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**AZERBAIJAN'S INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION
TECHNOLOGIES SECTOR: SOME DEVELOPMENT PECULIARITIES**

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The development of the information and technology sector is a key aspect of Azerbaijan's future, according to the 2012 "Azerbaijan 2020: Future Look" concept

paper. That sector has been growing at an annual rate of more than 20 percent over the last decade, a trend that is projected by the Communication and Information Technologies Ministry to continue. Indeed, it may at some point become a more important source of national income than the oil and natural gas sector.

The Azerbaijan government has been actively promoting this latter trend through a variety of agencies and institutions, although overall state spending on this sector is estimated between AZN 45-60 mln. and only represents about two percent of the state budget. The latter amount, in turn, is dispersed across a number budget sectors. Thus, the "financial support for executive bodies" section features, as part of its "general public services" item, expenses for the Ministry of Communication and Information Technologies (MCIT). The MCIT expenses are also included in the budget's "education" section as part of the "other services in education" item. They also feature in the "culture, arts, information, body training and other activities" section under the latter's "radio, television and publishing" item. The budget's "transport and communication" section involves expenses, under the "communication heading," for MCIT and "Azercosmos LLC." The "transport and communication" section features the MCIT expenses for sectorial reforms, as well as salary, pension improvement, and other similar measures. Finally, the budget's "industry and construction" section features some related infrastructural expenses, including the construction of Regional Information Centers, the establishing of the centralized radio monitoring network, as well as the MS program licensing for 10,000 governmental PCs.

Notwithstanding the seemingly low share of public expenditure allocated to ICT needs, the impact of that spending, together with private sector actions, has been impressive as the following table shows.

Azerbaijan's ICT infrastructure, 2005-2012

	2005	2009	2010	2011	2012
Internet users per 100 inhabitants, person	8	27	46	65	70
Percentage of population covered by mobile cellular telephone	99,0	99,6	99,8	99,8	99,8
Internet access tariff (20 hours per month), manat	5,0	2,0	1,9	1,5	1,5
Internet access tariff per capita income (monthly), in percentage	4,5	0,7	0,6	0,5	0,5
Mobile cellular tariff (100 minutes of use per month), manat	18,0	8,0	7,7	7,4	7,3
Mobile cellular tariff per capita income per capita income (monthly), in percentage	16,1	2,6	2,5	2,4	2,4

As one can see from the table, the number of Internet users per 100 inhabitants has grown from 8 to 70 over the last seven years, the kind of growth partly associated with significant decreases in Internet access tariff per capita monthly income and Internet access tariff (20 hours per month) from 4.5 to 0.5 AZN and from 5 to 1.5

AZN respectively. Consequently, a significant share of income in the telecommunication sector is Internet generated: over 70 percent of it comes from Internet service payments.

Notably, the largest share of income in ICT lies with the mobile communications sector. The number of mobile subscribers has grown seven times over the last ten years to now reach 10 million, the average ratio of mobile phone users being 1.10 to 1.00.

Azerbaijan's achievements in this area have been recognized in a number of international reports. According to the World Economic Forum's 2013 Global Information Technologies report, Azerbaijan currently ranks 56th among 144 countries for "networked readiness index," five places higher than a year ago. Furthermore, it came 9th among those countries in terms of government support for the ICT sector and 1st for the extent of the population's mobile service usage. The UNDP's Global E-Government Readiness report ranked Azerbaijan 96th among 190 countries, while the E-Government development index ranked it sixth among 33 countries evaluated. And the E-readiness index this year said that the country had risen from 66th to 64th place.

The ICT Development Index and ICT Price Basket Index ranked Azerbaijan 68th out of 155 countries for 2011, up 13 places from a year earlier and making Azerbaijan one of the ten countries which have dramatically improved their standing on this measure. Among CIS countries, Azerbaijan also advanced, this time to sixth place. As far as the ICT Price Basket Index is concerned, Azerbaijan ranked 52nd among 161 countries and second among CIS states. That report noted that Azerbaijan has the highest level of internet use among the Commonwealth.

