalin did not agree with this proposal. He said that, "Moscow does not know anything about Kemal. For him, the question is put that before Sarykamysh, he will be forced to attack for fuel. Kemal was sent a telegram from Moscow calling on him to end the attack, but whether he received it is unknown. Here, there is no Turkish Communist Party and no representative of Kemal knows anything about the situation there. A communist who recently came from Kemal and who had spent time among the Kemalists and among the Soviets (which exist both in the army and in the population) says that Kemal is not against conducting talks with the sultan (he is for the Entente). The Kemalists present demands for a fraction and something else, but they have no money and reserves. Negotiations with the sultan can change the entire situation in a way, which is not going to be best for us. I agree with the proposal of Sheynman to send to Kemal a man to acquaint himself with the situation, but we think that Mdivani, together with Shakhtakhtinsky and Korkmasov should be sent instead (the candidacy of Stark did not meet any opposition, but he is more needed in Georgia). Besides, Mdivani is more suitable to Baku than Stark. But one can say to the Georgians about the attack that we have sent a note to Kemal, it hasn't been answered, when we receive one, then we will tell them." [7]

After the report of B. Legran about the situation in Armenia, his proposal to include in an agreement with Armenia a point about the transfer to Armenia of Nakhchivan and Zangazur was rejected. The final decision of the Central Committee of the RKP(b) about the treaty was assigned to I. Stalin. In the protocol of the session, it is written that the transfer to Armenia of Nakhchivan and Zangazur are not profitable politically or strategically.

After the Baku party decisions, B. Legran sent to the Soviet mission in Armenia an immediate communication that in the presence of I. Stalin at the session was shown a negative relation to "our treaty," and in the first instance it was noted that the withdrawal of Turkish forces to the borders of 1914 would significantly complicate relations with Turkey. Second, the importance of the possibility of influence on the course of events in Iran through the disputed territories was underscored. B. Legran wrote that, "At the same time, they consider that we cannot in fact undertake anything regarding the Turkish attacks, although our attitude as before remains sharply negative. Formally, Turkey is not connected by treaty with us, and we cannot make any demands on it. As concerns transit, given the current situation and the lack of information from Turkey, this issue loses its urgency. In addition, they suppose that the Turks, in the case of the achievement of peace with Armenia, would be easily able to achieve transit, the transfer of the disputed territories to Armenia however is [too] high a price for that." [8]

After the surrender of Kars, the policy of Soviet Russia toward Turkey, the Caucasus Muslims and all its Eastern policy as a whole became more shaky. This is clearly shown in the long letter G. Chicherin sent to I. Stalin on November 5, 1920, from Baku. He wrote there are numerous reports about a sharp and fundamental change in the policy of the Entente regarding Turkey and in the policy of the Kemalists regarding Armenia. But all the same, this is not final and not entirely clear. Chicherin particularly pointed out the situation regarding relations between the Kemalists and the Istanbul government and stressed the justice of this conception of the Kemalists: Historically, whoever controlled Anatolia then mastered Constantinople and that he who massed Constantinople without Anatolia inevitably lost it. G. Chicherin was concerned that Great Britain historically accustomed to controlling the main world water routes would make concessions to the Kemalists in order that the Kemalists would concede Constantinople to London.

G. Chicherin wrote that, "It is completely unclear whether on the part of the Kemalists this is simply a compromise for self-preservation or whether this involves a 180 degree turn against us, a shift into the anti-Bolshevik camp of world reaction and an effort to obtain compensation at our expense along the lines of Turkish policy in 1918 ... In our relations to Armenia and Georgia, we must not forget for a single minute that in the new turn of the wheel of history, these countries could become a necessary barrier for us against the policy of conquest of the shifting fronts of the Turkish nationalists. In our bet on the Muslims, we must all the time take into consideration that on one fine day, the anti-Bolshevik tendency as occurred in Afghanistan could turn out to be stronger than the anti-English. I have all the time warned and I warn now against that one-sided bet on the Muslims, of which Narimanov is the representative among us. At the present moment, we stand for not changing our relations to the Kemalists in order not to push the vacillating into the opposing camp." [9]

