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In this issue:

- Paul Goble, "Oil Shale Revolution Shakes Up Caspian Pipeline Calculations"
- Alex Vatanka, "Azerbaijan and Iran's Bungling Foreign Policy"
- Sevinj Aliyeva, "Islam and Azerbaijan's Relationship With the North Caucasus"
- A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy
- Note to Readers

**OIL SHALE REVOLUTION SHAKES UP
CASPIAN PIPELINE CALCULATIONS**

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Many of the longstanding assumptions about where pipelines should be built leading out of the Caspian basin have been undercut by the oil shale revolution, the rise of LNG distribution, and the rise of China relative to Europe and the United States, and

these new realities are now exerting a powerful influence on the struggle for energy resources and their export in Azerbaijan and other Caspian littoral states, according to a leading Russian analyst.

In a major article in *Kommersant-Vlast*, Aleksandr Gabuyev says that these underlying changes in the oil and gas world mean that “many projects, whose prospects seemed to be doubtful only a few years ago now are turning out to be more realistic” and nowhere is that more true than on the key question of the construction of oil and gas pipelines to Europe that will bypass Russia. [1]

In September 2010, Vladimir Putin confidently predicted at a Valdai Club session that no one was going to be able to build a gas pipeline that would bypass Russia. He based his conclusion on the fact that none of the proposed suppliers had enough gas to justify the kind of investment such a pipeline would require. To a certain extent, Putin has been proved right, at least so far. But now the situation is changing, and the prospects for exactly the kind of pipelines he dismissed as unlikely or even impossible are becoming far more real.

Even the difficulties that the Nabucco project has had can hardly be “happy news for Russia and Gazprom,” Gabuyev says. That is because its problems are the result of growing support for the Trans-Adriatic Gas Pipeline (TAP), a project whose route is shorter and thus whose cost is less. Moreover, the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline has already broken Russia’s monopoly on the export of hydrocarbons to Europe.

The April 2013 meeting of the World Economic Forum in Baku highlighted these changes and pointed to more ahead. Its participants focused on the future of regional energy policy and consequently on “the prospects for the construction of new gas pipelines from Azerbaijan to Europe and also the laying down of a Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline on the bed of the Caspian Sea,” Gabuyev says, noting that because the WEF operated under Chatham House rules, he cannot say more about who said precisely what.

The idea of setting up a network of pipeline to carry Caspian basin oil and gas to Europe bypassing Russia “appeared shortly after the disintegration of the USSR.” It was pushed by US President Bill Clinton in the 1990s, and some of those who worked on that initiative—Matthew Bryza and Richard Morningstar—subsequently worked as American ambassadors in Baku, an indication of that capital’s centrality on such questions.

Their efforts have already had results, Gabuyev notes. In 2005, the 1,768 km Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline went on line, and in 2006, the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline followed. But even as they did, “American and European diplomats stressed that in the future, [these two] would be supplemented by new and larger pipelines” to Europe and by a 300 km connector to Turkmenistan.” Such an arrangement could give the European Union yet another “alternative” to Russia’s Gazprom as a supplier and help make the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia wealthier and “more independent” of Moscow.

Moscow together with Tehran was able to block progress on the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline by citing the lack of an agreement on the delimitation of the sea. And the Russian government used Gazprom as “its main weapon” to try to get the littoral states to agree to ship their oil and gas via Russian pipelines rather than engaging in the construction of new ones bypassing the former metropolitan center.

The 2008 economic crisis and developments in the oil and gas industry undercut Moscow's position, Gabuyev says. Gazprom could not fulfill its contract with Turkmenistan, and it was forced to pay a supplement to Azerbaijan to secure Baku's agreement to ship gas northward. That step led many in the Russian capital to conclude by the end of 2010 that Russia had "won the battle with Nabucco and the Trans-Caspian project" and that Putin's predictions had been proven correct. However, since that time, "major changes have taken place on the world energy market" and these have profoundly affected the Caspian region.

The most important of these, the *Kommersant-Vlast* writer says, is "the shale oil revolution" in the United States. That has dramatically increased production there and equally dramatically reduced American interest in pipelines, including in and from the Caspian region. But this revolution has also "reduced" Europe's dependence on Gazprom and hence Russia's influence there. And those changes have been reflected in the decision of the Obama Administration as part of its "reset" policy to reduce its interest in promoting "many geopolitical projects on the post-Soviet space, including in the Caspian region."

The Europeans, too, have shifted their attention, with many in Brussels now assuming that "Europe will receive more LNG from Qatar" or even from the United States. As a result and because of the economic crisis, the European Union has backed away from its earlier support of projects like Nabucco. Problems with shale oil prospecting in Europe itself and political instability in the Middle East have blunted this trend and kept European interest in the Caspian higher than it is in the United States, the Moscow analyst says.

Azerbaijan is the key country in all of this. In 2016, its Shah Deniz-2 field will go fully online and produce some 16 billion cubic meters of natural gas a year, a large portion of which could be sold to Europe if pipeline capacity were available. Baku would like such a pipeline to bypass Russia and that explains the current push for a Trans-Anatolian route (TANAP). Final decisions about its construction, which needs to begin no later than 2014, are scheduled to be made this summer.