The core features underlying the comparative development of ICT across the globe are reflected in four international reports and five indexes. Three of these indexes have demonstrated an improvement of Azerbaijan's positions, a development one could take as expressive of the rapid growth and growing potential of the ICT sector in Azerbaijan.

**NINETY-NINE PERCENT OF AZERBAIJANIS SAY
TURKEY IS THEIR COUNTRY'S BIGGEST FRIEND**

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The attitudes of a country's population to foreign countries both affect and are affected by that nation's foreign policy, but measuring such attitudes is almost always problematic. That is nowhere more true than in the South Caucasus. But a study prepared by the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC) on the basis of massive polling in all three of the countries here provides some interesting data on these underlying attitudes.

Azerbaijanis are less interested in NATO and EU membership than are Georgians. In Georgia, 67 percent and 72 percent say they want their country to join, while in Azerbaijan, the corresponding figures are 54 percent and 48 percent. But Azerbaijanis are more interested in becoming part of these Western institutions than are Armenians, where these figures are 33 percent and 45 percent respectively.

According to the CRRC, Azerbaijanis are overwhelmingly interested in doing business with Russians, Greeks, Englishmen, and Americans, but they are slightly less interested in either case than are the Georgians and the Armenians. While 87 percent of Georgians and Armenians say they approve of doing business with Russians, the figure for Azerbaijanis is 82 percent, reflecting a skepticism about such foreign ties that extends in roughly the same proportion to the other three nations about whom the CRRC queried.

The three countries vary widely in terms of which country or countries their populations view as their "biggest friend." Respondents were given five choices: the United States, Russia, the European Union, another country in the South Caucasus, and another country outside it. Ninety-nine percent of Azerbaijanis chose the last category, almost certainly an indication that they view Turkey as their nation's closest partner. Georgians and Armenians, in contrast, were divided in their assessments on this point. Sixty-two percent of Georgians see the US as their nation's biggest friend, while 86 percent of Armenians say Russia plays that role.

The survey also included two other questions which bear on foreign policy: foreign language competence of the respondent and his or her views on what foreign languages should be required courses in the country's schools. With regard to foreign language competence, Azerbaijanis indicated a significantly lower level of English language knowledge than Georgians and Armenians, 77 percent, 66 percent and 60 percent respectively. At the same time, Azerbaijanis said that they spoke Russian well far less often than did citizens of the two other countries, 38 percent as against 71 percent in Georgia and 85 percent in Armenia.

Just over half of Azerbaijanis said they would like English to be a mandatory foreign language in their country's schools, slightly more than Armenians and about the same share as the Georgians. Twenty percent of Azerbaijanis said that Russian should be mandatory, significantly less than the 44 percent of Armenians and 32 percent of Georgians indicating support for that option. Intriguingly, nearly one Azerbaijani in five as compared to one Armenian in a 100 and one of every 14 Georgians said that no foreign language study should be required in the schools.

In reporting these findings, the CRRC said that the "substantial" differences of the three countries could become "more meaningful," with "openness towards the West, especially in terms of doing business" being balanced by "a growing interest in Russian as a mandatory language in schools" and perceptions of "the importance of friendship between Georgia and the United States, Russia and Armenia and Turkey and Azerbaijan."

A FOURTH JIHADIST GENERATION TAKES SHAPE IN SYRIA

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As the Syrian crisis continues, ever more foreign jihadis have joined the opposition. That phenomenon like the crisis itself has passed through several stages. It began when during the winter months of 2011-2012, the Gulf States have intensified efforts to strengthen military capabilities of the Free Syrian Army by transferring to Syria seasoned fighters from the just ended Libyan civil war. By May 2012, the *Liwa al-Umma*, a "volunteer" formation within the ranks of FSA, was formed, led by Mahdi al-Harati, a former deputy chief of the Tripoli Military Council, a participant of the "Free Gaza" raid, and an Irish citizen (Fitzgerald 2012). In August 2012, the Brigade claimed having 6,000 fighters in its ranks, some of them locals, but mostly expats, including the Westerners.