On November 2, 1920, the command of the Turkish army proposed to Armenia to conclude a peace. The Armenians, having understood that it was impossible to stop

the attack of the Turkish army at Gyumri on November 6 agreed to a ceasefire. On the same day, the Turks already reached Gyumri. On the basis of a proposal of A. Ogandzhanyan, the Armenian foreign minister, the conditions for an armistice were agreed on November 8. [10] In correspondence with the agreement achieved, in the course of no more than three days, the Armenian army was to leave Gyumri and withdraw to a position 15 kilometers south of Arpachay, while the Turkish army was to occupy the fortress of Gyumri, the railroad, and a ten kilometer zone around the city. [11]

This armistice, which consisted of seven points and was set to last seven days, required the Turks to observe the security of the civilian population and to maintain order in the city. All military actions were to cease. [12] On November 10, A. Ogandzhanyan handed the Turkish side a note in which he agreed to the terms. However, at the last minute, the Armenians refused to sign the accord explaining their actions by saying that such an agreement would give the Bolsheviks an opportunity to conduct propaganda against the Armenians. Therefore, on November 14, 1920, the armed forces of Turkey renewed military actions, which lasted until the moment when the Armenians could not bear further losses and sat down at the negotiating table. Seeing such a dangerous turn of events, G. Chicherin on November 7 telegraphed I. Stalin about the possibility of the introduction of Soviet forces into Armenia. He wrote that, "Trotsky has responded that in military terms, we are strengthening in the Caucasus and he does not oppose the dispatch of forces into Armenia for Sovietization. It is necessary to resolve the issue politically, we consider that You need to resolve the issue in place. There are two possibilities: the maximum one—to save Armenia at the price of its Sovietization." The choice between the beginning of an uprising of communists and the dispatch of forces into Armenia, Chicherin left to Stalin, being confident that if "there will be even one Red Army man [in Armenia], the Turks won't touch him." Then G. Chicherin reported that he had already sent mandates to B. Shakhtakhtinsky and Dzh. Korkmasov for going to meet Mustafa Kemal and about the replacement of B. Mdivani "in view of the Persian events." [13]

Not satisfied by telegraphic communications with I. Stalin, G. Chicherin on November 7 by direct line instructed B. Legran that the earlier draft of a treaty between Moscow and Erivan was out of date and now all means must be employed to stop the advance of the Turks. He added that, "The question about the status of Zangazur and Nakhchivan must still remain open." [14] G. Chicherin insisted that, "if the Armenians accept the mediation conditions of Soviet Russia, we will demand that the Turks stop their advance." He noted that, "we will continue to give the Turks arms only if they, first, stop the attack, but this is in the case if Armenia from its side accepts our conditions of mediation, and second, they will be required to expel the Entente from Batumi if they occupy it." [15]

Here too, G. Chicherin again reported that the Peoples Commissariat of International Affairs had given mandates to B. Mdivani, B. Shakhtakhtinsky and Dzh. Korkmasov to conduct talks with the Turks. As concerns the issue about the introduction of units of the Red Army into Armenia, G. Chicherin considered this only possible "if a decision is taken about the Sovietization of Armenia." He did not exclude the possibility of the occupation of Georgia either, but said that, "this should be done in such a way that the Georgian government upset with the Bolsheviks would not be able to throw itself into the embrace of the Entente. However in recent times, what matters is the dislocation of certain forces on the border of Armenia which could be put in motion in the case of necessity." [16]

On November 11, 1920, for the realization of the mediation mission, the Revolutionary Committee of the Caucasus Front gave a mandate to Polikarp (Budu) Mdivani. On the same day, G. Chichen informed Mustafa Kemal-pasha and the government of Armenia that P. Mdivani was being sent as a mediator for the Armenian-Turkish negotiations. With this mandate, Mdivani was sent along the Dilizhan road and on November 19th arrived in Erivan. The day before that, that is, November 18, the Armenians already accepted the conditions of the Turks. Before his departure to Erivan, Budu Mdivani received from I. Stalin a somewhat different instruction than G. Chicherin had given, namely, "don't get into a conflict with the Turks on behalf of the Dashnaks." [17]

* *The article originally appeared, in Russian, in Russia's Regnum News Agency at <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1438182.html#ixzz1Xevx11D3>.*

Notes

[1] Telegram of G. Chicherin to B. Legran, 13 October 1920, *Russian State Archive of Social-Political History* (hereafter RSASPH), f.64, op.1, d.21, l.183.