Some Azerbaijani officials project that by 2030 Azerbaijan will export up to 30 billion cubic meters of gas and by 2050 some 50 billion. In addition, they are saying that they believe that a Trans-Caspian pipeline would allow these figures to go even higher—and thus make Baku an even more important player in this game.

"For a long time," Gabuyev notes, the construction of such a pipeline has been held up not only by the opposition of Moscow and Tehran, but by disagreements between Baku and Ashgabat over which country owns which part of the seabed. However, the prospects of such enormous gas sales to Europe are gradually bringing the two countries closer together on this issue. By diversifying the pipeline routes, Baku will earn more money; and by earning more money, the Azerbaijani government will be in a better position to diversify its economy beyond the oil and gas sector.

Turkmenistan, too, has its reasons for a rapprochement. It has had its problems with Moscow, but now Moscow is much less important in Ashgabat than it was. China is now Turkmenistan's banker, and consequently, at least according to the *Kommersant-Vlast* analyst, "Ashgabat can survive" any conflict with the Russian Federation. Moreover, China is unlikely to oppose Turkmenistan participation in a Trans-Caspian pipeline as long as much of that central Asian country's reserves go

eastward. Consequently, however much Moscow and Tehran oppose the idea, it seems likely to go ahead.

Russia no longer can effectively employ economic sanctions, nor can Iran, although the latter might engage in another round of cyber-attacks. After all, it did so against Saudi Arabia's oil company Aramco in August 2012. Or Tehran could attack one of the oil and gas platforms in the Caspian. But that is a threat that, if carried out, would easily backfire on Iran.

In all these ways, Gabuyev concludes, "the shale revolution has been able to change not only the geography of the global flows of LNG, but also the geography of gas pipelines, at least in the Caspian region."

Notes

[1] See <http://kommersant.ru/pda/power.html?id=2178605> (accessed 30 May 2013).

AZERBAIJAN AND IRAN'S BUNGLING FOREIGN POLICY

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Among Iran's immediate neighbors, Azerbaijan stands out in two distinct ways. First, the existence of a large ethnic Azerbaijani population inside Iran makes the Republic of Azerbaijan more than just another neighbor. And second, at the moment, no other neighboring state challenges the ideological foundations of Islamic Republic as clearly as does the staunchly secular Republic of Azerbaijan.

While this combination has over recent years transformed Baku-Tehran relations into a turbulent affair, many Iranian analysts and even some officials are now increasingly calling for Tehran to rethink its policy approach toward its northern neighbor given Baku's increasing influence in the region, something—if allegedly long overdue—Baku would presumably welcome.

The historical and religious closeness between Iran and Azerbaijan is undeniable, something that finds its expression in the existence of more than 20 million ethnic Azerbaijanis in Iran. However, the behavior of the Iranian regime has driven the two countries apart. Since 1991, Tehran has repeatedly tried—and failed—to coerce the authorities in Baku to be receptive to its Islamist-centric overtures. Successive governments in Baku have rejected the Iranian regime's version of politicized Shia Islam, preferring instead to keep religion and politics apart.

This secularism of the Republic of Azerbaijan has become a torn in the side of the Iranian theocratic regime. Even more distressing from Tehran's perspective is that Baku's secularist model is clearly very attractive to many people inside Iran, something the Iranian hardliners can no longer afford to ignore. The latter

development has become particularly true as the Arab Revolutions and the civil war in Syria have heightened sectarian tensions among Sunni and Shia Muslims across the region. In the Islamic World, Azerbaijan is now viewed as a bastion of secularism and traditional Islam, a function previously played by Turkey before the arrival of the AKP government in Ankara. Just as it used to fear Turkish secularism, Tehran now fears the secularism of Azerbaijan.

Iran's rocky relation with Azerbaijan is far from unique. To its south, Iran has managed to antagonize most of the Arab states of the Persian Gulf, particularly Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. Its relations with Turkey have nose-dived since 2011 thanks to the intense rivalry in Syria where Tehran has wholeheartedly backed the Bashar Al Assad regime when the Turks early on sided with the opposition. Tehran's policies in Iraq and Afghanistan are often resented and seen as intrusive even though Iranian influence in those countries is indisputable. Iran-Pakistan relations are only cordial on paper, while in reality a deep sense of mistrust plagues bilateral ties.

In short, Iranian foreign policy is in crisis, a reality that is growingly openly acknowledged by many in the Tehran regime as well. Even the carefully screened candidates in Iran's presidential election this season are suggesting publically that Tehran needs to rethink its approach to the region and the world.

The two candidates closest to the reformist camp, Mohammad Reza Aref and Hassan Rohani, have blasted the eight-year foreign policy record of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and are running on a pledge to reduce Iran's tensions with her neighbors and other actors on the international stage. Even those candidates closest to the hardliners and Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei are arguing for a change and question whether empty gestures and sloganeering is a substitute for an effective foreign policy. One, Mohsen Rezai, recently attacked Ahmadinejad's trade-mark Holocaust-denial stance and promised not to repeat such mistakes if he was elected president after the 14 June elections. Another hardline candidate, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, asked, "What good did Iran get out of [Ahmadinejad] denying the Holocaust?"