In February 2012, Al Qaeda's al-Zawahiri issued an appeal calling on all its supporters to come to Syria to topple the Assad regime. That coincided chronologically with the emergence of *Jabhat al-Nusra*, a jihadist entity believed to be created by the mostly Syrian war veterans who had fought against the U.S. in Iraq. But the foreign jihadist presence in Syria became prominent during the summer of 2012 when the Aleppo stalemate and seesaw fighting in other areas allowed anti-regime forces the time to restructure and consolidate the zones of control.

In the nature of things, there are little hard data on this subject, but various researchers have made estimates. According to the International Centre for the Study of Radicalization, there were approximately 5,500 foreign fighters present in Syria as of March 2013, of whom 11 percent were Europeans (BBC News 2013; Zelin 2013). Security officials have expressed concerns that these figures will rise (Economist 2013; Gebauer & Salloum 2013). Several dozen Canadians, mostly of the Mid-Eastern descent, have joined fighting in Syria too (Bell 2013), and there are reports that a few Americans have done so as well (Owen & Harding 2013; Reilly 2013). But if foreign jihadists from the Western countries number in the dozens, those from the former Soviet space and especially from the North Caucasus and Central Asia number in the hundreds (Gazeta.ru 2013). In addition, there are Australians, Chinese (the ethnic Uyghur from the East Turkestan Islamic Movement), Malaysians, Bangladeshis, and a few others (Malaysian Insider 2012; Valiente 2012).

Most of the Syria-related activities are based on, or loosely connected to, previously existing Salafi-influenced networks. Among these are *Shariat4Belgium* (Belgium), *Millatu Ibrahim* (Germany), *Profetens Ummah* (Norway), and *Svenska Mujahidin fi-Bilad al-Sham* (Sweden). The individuals involved have been active for some time. Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane, a Danish jihadist who fought in Afghanistan in the 90s, spent time in Guantanamo, and tried to get to Chechnya, has finally made his way to Syria. Raphael Gendron, a.k.a. Abu Marawa, a French convert to Islam, four years before he was killed in Syria last April, has been already convicted to prison terms for his involvement with the Islamist propaganda network in Belgium. Another case is Denis Mamadou Cuspert, a.k.a. "Deso Dogg," a notorious jihadist rap star, a

German convert to Islam of Ghana origin, who fled to Syria to avoid legal investigation at home.

Almost all of these foreign jihadists in Syria have a record of violence and the glorification of violence. The Norwegian *Profetens Ummahhas*, for example, has threatened violence for what it sees as insults to Islam (Gates of Vienna 2012a) and appears to have among its members several who fired shots at the Israeli embassy in Oslo in 2006. And the *Svenska Mujahidin fi-Bilad al-Sham* group earlier issued death threats in relation to the Prophet cartoons' controversy.

Most of those who can be identified range in age from 18 to 30. They are typically members of homegrown second generation of European Muslims, first generation-migrants, or indigenous European converts to Islam. Many come from the mixed parentage. For instance, the above named Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane is of the mixed Algerian-Danish descent; Abu Kamal al-Swede from Sweden, who was killed in March 2013, was of the Sudanese-Finnish origin; and Ayachi Abdel Rahman, a commander of the Falcons of Levant Brigade and the Belgian citizen, comes from the Saudi-French family.

All these organizations have an active and multi-pronged recruitment effort and operate channels for sending new people to Syria as well as providing them with military and ideological training. The *Shariat4Belgium* Salafi network is believed to have helped to arrange a transfer of the estimated 33 Muslims, mostly at the age between 18 and 24, from Northern Belgium area between Antwerp and Brussels to Syria, until its recruitment pipeline was suspended by the police raid (Associated Press 2013). And the *Profetens Ummah* group tried to facilitate weapons training for its affiliates in the hunting courses in Norway, perhaps aiming at the further legal procurement of firearms (Gates of Vienna 2012b). These groups raise money both from supporters and via various kinds of criminal activities.