[2] Telegram of B. Legran to G. Chicherin, 14 October 1920, *RSASPH*, f.64, op.1, d.21, l.181.

[3] Telegram of B. Legran to G. Chicherin, 24 October 1920, *RSASPH*, f.64, op.1, d.21, l.188.

[4] See telegram of G. Chicherin to B. Legran, 26 October 1920, *RSASPH*, f.64, op.1, d.21, l.191.

[5] Telegram of B. Legran to G. Chicherin, 1 November 1920, *RSASPH*, f.64, op.1, d.21, l.196.

[6] Telegram of B. Legran to G. Chicheri, 1 November 1920, *RSASPH*, f.64, op.1, d.21, l.197.

[7] Excerpt from protocol number 4 of the joint session of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the KP(b) of Azerbaijan and the Caucasus Bureau of the Central Committee of the RKP(b), 4 November 1920, *Political Documents Archive under the President of Azerbaijan Republic* (hereafter PDA PAR), f.1, op.1, d.22. l.18-19.

[8] See the telegram of B. Legran to the Soviet mission in Erivan, 6 November 1920, *RSASPH*, f.64, op.1, d.21, l.203.

[9] Letter of G. Chicherin to I. Stalin, 5 November 1920, *FPA RF*, f.04, op.39, p.232, d.52987, l.42-43.

[10] B. Legran to G. Chicherin, 19 November 1920, *RSASPH*, f.85, op.14, d.17, l.4.

[11] Armistice conditions of the Ankara government, November 1920, *RSASPH*, f.85, op.14, d.24, l.2.

[12] Telegram of A. Sheynman to G. Chicherin, 9 November 1920, *RSASPH*, f.85, op. 14, d.19, l.1.

[13] Telegram of G. Chicerin to I. Stalin, 7 November 1920, *RSASPH*, f.64, op.1, d.21, l.205.

[14] Conversation of G. Chicherin with Legran on direct line, 7 November 1920, *RSASPH*, f.64, op.1, d.21, l.207.

[15] Conversation of G. Chicherin with Legran on direct line, 7 November 1920, *RSASPH*, f.64, op.1, d.21, l.212-213.

[16] Telegram of G. Chicherin to I. Stalin, 9 November 1920, *RSASPH*, f.5, op.1, d.2097, l.9.

[17] See the Telegram of V. Lenin to I. Stalin, 16 November 1920, *PDA PAR*, f.1, op.44, d.118, l.38.

A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva lead the Azerbaijani nation in the celebration of Novruz (<http://news.day.az/politics/322245.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that Baku "expects much from Russia" in terms of the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, because Moscow "can push [Armenia] in a desired direction and toward a constructive position on any question" (<http://news.day.az/politics/323596.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that media reports suggesting that Azerbaijan has offered its air bases to a third country for use against anyone are untrue (<http://news.day.az/politics/323593.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

Sergey Lavrov, Hillary Clinton, and Alain Juppe, the foreign ministers of the three OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries, issue a joint declaration calling on the leaders of the sides of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict "to complete work as soon as possible on the framework agreement and subsequent final settlement – based on the Helsinki Final Act principles of non-use or threat of force, territorial integrity, and self-determination and equal rights of peoples; the United Nations Charter; and norms and principles of international law – which will allow the entire region to move beyond the status quo toward a more secure and prosperous future" (<http://news.day.az/politics/322557.html>).

Egemen Bagys, Turkey's minister for European Union affairs, says that "we consider the OSCE Minsk Group very passive. The Minsk Group must either create a consensus between Azerbaijan and Armenia or say that 'we cannot fulfill this work and let he who can deal with it'" (<http://news.day.az/politics/322596.html>).

James Appathurai, NATO Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, says that the Western alliance has no intentions or plans to take part in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and it even does not participate in the peace process currently under way within the realms of the Minsk Group (<http://news.day.az/politics/321744.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

31 March

President Ilham Aliyev tells visiting Kyrgyzstan President Almazbek Atambayev that, "Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan are connected by historical roots" (<http://news.day.az/politics/323757.html>).