It remains to be seen, of course, if these declarations by the regime insiders represent signs of a genuine change of heart in Tehran or if these are empty slogans and the regime will continue where it left off once the elections are over. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that Tehran is increasingly feeling the pinch of international sanctions and tensions with so many of her neighbors and this could well force Tehran to adopt a less dogmatic and a more pragmatic regional behavior.

With regard to Azerbaijan, it is clear that Tehran does not want to allow relations to deteriorate further. Iran can simply not afford more isolation, and Azerbaijan, as an increasingly important regional actor, is hard to ignore. This reality holds true despite the periodic cycles of provocation and retaliation, which each side blames on the other.

From Baku's perspective, an Iranian decision to end attempts to interfere in the domestic affairs of neighboring countries, including Azerbaijan, would be a welcome development. For years, Iran has been adamant that its version of political Islam should be emulated and particularly in a Shia-majority country such as Azerbaijan. If Tehran abandoned that stance, relations could improve.

There is a track record for this sort of Iranian policy reversal. During the reformist administration of President Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005), Tehran succeeded in overhauling relations with neighboring countries such as its arch foe Saudi Arabia via an outreach strategy that underscored an Iranian willingness to end its efforts to export its Islamist revolution.

If Tehran decided to go down such a sober path—as was largely the case during the presidency of Mohammad Khatami—Baku would probably reciprocate in kind. While the Azerbaijani government, and clear majority of the country’s population, have no time for Tehran’s Islamist model and the system of governance, one cannot ignore that Iran is a large neighboring state of 76 million people with numerous historical and ethnic linkages to the Republic of Azerbaijan.

While an Iranian decision to shift away from the disastrous foreign policy record of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad seems likely, this will not translate into an immediate overhaul of Tehran’s relationship with Baku anytime soon. There are simply too many problems that have to be addressed. Yet the ties can no doubt still benefit should Tehran start looking for ways to lessen tensions with neighbors, including Azerbaijan.

ISLAM AND AZERBAIJAN’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NORTH CAUCASUS

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Islam plays a key role both in linking Azerbaijan and the North Caucasus together and because their religious experience has been different in setting them apart. As a result, the relationship has been complicated and at no time more than over the past century and especially the past generation.

In the beginning of the 20th century, Musavat, the Azerbaijani national-democratic party, called for the establishment of a secular nation-state, while Ittihad, the pan-Islamist party, urged the creation of an Islamic state, which would include all the Muslims of the Russian Empire. Obviously, the program of the former put Azerbaijanis at odds with many in the North Caucasus, while that of the latter reflected some of their underlying commonalities.

This distinction continued during the first years of Soviet power. Then, the Muslim clergy continued to play a decisive role in the life of the local umma. Thus, in Adygeya in September 1922, an *oblast* congress of religious and secular representatives adopted a resolution calling for the restoration of Sharia law. All civil, family and religious cases were to be handled by a Sharia court. However, following a decision of the joint session of the Presidium of the Adygey *oblast* executive committee and the *Orgburo* of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) on December 1, 1922, the role of Sharia courts there was gradually eliminated. In 1924, there were 126 mosques in the 45 *auls* of Adygeya. Seven of them were built in Soviet times. However, the representatives of the clergy were deprived of the

right to vote and were excluded from assemblies in which they earlier had had an honored place. Many Adygs protested this change.

The measures of Soviet power regarding the Muslim clergy generated anger among many in the North Caucasus. The registration of religious groups and the enumeration of parishioners at mosques were entirely foreign to Islam, and the requirement that the mosques take out insurance did not add to the popularity of the Soviet system among the population. In 1923, there were 120 Muslim groups registered and 120 mosques, and in 1927, there were 124 of each. Three mosques were closed during that period on the pretext that they did not have any parishioners, because they had been functioning only at the time of Muslim holidays.

Throughout the Soviet period, Islamic values and the dissemination of Islam were banned. However, Islam continued to be followed and to develop outside of the government system. The attempts of the Soviet authorities to suppress Muslim traditions and customs did not work; instead, these efforts led to the conservation and functioning in a hidden form. Only during the years of the Great Fatherland War (1941-1945) were Muslims able to come out into the open and to create the Muslim Spiritual Directorate of the North Caucasus in the Dagestani city of Buinaksk. In May 1944, representatives of the Muslim clergy and the laity took part in a congress representing Dagestan, Krasnodar and Stavropol.

Only at the end of the 1980s were the traditional forms of religious life reestablished. In the post-Soviet period, religion began to play an enormous role in the lives of the peoples of Azerbaijan and the North Caucasus. Islamic values again became one of the factors, which connected the North Caucasus and Azerbaijan. The Muslim Spiritual Directorates divided and multiplied. In 1991, the *muftiat* was reorganized, a council of *ulema* was again established, and the directorates began to devote their attention to the moral and spiritual education of believers, something they were restricted from doing in Soviet times. The central authorities in the Russian Federation were concerned by the radical increase in the number of Muslims fearing that after a generation, the number of ethnic Muslims in the country would be between 30 and 40 million. Under the aegis of the struggle with "radical Islamism," they carried out a broader struggle against Islam as such.