Over the last few months, Western officials have begun to focus on the problems these foreign jihadists represent in Syria. An early warning came from the UK Foreign Secretary William Hague, who speaking at the RUSI conference on February 14, 2013, referred to Syria as an "acute case" and "the number one destination for jihadists anywhere in the world today." Furthermore, he said, the jihadists "may not pose a threat to us when they first go to Syria, but if they survive some may return ideologically hardened and with experience of weapons and explosives" (Royal United Services Institute 2013). Similar statements then came from Gilles de Kerchove, the EU CT coordinator; Michael Peirce, the Assistant Director, Canadian Security and Intelligence Service; Lieutenant-General Kjell Grandhagen, head of the Norwegian Intelligence Service; Hans-Peter Friedrich, the German Interior Minister; and Hans-Georg Maassen, the head of the German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Bell 2013; Gebauer & Medick 2013). And following these comments, Western countries sought to tighten control over their nationals' travel to Syria (e.g. Netherlands Ministry of Justice & Security 2013).

The situation with regard to jihadists from the former Soviet republics is different. Most of the jihadists coming from that region are not amateur fighters as is the case with the Europeans, but rather seasoned fighters in the Chechen war and other conflicts. Chechens have been prominent in Syria since at least the summer of 2012. Their exact number is unknown, but it appears that they have assumed control of a group calling itself the *Kataib al-Muhajireen* or "Battalions of Émigrés." In November 2012, Doku Umarov, the emir of *Imarat Kavkaz*, endorsed the creation

of the unit and praised the mujahidin in Syria, as well as the fighters from the Caucasus. Both Abu Omar al-Shishani, the leader of the KM, who reportedly comes from the Pankisi Gorge area in Georgia, and his deputy Abu Abdurrahman, an ethnic Chechen killed in action in April 2013, had ties to Umarov's group. However, the ethnic composition of the Battalions of Émigrés is not limited to Chechens and other North Caucasians, but includes Azeris, Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, as well as people from Middle Volga, some ethnic Russian converts to Islam, and Turks (for more on the KM / JMA, see Long War Journal 2013; Roggio 2013). The group uses Russian as its *lingua franca*.

On March 26, 2013 the battalions merged with some indigenous jihadist outfits, including *Kataib Khattab* and *Jaish Muhammad*, into the *Jaish al-Muhajireen wal-Ansar* or the Army of Émigrés and Supporters, under the command of Abu Omar al-Shishani (Batal 2013). That merger suggests a disturbing trend, one reminiscent of Afghanistan when foreign volunteers in the late 1980s joined local people to establish a "firm base." It is worth noting that the Arabic for this concept is "qaeda," which has become infamous because of Al Qaeda.

In addition to this group, an Azerbaijani Jamaat under command of Abu Yahya al-Azeri, has emerged, even as some ethnic Azerbaijanis are fighting on behalf of the Asad regime (Kavkazcenter.com 2013). There are also Central Asian groups, in particular involving Kyrgyz citizens (Blua & Ashakeeva 2013). And at the end of May 2013 there were reports on jihadist sites referring to the existence of the "Crimean Tartars' Battalion" led by a certain Abdul Karim. [1] Turkey is believed to be a main entry point for the foreign jihadists in Syria (Boeke & Weggemans 2013).

There are a number of motivations that "pull" people out of home environment to the battle zones. Religious zeal, extremist ideologies and related prejudices and resentments are likely to top the list. In addition, a search of identity and a "need to belong" create a special subgroup within pulling drivers' category. Friendship and family connections are important, and there are many examples of people volunteered to fight in Syria after being radicalized by their hardcore friends or next-to-kin. An additional factor is what might be called the "bleeding heart syndrome." For instance, Yusuf Toprakkaya, a.k.a. Abu Waleed, an Australian jihadist of Turkish descent, has been "pulled out" to Syria, where he was eventually killed, by the TV-images of the government forces' atrocities against the civilians (Shelton 2013a). Given that, the Internet, Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube have become a force multiplier for the jihadists.

In addition, there are several "push" factors as well. Being an alienated, disenfranchised and (or) uprooted person with modest life perspectives often means not much left to lose. The Syrian-type war is viewed by many such people as a window of opportunity of altering their ways of life by people beaten down. The security environment in the countries and areas of origin of many FJs makes them looking for favorable conditions to wage jihad. Strict military and security control imposed by governments in places like Chechnya, Uzbekistan or Xinjiang, or lethal drones in the sky over Waziristan are narrowing window for overt insurgent warfare, unlike in Syria where vast areas are already out of the regime's power.