Azerbaijan marks the Day of the Genocide of Azerbaijanis (<http://news.day.az/politics/323946.html>).

Interior Minister Ramil Usubov hosts a session on the Day of the Genocide of the Azerbaijanis (<http://news.day.az/society/324130.html>).

The Azerbaijani embassy in Serbia hosts a ceremony on the Day of the Genocide of the Azerbaijanis (<http://news.day.az/politics/324107.html>).

Ayдын Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that, "today's Azerbaijan will not allow anyone to commit a genocide against its own people on their own land" (<http://news.day.az/politics/324014.html>).

30 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives Kyrgyzstan President Almazbek Atambayev (<http://news.day.az/politics/323757.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that so-called "presidential elections" in Nagorno-Karabakh are "nothing but the latest provocation of the government of Armenia" (<http://news.day.az/politics/323828.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Armenia is "condemned to inevitable collapse" if it continues its unproductive approach to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/323953.html>).

Gudsi Osmanov, Azerbaijan's consul general in St. Petersburg, says that Azerbaijan is making a major contribution to the energy security and ecological protection of the entire region (<http://news.day.az/society/323771.html>).

Bakhtiyar Sadykhov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Yerevan's claim about the number of voters in Armenia is "a complete absurdity" given declines in the Armenian population in recent years (<http://news.day.az/politics/323631.html>).

Kyrgyzstan President Almazbek Atambayev tells the Milli Majlis that, "the Turkic language states must be transformed into significant powers" (<http://news.day.az/politics/323970.html>).

Katrin Werner, a deputy of the German Bundestag, says that, "the freeing of 62 prisoners is an important step on the path to the improvement of the human rights and democracy situation in Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/323922.html>).

29 March

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that Baku "expects much from Russia" in terms of the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, because Moscow "can push [Armenia] in a desired direction and toward a constructive position on any question" (<http://news.day.az/politics/323596.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that media reports suggesting that Azerbaijan has offered its air bases to a third country for use against anyone are untrue (<http://news.day.az/politics/323593.html>).

The Defense Ministry says that media reports suggesting that Azerbaijan has offered its air bases to a third country for use against anyone are untrue (<http://news.day.az/politics/323608.html>).

The Office of the Ombudsman issues a declaration marking the Day of the Genocide of Azerbaijanis (<http://news.day.az/politics/323718.html>).

Mammad Ahmadov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Argentina also accredited to Paraguay, meets with that country's president Fernando Lugo (<http://news.day.az/politics/323622.html>).

Govhar Bakhshaliyeva, head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, says that "everyone knows that in Armenia, a military regime rules and that consequently it would be naïve to speak about the democratic nature of the upcoming elections there" (<http://news.day.az/politics/323526.html>).

Bahar Muradova, a Milli Majlis deputy, is given a special medal by the Azerbaijani parliament for her work in developing inter-parliamentary ties at an international level (<http://news.day.az/politics/323741.html>).

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin and US Deputy Secretary of State Philip Gordon discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/323779.html>).

28 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives Bulgarian Ambassador Vasil Kalinov on the occasion of the completion of his appointment to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/323447.html>).

Elin Suleymanov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Washington, says that US-Azerbaijani relations have developed well over the last 20 years (<http://news.day.az/politics/323320.html>).

Shahin Abdullayev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Cairo, announces the launch of a new publication *EgAz* for Egyptians (<http://news.day.az/politics/323491.html>).

Fuad Muradov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Baku will guarantee "the complete security" of an Armenian delegation scheduled to attend a *Euronest* meeting in the Azerbaijani capital in April (<http://news.day.az/politics/323404.html>).

The Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy and its Spanish counterpart sign a memorandum providing for cooperation and the exchange of students (<http://news.day.az/politics/323477.html>).

The Academy of Sciences announces plans to assemble at a new institute in Baku copies of archival documents concerning Azerbaijan now held by institutions abroad (<http://news.day.az/society/323444.html>).