At present, in the North Caucasus there are 11 Muslim spiritual directorates, which together form the Coordination Center of Muslims of the North Caucasus. There were more than 1,700 Muslim organizations in the North Caucasus by 2007, including more than 1,100 in Dagestan alone. The Muslims of the Caucasus, north and south, are part of various spiritual administrations. One of them is the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Caucasus in Baku, which is headed by the sheikh-ul-Islam, Allahshukur Pashazade and oversees many Muslim parishes in the Muslim republics of the North Caucasus.

A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

President Ilham Aliyev says that Azerbaijan's partnership with the United States has "a large historical tradition" that reflects the mutual interests of the two countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/405230.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that Azerbaijan does not have any problems with Iran at the present time (<http://news.day.az/politics/403784.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that Baku has chosen as its future "integration with the European countries and the European Union" (<http://news.day.az/politics/404189.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

The US Department of State says that Azerbaijan has made a significant contribution the fight against terrorism (<http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2012/209981.htm>).

The Russian Foreign Ministry says that, "Azerbaijan is our strategic partner in the Trans-Caucasus and in the Caspian region" (<http://news.day.az/politics/402826.html>).

Rabbi Levi Matusof, a member of the European Jewish Parliament, says that Azerbaijan deserves its image of "the most tolerant country in the world" (<http://news.day.az/politics/405602.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

31 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Lord Christopher Pincher, president of the British-Azerbaijani Inter-Parliamentary Group (<http://news.day.az/politics/405707.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Boris Tadić, former president of Serbia (<http://news.day.az/politics/405707.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Georgi Parvanov, former president of Bulgaria (<http://news.day.az/politics/405707.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Stjepan Mesić, former president of Croatia (<http://news.day.az/politics/405707.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Lamberto Dini, former prime minister of Italy (<http://news.day.az/politics/405707.html>).

First Deputy Prime Minister Yagub Eyubov receives Nikolay Patskevich, Belorussian ambassador to Baku, to discuss joint industrial projects (<http://news.day.az/economy/405789.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Mari Skare, special representative of NATO for women, peace and security (<http://news.day.az/politics/405761.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Hafiz Pashayev, rector of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, says that Azerbaijan from its very beginnings has created a supportive environment for its 75 ethnic minorities (<http://news.day.az/politics/405758.html>).

Polad Bulbuloglu, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Moscow, says that Azerbaijan and Russia have "very constructive ties" and that the two countries are "strategic partners" (<http://news.day.az/politics/405729.html>).

Polad Bulbuloglu, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Moscow, says that the introduction of a visa regime by Russia for Azerbaijanis is "not on the agenda" (<http://news.day.az/economy/405747.html>).

Elkhan Suleymanov, a Milli Majlis deputy, is elected vice president of Euronest (<http://news.day.az/politics/405723.html>).

The Second Baku World Forum for Inter-Cultural Dialogue adopts a final communiqué calling for more such conversations among peoples of various cultures and religions (<http://news.day.az/politics/405717.html>).

Roland Kobia, head of the EU office in Baku, says that cooperation between the European Union and Azerbaijan has significantly broadened over the last several years (<http://news.day.az/politics/405537.html>).

Sergey Lebedev, head of the executive committee of the CIS, says that Azerbaijan shows interest in joining a CIS free trade zone (<http://news.day.az/economy/405773.html>).

Almaz Nurazkhan, a senior official of the Kazakhstan culture ministry, says that the Second Baku World Forum on International Cultural Dialogue provides a valuable opportunity for the exchange of ideas on that subject (<http://news.day.az/politics/405776.html>).

Tokozile Hasa, UAE deputy minister for tourism, says that the Second Baku World Forum on Inter-Cultural Dialogue is an irreplaceable platform for discussion of key issues (<http://news.day.az/politics/405756.html>).

Vuong Dui Bien, Vietnam's deputy minister for culture, sport and tourism, praises Azerbaijan for hosting the Second Baku International Forum on Inter-Cultural Dialogue (<http://news.day.az/politics/405731.html>).

The Senate of Jordan adopts a resolution recognizing the Khojaly massacre as genocide (<http://news.day.az/politics/405742.html>).

The Senate of the US State of Arizona adopts a resolution recognizing Nagorno-Karabakh as an inalienable part of Azerbaijan and praising Baku for its role in counter-terrorism operations (<http://news.day.az/politics/405540.html>).

The Permanent Commission and Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe meeting in Yerevan adopts a resolution calling for the peaceful solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the basis of the Madrid Principles (<http://news.day.az/politics/405693.html>).

30 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives US Senator Saxbe Chambliss (<http://news.day.az/politics/405446.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Afghanistan Foreign Minister Zalmay Rassoul (<http://news.day.az/politics/405446.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives ISESCO Director General Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri (<http://news.day.az/politics/405446.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Nasir Abdulaziz al-Nasser, special representative of the UN secretary general (<http://news.day.az/politics/405446.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Irina Bokova, secretary general of UNESCO (<http://news.day.az/politics/405446.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that Baku is providing funding for the defense of the interests of the Islamic world (<http://news.day.az/politics/405256.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Philippe Leforte, the EU's special representative for the South Caucasus (<http://news.day.az/politics/405251.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that Azerbaijan is ready to share its experience with promoting tolerance (<http://news.day.az/politics/405422.html>).