Many foreign fighters coming to Syria are not necessarily affiliated with the hardcore Islamist outfits. Some are linked with the "moderate" opposition forces, such as the FSA (Shelton 2013b). The Syrian battlefield, however, is increasingly dominated by Al Qaeda groups boosting the status and attractiveness of radical groups and

threatening to spark more conflicts elsewhere (Hashim 2013). Such groups thus become an alternative explanation for why the resolution of the Syrian conflict is likely to be so difficult and why that in turn threatens neighboring countries and those further afield.

Many analysts are already calling the foreign jihadists of Syria the Fourth Jihadist Generation (Gunaratna 2012). The first generation was initiated in the 80s in Afghanistan, while the second—in the 1990s again—appeared in Afghanistan, also Bosnia, Chechnya and some other places. The third jihad of the 2000s already began on the ground in Afghanistan and Pakistan and internationally in the virtual world. And with Al Qaeda having abandoned its centralized system in recent years, the Syrian war is becoming a new fourth generation.

The “Syrian Alumni” will likely become the core of this generation. It will be centered on radical narratives, networking, operational connections, and expertise from the current conflict. Its members are unlikely to mount another 911 attack, but more violence of the kind seen in Toulouse, Boston, and Woolwich are likely. Such actions would clearly conform to the strategic vision of Abu Musab al-Suri, the Al Qaeda theoretician who had argued the case for the need to make the West bleeding through multiple minor blows (Black 2006).

If Al Qaeda affiliates gain control over parts of Syria or at the vicinity, the imported Syrian jihad will quickly be exported to other countries. As King Abdullah II of Jordan said in Davos this year, “The new Taliban we are going to have to deal with will be in Syria” (Dickey 2013). This danger needs to be more widely recognized, and governments east and west need to focus greater attention on it, focusing on the groups involved in each of their countries, the Turkish pathway, and Syria as a radicalizing center. If that is done, there is a chance of containing the new generation of jihadists; it isn’t, the future ahead looks extremely bleak.

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Notes

[1] See *FiSyria* (in Russian), 29 May 2013, at <http://fisyria.com/?p=477> (accessed 29 May 2013).

A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

President Ilham Aliyev tells the ambassadors in Baku from Islamic countries that the Islamic world is ever more united (<http://news.day.az/politics/417165.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that Baku supports a meeting between the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/416353.html>).

Bayram Safarov, head of the Azerbaijani Community of Nagorno-Karabakh, says that the Azerbaijani army has sufficient forces not only to recover occupied Nagorno-Karabakh, but to "restore the borders of the country which existed a century ago" (<http://news.day.az/politics/417672.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

Richard Morningstar, US ambassador to Baku, says that he "thinks that the presidential elections in Azerbaijan will be carried out in a free and just manner" (<http://news.day.az/politics/419765.html>).

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu says that, "Turkey's problems with Armenia are connected with the occupation of Azerbaijani territories" (<http://news.day.az/politics/416576.html>).

Sergey Lebedev, executive secretary of the CIS, says that Azerbaijan's relations with the CIS are "pragmatic" (<http://news.day.az/politics/419065.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

15 August

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmed Davutoglu says that Ankara will do everything within its powers to promote a settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/422987.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that Armenia's continuing occupation of Azerbaijani territory is the main obstacle to the expansion of regional cooperation (<http://news.day.az/politics/422924.html>).

14 August

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Valery Vakulchik, chairman of the Belorussian KGB (<http://news.day.az/politics/422842.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives his Kyrgyzstan counterpart, Erlan Abdyldayev (<http://news.day.az/politics/422826.html>).

Azerbaijan hosts the Third Summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Language Countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/422826.html>).

Azerbaijan hosts the youth wing of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (<http://news.day.az/politics/422622.html>).

The Panamanian parliament adopts a resolution criticizing Armenia for its continuing occupation of Azerbaijani territory (<http://news.day.az/politics/422829.html>).

Ikram Mollah Masud, Pakistan's ambassador to Baku, says that Pakistani-Azerbaijani ties are close and getting better (<http://news.day.az/politics/422646.html>).