Michael Ericson, Sweden's ambassador to Baku, says that Stockholm will soon open an embassy in the Azerbaijani capital (<http://news.day.az/politics/323538.html>).

Yuri Shchedrin, Russia's trade representative in Baku, says that there is still great potential for the expansion of ties between Russia and Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/economy/323475.html>).

Valentina Matvienko, speaker of Russia's Federation Council, tells Oktay Asadov, speaker of the Milli Majlis, that the Eurovision competition in Baku provides Azerbaijan with "another opportunity" to present itself to the world (<http://news.day.az/politics/323525.html>).

27 March

President Ilham Aliyev tells the Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul that "the atomic power station in Armenia is a potential source of a catastrophe in the region" to the region (<http://news.day.az/politics/322897.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Yerevan is continuing its "destructive approach" to discussions about the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/323096.html>).

The Youth and Sports Ministry says that Azerbaijan will not take place in an Eastern Partnership conference scheduled to be held in Yerevan (<http://news.day.az/politics/323256.html>).

Farid Shafiyev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Ottawa, publishes an article saying that the world must condemn Armenian atrocities against Azerbaijanis (<http://news.day.az/politics/323104.html>).

Asef Hajiyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the situation in Armenia is "at the edge of a catastrophe" (<http://news.day.az/politics/322998.html>).

The Academy of Sciences presents a four-volume collection detailing the genocide

Armenia has conducted against Azerbaijanis over the last century (<http://news.day.az/politics/323129.html>).

The Russian Foreign Ministry says that the OSCE Minsk Group is working sufficiently well and therefore the possibility of replacing France with the European Union as a co-chair does not arise (<http://news.day.az/politics/323252.html>).

Ioannis Metaxas, Greece's ambassador to Baku, says that, "all internally displaced persons must return to Nagorno-Karabakh" (<http://news.day.az/politics/323122.html>).

Uzbekistan names Sherzod Fayziyev as its new ambassador to Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/323075.html>).

26 March

President Ilham Aliyev takes part in ceremonies opening the Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul (<http://news.day.az/politics/322897.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Yerevan continues to "ignore the declarations of the leaders of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries" and the decisions of "numerous international organizations" on Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://news.day.az/politics/322982.html>).

Oktay Asadov, speaker of the Milli Majlis, takes part in a meeting devoted to the 20th anniversary of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (<http://news.day.az/politics/323026.html>).

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan discusses the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict during his meeting with US President Barak Obama (<http://news.day.az/politics/322990.html>).

Duma deputies from Daghestan call on Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin to simplify border crossings with Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/323033.html>).

24 March

Egemen Bagys, Turkey's minister for relations with the European Union, says that the OSCE Minsk Group must fulfill its obligations and "put an end" to the capricious behavior of the Armenians (<http://news.day.az/politics/322863.html>).

Zafer Chaglayan, Turkey's economics minister, tells his Georgian counterpart Vera Kobalia that "Georgian, Azerbaijani and Turkish businessmen must more actively work together and create enterprises for the development of the region" (<http://news.day.az/economy/322852.html>).

Neria Putinaite, Lithuania's deputy education and science minister, says that "the intellectual orientation of Azerbaijan is toward Europe" (<http://news.day.az/politics/322845.html>).

23 March

Ilgar Mukhtarov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Mexico City, takes part in a Novruz

celebration organized by the Mexican parliament
(<http://news.day.az/society/322821.html>).

Gudsi Osmanov, Azerbaijan's consul general in St. Petersburg, speaks about the Azerbaijani diaspora of that city (<http://news.day.az/society/322729.html>).

Anar Mammadov, Azerbaijan's consul in Athens, speaks to a Novruz celebration in Saloniki (<http://news.day.az/society/322688.html>).

Tahir Rzayev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says the failure to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is "leading the Armenian people to destruction"
(<http://news.day.az/politics/322574.html>).

The legislature in the US state of Maine adopts a resolution marking the 20th anniversary of the Khojaly tragedy (<http://news.day.az/politics/322660.html>).

Papun Davitai, Georgia's state minister for diasporas, and Nugzar Tsiklauri, a member of the Georgian parliament, participate in a celebration in Azerbaijan's Gakh district of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Georgia and Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/society/322618.html>).