Culture and Tourism Minister Abulfas Garayev receives his Moroccan counterpart, Muhammed Amini Sabuhi (<http://news.day.az/society/405482.html>).

Culture and Tourism Minister Abulfas Garayev and UNESCO Secretary General Irina Bokova sign a cooperation agreement (<http://news.day.az/society/405470.html>).

Cultural and Tourism Minister Abulfas Garayev says that Armenia uses various ways to prevent UNESCO officials from visiting the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/405459.html>).

Labor and Social Security Minister Fizuli Alakparov receives ILO expert Olga Kulayeva (<http://news.day.az/politics/405435.html>).

Deputy Economic Development Minister Niyazi Safarov says that Azerbaijan is interested in expanding cooperation with Western Kazakhstan (<http://news.day.az/economy/405329.html>).

Polad Bulbuloglu, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Moscow, says that the end of Russia's use of the Gabala radar station will not have any effect on bilateral relations (<http://news.day.az/politics/405420.html>).

Samad Seyidov, head of the Azerbaijani delegation to PACE, says he and his colleagues will not participate in that body's meeting in the Armenian capital (<http://news.day.az/politics/405349.html>).

French President Francois Holland sends a message to President Ilham Aliyev on the

Day of the Republic (<http://news.day.az/politics/405419.html>).

Farhad Mammadov, head of the Presidential Center for Strategic Research, says that tolerance and positive relations among various religions are characteristic of Azerbaijan and Turkey (<http://news.day.az/politics/405500.html>).

Richard Morningstar, US ambassador to Baku, says that, "the United States needs a strong Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/economy/405252.html>).

Brazil's Parliament adopts a resolution stating that Nagorno-Karabakh is an inalienable part of Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/405423.html>).

Montenegrin Culture Minister Borislav Mikonovic says his country is interested in expanding cooperation with Azerbaijan in all areas (<http://news.day.az/politics/405442.html>).

Mikhail Shvydkoy, the Russian president's special representative for international cultural cooperation, says that starting a dialogue is extremely important for Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/405418.html>).

Irina Bokova, secretary general of UNESCO, says that Azerbaijan has been "transformed into a center of culture" for the world (<http://news.day.az/politics/405315.html>).

Nasir Abdulaziz al-Nasser, special representative of the UN secretary general, says that the Second Baku World Forum on Inter-Cultural Dialogue has great importance (<http://news.day.az/politics/405310.html>).

Said Abbas Arakci, Iran's deputy foreign minister, says that Iranian officials will soon release the two Azerbaijanis they have detained and allow them to return to their homeland (<http://news.day.az/politics/405288.html>).

29 May

President Ilham Aliyev says that Azerbaijan's partnership with the United States has "a large historical tradition" that reflects the mutual interests of the two countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/405230.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Richard Lugar, former US senator (<http://news.day.az/politics/405217.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that Azerbaijan is an ally of the West in the energy sphere (<http://news.day.az/politics/405035.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that several Azerbaijanis were evacuated from Syria by the Russian emergency situations ministry (<http://news.day.az/politics/405031.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that the UN has failed to show decisiveness and thus allowed Armenia not to fulfill UN resolutions and that many NGOs use double standards in their judgments about the situation in the South Caucasus (<http://news.day.az/politics/405215.html>).

Ziyafat Askarov, deputy chairman of the Milli Majlis, says that relations between Azerbaijan and the United States are at the level of strategic cooperation (<http://news.day.az/politics/405063.html>).

Emergency Situations Ministry visits Bishkek to provide training for its Kyrgyzstan counterparts (<http://news.day.az/politics/405150.html>).

Richard Morningstar, US ambassador to Baku, says that the OSCE Minsk Group "must be strengthened" (<http://news.day.az/politics/405246.html>).

ISESCO Director General Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri says that Azerbaijan is an example of tolerance for the entire world (<http://news.day.az/politics/405234.html>).

Thomas Barais, a deputy in Germany's Bundestag, calls for an end to Armenia's occupation of Azerbaijani lands (<http://news.day.az/politics/405225.html>).

Richard Lugar, a former US senator, says that Azerbaijani energy exports are strengthening the energy security of Europe (<http://news.day.az/politics/405224.html>).

Bill Richardson, a former member of the US Congress, says that Azerbaijan and the US will continue to expand their bilateral ties (<http://news.day.az/politics/405049.html>).

Jim Messina, a former senior official in President Barack Obama's White House, says that, "America recognizes that Azerbaijan is a strategic partner and is playing an important role in the South Caucasus" (<http://news.day.az/politics/405130.html>).

28 May

President Ilham Aliyev says that Baku "must continue to keep Armenia isolated from all international projects" until Yerevan withdraws its forces from the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/404659.html>).

Fuad Akhundov, head of a sector in the Presidential Administration, says that 95 years ago, "Azerbaijan gave Armenia the city of Erivan and the territory of the Erivan khanate and immediately after this Armenia declared war on the basis of territorial claims against Azerbaijan and Georgia" (<http://news.day.az/politics/404920.html>).