13 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin (<http://news.day.az/politics/422554.html>).

Farhad Mammadov, director of the Presidential Center for Strategic Research, says that Armenia has always proved to be an unreliable and unpredictable partner for those who seek to cooperate with it (<http://news.day.az/politics/422429.html>).

The office of Catherine Ashton, the EU foreign minister, says that the EU and Azerbaijan are launching talks on airspace (<http://news.day.az/politics/422546.html>).

12 August

President Ilham Aliyev names Adysh Mammadov ambassador to Stockholm

(<http://news.day.az/politics/422344.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev names Fahraddin Mirzoyev honorary consul in Karlovy Vary (<http://news.day.az/politics/422344.html>).

Roland Kobia, EU representative to Baku, says that Azerbaijan is a partner of Europe, which makes its own decisions (<http://news.day.az/politics/422160.html>).

The Ukrainian foreign ministry recommends that Ukrainian citizens not visit Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://news.day.az/politics/422322.html>).

Tancred Schipanski, a deputy in the German Bundestag, says that Nagorno-Karabakh is a constituent part of Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/422298.html>).

The Russian Caspian Flotilla visits Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/422268.html>).

11 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letti (<http://news.day.az/politics/422094.html>).

10 August

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev receives Baek Seung Joo, the Republic of Korea's deputy defense minister (<http://news.day.az/politics/421985.html>).

Aydyn Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenia's efforts to blacken the reputation of Azerbaijan have completely failed (<http://news.day.az/politics/421969.html>).

9 August

Vahid Ahmadov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenia is condemned to collapse by its own policies (<http://news.day.az/politics/421621.html>).

Asef Hajiyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenia has become "the appendicitis of Europe" (<http://news.day.az/politics/421642.html>).

8 August

President Ilham Aliyev says that Azerbaijan is known around the world as a strong state (<http://news.day.az/politics/421402.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets in New York with his counterparts from Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Cuba, Morocco, Argentina and Uruguay (<http://news.day.az/politics/421663.html>).

7 August

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov tells the UN Security Council that its members are responsible for maintaining peace and resolving conflicts like the one concerning Armenia's occupation of Azerbaijani territories

(<http://news.day.az/politics/421380.html>).

A group of Hungarian intellectuals call on Budapest to expel Renatas Juska, Lithuania's ambassador to Budapest, after the publication of reports about his telephone comments on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/421375.html>).

The Israeli-Azerbaijani Chamber of Commerce begins to function (<http://news.day.az/economy/421342.html>).

6 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives the letters of credence of incoming German ambassador Heydrun Temple (<http://news.day.az/politics/421141.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev meets with Chuck Hagel, his US counterpart, in Washington (<http://news.day.az/politics/420990.html>).

Defense Industry Minister Yaver Jamalov receives Boris Obnosov, head of Russia's Tactic Missile Arms corporation (<http://news.day.az/politics/421085.html>).

The Foreign Ministry expresses the hope that the OSCE Minsk Group will become more active now that a new US co-chair has been appointed (<http://news.day.az/politics/421062.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that anyone who does visit the occupied territories without Baku's permission can apply for removal from the country's black list (<http://news.day.az/politics/421057.html>).

Azerbaijan now is represented in the expert committee of the UN committee on tax policy relations (<http://news.day.az/economy/421125.html>).

James Warlick is appointed by US Secretary of State John Kerry to be the US co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group (<http://news.day.az/politics/420989.html>).

5 August

Ogtay Asadov, speaker of the Milli Majlis, meets with Iran President Hasan Rowhani (<http://news.day.az/politics/420967.html>).

Hasan Mammadzade, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Vilnius, says that the official position of Lithuania on Nagorno-Karabakh corresponds to that of Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/420863.html>).

Zahid Orudzh, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Azerbaijan and Turkey are actively involved in creating a unified army (<http://news.day.az/politics/420816.html>).

Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė says that media reports about the telephonic conversations of Lithuanian ambassadors about Nagorno-Karabakh are a provocation (<http://news.day.az/politics/420814.html>).

2 August

The Foreign Ministry publishes an updated list of those who are persona non grata and will not be admitted to Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/420484.html>).