22 March

The Foreign Ministry says that, "Azerbaijan is the most secure and stable country of the region" (<http://news.day.az/politics/322553.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that "Yerevan is trying to blame others" for its failure to agree on a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict
(<http://news.day.az/politics/322519.html>).

The Economic Development Ministry says that Sri Lankan companies are interested in cooperating with Azerbaijani firms (<http://news.day.az/economy/322589.html>).

Mammad Ahmadzade, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Chile, meets with Chilean Foreign Minister Alfredo Moreno (<http://news.day.az/politics/322533.html>).

Aydin Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenia has already reached the point where "serious changes" are needed
(<http://news.day.az/politics/322432.html>).

Montenegrin Prime Minister Igor Lukšić tells Eldar Hasanov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to his country, that "bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Montenegro is at a high level, but that it ought to strengthen in such areas as economics, culture and tourism" (<http://news.day.az/politics/322551.html>).

Georgian Vice Prime Minister Giorgi Baramidze opens a Tbilisi conference of the Eastern Partnership concerning European integration
(<http://news.day.az/politics/322568.html>). Among the participants are Yashar Aliyev, Azerbaijan's diplomatic representative for special tasks, Milli Majlis deputies Asim Mollazade and Ganira Pashayeva, ADA pro-rector Fariz Ismailzade, and Grigol Vashadze, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Tbilisi
(<http://news.day.az/politics/322575.html>).

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin says that the littoral states have achieved "mutual understanding" on the basic issues of cooperation in the Caspian (<http://news.day.az/politics/322599.html>).

Macedonia unilaterally eliminates the visa requirements for Azerbaijanis for a period of one year (<http://news.day.az/politics/322503.html>).

Two more members of the US House of Representatives—John Duncan and Ralph Hall—join the Congressional Working Group on Azerbaijan, bringing that body's number to 45 (<http://news.day.az/politics/322495.html>).

21 March

Tural Rzayev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Kuwait, meets with Ahmad Abdul-Aziz al-Sadun, speaker of the Kuwaiti parliament (<http://news.day.az/politics/322431.html>).

Vagif Sadygov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Rome, meets with Giovanni Alemanno, mayor of the Italian capital (<http://news.day.az/politics/322428.html>).

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili greets Azerbaijanis living in Georgia on the occasion of Novruz (<http://news.day.az/politics/322451.html>).

Robert Bradtke, US co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, says that "Azerbaijan and Armenia may be closer to agreement on the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict than they suppose" (<http://news.day.az/politics/322427.html>).

20 March

Elin Suleymanov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Washington, says that "the strengthening of strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and the US corresponds to the long-term national interests of each of these countries" (<http://news.day.az/politics/322340.html>).

Hasan Mammadzade, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Vilnius, meets with members of the Lithuanian parliament (<http://news.day.az/politics/322357.html>).

Igor Popov, Russian co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, says that talks on the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict are going "sufficiently intensively" (<http://news.day.az/politics/322364.html>).

19 March

President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva lead the Azerbaijani nation in the celebration of Novruz (<http://news.day.az/politics/322245.html>).

The National Security Ministry announces that it has blocked an attempt to smuggle drugs into Azerbaijan from Iran (<http://news.day.az/society/322254.html>).

Ali Ahmadov, deputy chairman and executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that the reasons behind growing nervousness in Armenia reflect "the real strengthening of Azerbaijan," a trend that "does not work in favor of the aggressor country" (<http://news.day.az/politics/322306.html>).

Govhar Bakhshaliyeva, head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of Islamic cooperation, says that Yerevan's comments about "historic Armenian lands" are without foundation (<http://news.day.az/politics/321810.html>).

Asim Mollazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Yerevan's attempts to blame Baku for the absence of progress in the Nagorno-Karabakh talks is "the latest attempt of Armenian propaganda" to distract attention from its own actions (<http://news.day.az/politics/321866.html>).

Gular Ahmadova, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that, "Yerevan is losing its nerve" (<http://news.day.az/politics/321946.html>).

Ganira Pashayeva, a Milli Majlis deputy, receives Mehmet Saglan, deputy chairman of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (<http://news.day.az/society/322195.html>).