David Merkel, a former US deputy assistant secretary of state, says that the US must increase its role in promoting a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/404833.html>).

27 May

President Ilham Aliyev leads the nation at home and abroad in marking the Day of the Republic on the occasion of the 95th anniversary of the founding of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (<http://news.day.az/politics/404572.html>).

Russian President Vladimir Putin sends Azerbaijan greetings on the occasion of the Day of the Republic (<http://news.day.az/politics/404755.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Hafiz Pashayev, the rector of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic

Academy, welcomes international visitors to the US-Azerbaijani forum "A View to the Future" (<http://news.day.az/politics/404765.html>).

Zahid Orudzh, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that NATO should play a role in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/404647.html>).

Russian President Vladimir Putin sends Azerbaijan greetings on the occasion of the Day of the Republic (<http://news.day.az/politics/404755.html>).

Antonius Broek, UN resident coordinator in Baku, says Azerbaijan has made serious progress toward the goals it and the UN have set together (<http://news.day.az/politics/404634.html>).

Jean-Claude Minion, the president of PACE, says that Azerbaijan is playing a strategic role in the region (<http://news.day.az/politics/404580.html>).

Jean-Claude Minion, the president of PACE, says that 2013 may be the year that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will be resolved (<http://news.day.az/politics/404547.html>).

The foreign ministers of the Organization of the Collective Security Treaty call for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/404650.html>).

Catherine Connolly, a member of the house of representatives of the US state of Wyoming, says that relations between Azerbaijan and the US are developing in a positive way (<http://news.day.az/politics/404759.html>).

Ron Walters, a member of the house of representatives of the US state of West Virginia, says that Azerbaijan plays a significant role in US foreign policy calculations (<http://news.day.az/politics/404757.html>).

Petr Stoyanov, former president of Bulgaria, says that "Azerbaijan can achieve any goal" it sets for itself (<http://news.day.az/politics/404562.html>).

26 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Jean-Claude Mignon, president of PACE (<http://news.day.az/politics/404493.html>).

Youth and Sports Minister Azad Rahimov says that Baku is ready and able to host the 2020 European Football championship (<http://news.day.az/sport/403838.html>).

25 May

Economic Development Minister Shahin Mustafayev says that until Yerevan withdraws from the occupied territories, it cannot be allowed to take part in any regional cooperation project (<http://news.day.az/economy/404494.html>).

Economic Development Minister Shahin Mustafayev says that Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey must work to attract more cargo for the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad (<http://news.day.az/economy/404335.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that the two Azerbaijanis under arrest in Iran have not yet been turned over to Azerbaijani officials (<http://news.day.az/politics/404386.html>).

Vladimir Dorokhin, Russia's ambassador to Baku, says that Russia appreciates the way in which Azerbaijan treats the ethnic Russians living there (<http://news.day.az/politics/404362.html>).

Vladimir Dorokhin, Russia's ambassador to Baku, says Moscow will continue to support all efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/404344.html>).

Vladimir Dorokhin, Russia's ambassador to Baku, says that Russia will complete its withdrawal of equipment from the Gabala radar station over the next several weeks (<http://news.day.az/politics/404341.html>).

24 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Elmar Brok, chairman of the foreign affairs committee of the European Parliament (<http://news.day.az/politics/404209.html>).

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva meets with members of the French National Assembly (<http://news.day.az/politics/403258.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that Baku's independent foreign policy represents the joint commitment of the government and people of the country (<http://news.day.az/politics/404237.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that time is working for Azerbaijan regarding the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/404218.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that Baku has chosen as its future "integration with the European countries and the European Union" (<http://news.day.az/politics/404189.html>).

The Milli Majlis ratifies agreements with Montenegro and Croatia (<http://news.day.az/politics/404163.html>).

The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs are seeking to organize another meeting between President Ilham Aliyev and his Armenian counterpart, Serzh Sargsyan (<http://news.day.az/politics/404260.html>).

Richard Morningstar, the US ambassador to Baku, says that Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan have the right to decide on the building of a trans-Caspian pipeline (<http://news.day.az/economy/404091.html>).

Sherzod Fayziyev, Uzbekistan's ambassador to Baku, hosts a session at his embassy on water problems in Central Asia (<http://news.day.az/society/404255.html>).

Lamberto Zanier, secretary general of the OSCE, says that Azerbaijan has the right

to set the rules for the operation of an OSCE office on its territory (<http://news.day.az/politics/404180.html>).

Montenegro introduces a visa-free regime for Azerbaijanis (<http://news.day.az/politics/404262.html>).

23 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (<http://news.day.az/politics/403931.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Gabor Iklody, the deputy secretary general of NATO (<http://news.day.az/politics/403931.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Park Biong Sog, deputy chairman of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea (<http://news.day.az/politics/403931.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Slovak journalist Spimr Ing has shamed his profession by saying that there is democracy in Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://news.day.az/politics/403999.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev meets his Russian counterpart, Sergey Shoygu, in Moscow (<http://news.day.az/politics/403997.html>).

Polad Bulbuloglu, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Moscow, says that the miscounting of votes at Eurovision 2013 was either a technical error or a provocation (<http://news.day.az/politics/403804.html>).

President Barack Obama sends a message of greeting to Azerbaijan on the occasion of the Day of the Republic (<http://news.day.az/politics/403908.html>).

Richard Morningstar, US ambassador to Baku, says that NATO and the US will continue to work in close cooperation with Azerbaijan on energy security and infrastructure issues (<http://news.day.az/politics/403803.html>).

Christine Lagarde, director of the IMF, says that she regrets she is unable to participate in an IMF parliamentary conference in Baku, but notes that the Fund's cooperation with parliamentary groups is critically important (<http://news.day.az/economy/403798.html>).

Cyrill Mueller, vice president of the World Bank, says that Azerbaijani continues to maintain stable economic growth and has great potential for further expansion (<http://news.day.az/economy/403789.html>).

Feisal Abdulaziz al-Nassar, secretary general of the Sports Federation of Islamic Solidarity, says that Baku meets all the conditions for holding international competitions (<http://news.day.az/society/403825.html>).

The house of representatives of the US state of Texas adopts a resolution praising Azerbaijan on the 95th anniversary of the establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (<http://news.day.az/politics/403777.html>).

22 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Susan Waffa-Ogoo, foreign minister of Gambia (<http://news.day.az/politics/403658.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Herman Cardoso, chairman of the House of Representatives of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay (<http://news.day.az/politics/403658.html>).

Education Minister Mikail Jabbarov receives his Turkish counterpart Nabi Avdji and announces that the two countries will soon recognize the diplomas of each other's country (<http://news.day.az/society/403697.html>).

Khazar Ibrahim, Azerbaijan's permanent representative to NATO, says that Azerbaijani peacekeepers will remain in Afghanistan even after 2014 (<http://news.day.az/politics/403583.html>).

Bahar Muradova, vice speaker of the Milli Majlis, says the restatement of the principles for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict suggests there has been some progress in the talks (<http://news.day.az/politics/403738.html>).

Sultan Gasymov, Azerbaijan's consul general in Ekaterinburg, says that "Russia is our friend and partner" (<http://news.day.az/politics/403679.html>).

Georgian Interior Minister Irakly Garibashvili meets with officials of the Presidential Agency for Services to Citizens and Social Innovations (<http://news.day.az/politics/403684.html>).

Richard Morningstar, US ambassador to Baku, says that Azerbaijan is playing an important role in increasing the number of alternative routes for energy supplies to Europe (<http://news.day.az/economy/403557.html>).

Humayun Tandar, Afghanistan's ambassador to NATO, says that Azerbaijan is playing an important role for his country and its relations with the western alliance (<http://news.day.az/politics/403591.html>).

21 May

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov tells his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov that there has not been any concrete progress in the Nagorno-Karabakh talks for the last two years (<http://news.day.az/politics/403337.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov and his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov say that the issue of extending the shipment of Azerbaijani oil via the Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline will be decided on the basis of good neighborly relations (<http://news.day.az/economy/403363.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev receives his Spanish counterpart, Pedro de Morenés y Álvarez de Eulate (<http://news.day.az/politics/403485.html>).

The National Academy of Sciences hosts an international forum on New Challenges in the European Space (<http://news.day.az/society/403491.html>).

Ethnic Azerbaijanis in Georgia organize a Society of Azerbaijani Patriots of Georgia (<http://news.day.az/politics/403436.html>).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says that the status quo in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is unacceptable (<http://news.day.az/politics/403365.html>).

Seid Abbas Argci, press secretary of the Iranian foreign ministry, says that Tehran has always respected the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and sought good relations with Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/403503.html>).

Jerry Brown, governor of the US state of California, greets the people of Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijani community of California on the occasion of the 95th anniversary of the establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (<http://news.day.az/politics/403309.html>).

20 May

The Foreign Ministry says again that the territory of Azerbaijan will not be used as a base for a military strike by the US or Israel against Iran (<http://news.day.az/politics/403066.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Baku is working to secure the release of two Azerbaijanis who were arrested by the Iranian authorities (<http://news.day.az/politics/403165.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that media reports suggesting that Baku plans to purchase weapons systems from North Korea are without foundation (<http://news.day.az/politics/403159.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Azerbaijanis should avoid non-essential travel to Syria because of the conflict there (<http://news.day.az/politics/403124.html>).

Leyla Aliyeva, vice president of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and president of the Azerbaijani Youth Organization of Russia, says that, "the further improvement of the policy of strengthening the diaspora is among the main government priorities of Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/403164.html>).

Allahshukur Pashazade, sheikh-ul-Islam and head of the Administration of Muslims of the Caucasus, meets Iranian Security Council secretary Said Jalili and the speaker of the Iranian parliament Ali Larijani during a visit to Tehran (<http://news.day.az/society/403070.html>).

Aleksandr Zhilin, governor of Russia's Astrakhan oblast, says that Russia has always been Azerbaijan's strategic partner (<http://news.day.az/politics/403235.html>).

Mikhail Stolyarov, the mayor of Astrakhan, says that Heydar Aliyev established "very close and friendly relations" with Russia, which "did a great deal" for the development of relations among all the post-Soviet states (<http://news.day.az/politics/403218.html>).