Hulusi Kilic, Turkey's ambassador to Baku, hosts a reception in honor of Novruz (<http://news.day.az/politics/322303.html>).

The Senate of Argentina adopts a declaration calling for the establishment of an embassy in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/322087.html>).

Marian Lupu, chairman of the Moldovan parliament, hosts a concert for Azerbaijanis living in Moldova in honor of Novruz (<http://news.day.az/society/322166.html>).

David Harris, executive director of the American Jewish Committee, thanks Azerbaijan for blocking a conspiracy directed against the American and Israeli embassies in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/322261.html>).

18 March

The Foreign Ministry says that Baku supports good-neighborly relations with Iran (<http://news.day.az/politics/322028.html>).

Javanshir Akhundov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Tehran, was summoned to the Iranian foreign ministry in connection with commentary in Baku concerning the role of the Corps of Defenders of the Islamic Revolution in supporting the organization of terrorist actions in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/322020.html>).

Ali Larijani, speaker of the Iranian parliament, sends a message of greetings to the peoples of 11 countries where Novruz is a national holiday (<http://news.day.az/politics/322032.html>).

17 March

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Information, says that the report issued by the National Security Ministry of Azerbaijan "is not an action directed against the Iranian state" (<http://news.day.az/politics/321978.html>).

The National De-Mining Agency signs an agreement with NATO to promote the demining of Azerbaijani territory (<http://news.day.az/politics/321953.html>).

Ziyad Samadzade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says the return of bank deposits from Soviet

times will take place without regard to whether those then living in the Azerbaijan SSR still live in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/321923.html>).

The US Department of State says that, "Iran must not become a cause of the destabilization and slowing of regional development" (<http://news.day.az/politics/321893.html>).

The US Department of State supports the detention by Azerbaijan of a group of persons accused of seeking to harm the interests of foreign states in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/321934.html>).

16 March

The Foreign Ministry says that Yerevan continues to try to deflect responsibility from itself for the lack of progress in talks about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/321807.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev receives Hun Tsui, China's ambassador to Baku, and Mammad Baqir Bahrami, Iran's ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/321740.html>).

Mahir Aliyev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Damascus, says the Azerbaijani embassy continues to function normally, but with heightened security (<http://news.day.az/politics/321731.html>).

Hasan Mammadzade, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Vilnius, hosts a four-day visit by AZPROMO in Lithuania to promote bilateral trade and investment (<http://news.day.az/economy/322178.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, deputy executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, protests the closed meeting of German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle with members of Azerbaijani NGOs (<http://news.day.az/politics/321763.html>).

Bakhtiyar Sadykhov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenia's territorial claims against Turkey are "symptoms of the illness of the Armenian nationalists" (<http://news.day.az/politics/321746.html>).

The Civil Aviation Administration of Azerbaijan has raised with the European Civil Aviation Conference the issue of the illegal construction by Armenia of an airport in Khojaly (<http://news.day.az/politics/321717.html>).

The Azerbaijani European Movement issues an appeal to world public opinion concerning the hosting of Eurovision 2012 in Baku in May 2012 noting that Azerbaijan has always been known for its tolerance and protection of members of different nations and religions (<http://news.day.az/society/321792.html>).

James Appathurai, NATO Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, says that Azerbaijan is making a significant contribution to international security (<http://news.day.az/politics/321798.html>).

Adam Sterling, charge d'affaires of the US embassy in Baku, says that the United States welcomes the success of the Azerbaijani security forces in breaking up a group of Azerbaijani citizens who were cooperating with the Iranian Corps of

Defenders of the Islamic Revolution (<http://news.day.az/politics/321802.html>).

Adam Sterling, charge d'affaires of the US embassy in Baku, hosts a ceremony in honor of Novruz (<http://news.day.az/society/321836.html>).

Adam Sterling, charge d'affaires of the US embassy in Baku, says that President Barak Obama will nominate a candidate for ambassador to Azerbaijan in the near future (<http://news.day.az/politics/321794.html>).

German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle says that the current status quo in the Nagorno-Karabakh negotiations must "not be prolonged" (<http://news.day.az/politics/321713.html>).

Note to Readers

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