The Moscow State Institute of International Relations hosts a conference on Heydar Aliyev and International Politics (<http://news.day.az/politics/403220.html>).

Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, the former president of Latvia, says she is disappointed that the OSCE Minsk Group has not made more progress (<http://news.day.az/politics/403098.html>).

19 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras (<http://news.day.az/politics/403009.html>).

Allahshukur Pashazade, sheikh-ul-Islam and head of the Administration of Muslims of the Caucasus, meets Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad who says that "Azerbaijan and Iran are two fraternal peoples and states" and that "those who do not want the development of relations between Iran and Azerbaijan should not think that they will be able to harm these relations" (<http://news.day.az/politics/402951.html>).

18 May

President Ilham Aliyev says that "the Azerbaijan people keeps in its heart a respect for and love of its own holy religion," Islam (<http://news.day.az/politics/402479.html>).

Health Minister Ogtay Shiraliyev signs a cooperation accord with his Hungarian counterpart Zoltán Balog (<http://news.day.az/society/402910.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Baku and Cairo have had good relations since the restoration of Azerbaijan's independence in 1991 (<http://news.day.az/politics/402849.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov says that work on the decommissioning of the Gabala radar station is almost complete (<http://news.day.az/politics/402848.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov says there are no principled disagreements between Baku and Moscow on the demarcation of the Azerbaijan-Russian border (<http://news.day.az/politics/402843.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov says that Baku has the situation regarding the two Azerbaijanis detained in Iran under full control (<http://news.day.az/politics/402837.html>).

Parviz Shahbazov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Berlin, hosts an Azerbaijani cultural evening in Munich (<http://news.day.az/politics/403193.html>).

The Russian Foreign Ministry says that, "Azerbaijan is our strategic partner in the Trans-Caucasus and in the Caspian region" (<http://news.day.az/politics/402826.html>).

17 May

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with his Armenian counterpart Edvard Nalbandyan in Cracow under the aegis of the OSCE Minsk Group (<http://news.day.az/politics/402767.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Hafiz Pashayev, who also serves as rector of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, tells the 28 students of ADA receiving their masters degrees that they will become "global leaders and responsible citizens" (<http://news.day.az/politics/402817.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Mahmoud Mammadgulyev says that Baku and the European Union are preparing an agreement that will simplify the visa rules between them (<http://news.day.az/politics/402665.html>).

Polad Bulbuloglu, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Moscow, says that, "there are no problems between Russia and Azerbaijan concerning the demarcation of state borders" (<http://news.day.az/politics/402781.html>).

Anar Imanov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Hanoi, presents his letters of credence to Vietnamese President Trương Tấn Sang (<http://news.day.az/politics/402572.html>).

The Presidential Library launches a website, www.iravan.info, to highlight the Azerbaijani origins of Yerevan which is now the capital of Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/402690.html>).

Farhad Mammadov, director of the Presidential Center for Strategic Research, says that "Armenia is a cancerous growth" in the South Caucasus (<http://news.day.az/politics/402615.html>).

The Milli Majlis takes up a measure that would make it a criminal offense for any Azerbaijani citizen who cooperates with any organization or structure of Armenia unless and until Yerevan withdraws its forces from the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/402736.html>).

SOCOR becomes a sponsor the 2016 European Football championships (<http://news.day.az/sport/402656.html>).

The European Union says that Azerbaijan's favorable economic situation is allowing Baku to integrate immigrants better than many of its neighbors are able to, even though it faces the challenge of helping many immigrants and IDPs as a result of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/402715.html>).

US President Barack Obama and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/402574.html>).

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili says that "today as never before Georgia must show its solidarity with Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/402622.html>).

Madeleine Bordallo, a member of the US House of Representatives and of the Congressional Working Group on Azerbaijan, says that, "over the last 20 years, Azerbaijan has become a very important partner of the United States" (<http://news.day.az/politics/402785.html>).

16 May

The Foreign Ministry says that Azerbaijan, as a member of the UN Security Council, is making an important contribution to the resolution of global problems

(<http://news.day.az/politics/402423.html>).

Oktay Asadov, speaker of the Milli Majlis, receives Mubarak Saleh al-Najad, head of the Kuwaiti parliament's Azerbaijani friendship group, who tells him that Kuwait has always supported Azerbaijan and its territorial integrity (<http://news.day.az/politics/402525.html>).

Asim Mollazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenia is actively working to mislead the Council of Europe and other international organizations about Yerevan's policies and intentions (<http://news.day.az/politics/402482.html>).

Aydin Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy who heads the Azerbaijani parliament's Tajikistan friendship group, receives Zohir Saidov, Tajikistan's ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/402460.html>).

The Milli Majlis is preparing new legislation to regulate travel to and from the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/402368.html>).

Nijat Mammadli, a senior official of the Azerbaijani State Committee for Work with Religious Structures, says that the European Parliament is currently discussing the Azerbaijani model of tolerance (<http://news.day.az/politics/402429.html>).

The Azerbaijan Cultural Center in Paris hosts an international conference on Azerbaijani foreign policy and the geopolitical situation in the South Caucasus (<http://news.day.az/politics/402300.html>).

Note to Readers

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