Arturas Jurauskas, Lithuania's ambassador to Baku, announces that he is departing his post after the recent controversy, a step both the Azerbaijani and Lithuanian foreign ministries say they respect (<http://news.day.az/politics/420485.html>).

Tancred Schipanski, a member of the German Bundestag, says Berlin will do what it can to promote a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/420331.html>).

1 August

The Presidential Administration says that media reports that President Ilham Aliyev is about to go to Moscow are not true (<http://news.day.az/politics/420163.html>).

Emergency Situations Minister Kamaladdin Heydarov visits Tbilisi to discuss expanding cooperation with Georgian officials (<http://news.day.az/politics/420078.html>).

Elmira Suleymanova, Azerbaijan's ombudsman, receives Vladimir Shkolnikov, chief advisor on human rights, at the South Caucasus Office of the UN Human Rights organization (<http://news.day.az/society/420176.html>).

Fuad Muradov, head of the Azerbaijani-Lithuanian Interparliamentary Group, says that the Armenian lobby is seeking to drive a wedge between Baku and Vilnius (<http://news.day.az/politics/420157.html>).

Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius says that a reported telephone call from his ministry about Nagorno-Karabakh is a provocation and that he has ordered an investigation (<http://news.day.az/politics/420089.html>).

Richard Morningstar, US ambassador to Baku, hosts an iftar. At the session, Allahshukur Pashazade, sheikh-ul-Islam and head of the Administration of the Muslims of the Caucasus says that Azerbaijan is known to the world as a tolerant country (<http://news.day.az/politics/420185.html> and <http://news.day.az/politics/420179.html>).

A committee of the Columbian parliament approves a resolution condemning Armenia for its continuing occupation of Azerbaijani territory and for acts of genocide at Khojaly (<http://news.day.az/politics/420162.html>).

31 July

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives incoming German Ambassador Heydrun Temple (<http://news.day.az/politics/419866.html>).

Richard Morningstar, US ambassador to Baku, says that he "thinks that the presidential elections in Azerbaijan will be carried out in a free and just manner" (<http://news.day.az/politics/419765.html>).

Teymuraz Sharashenidze, Georgian ambassador to Baku, says that deepening relations with Azerbaijan is a strategic priority for Georgia

(<http://news.day.az/politics/419679.html>).

Mohsun Pakayin, Iranian ambassador to Baku, says that Iran and Azerbaijan cooperate fully in using the waters of the Araz river and Lake Urmiya (<http://news.day.az/politics/419693.html>).

Mohsun Pakiyin, Iranian ambassador to Baku, says that Iran has a draft proposal for resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/419684.html>).

30 July

Nazim Ibrahimov, chairman of the State Committee for Work with the Diaspora, says that Azerbaijanis in Lithuania have called on the Lithuanian parliament to disband the friendship group with Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://news.day.az/politics/419485.html>).

Azerbaijan as chair of the UN Security Council proposes and the Security Council approves a declaration condemning the attack on the Turkish embassy in Somalia (<http://news.day.az/politics/419566.html>).

The Congress of Azerbaijanis of Europe calls on the European Parliament to condemn Armenia for its treatment of Moldovan ombudsman Aurelia Grigoriu (<http://news.day.az/politics/419459.html>).

Kai Wegener, a deputy in Germany's Bundestag, says that Armenia must withdraw its forces from the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/419444.html>).

29 July

Leonid Kozhara, Ukrainian foreign minister and OSCE chairman in office, says that Kyiv will work as hard as possible to solve "frozen conflicts" like the one between Azerbaijan and Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/419214.html>).

Sergey Lebedev, executive secretary of the CIS, says that Azerbaijan's relations with the CIS are "pragmatic" (<http://news.day.az/politics/419065.html>).

Koray Targay, head of the OSCE Baku Office, says that the change in the title of his office has not affected its operations (<http://news.day.az/politics/419050.html>).

28 July

The Foreign Ministry condemns the attack on the Turkish embassy in Somalia (<http://news.day.az/politics/418942.html>).

Polad Bulbuloglu, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Moscow, says that "the authority of Azerbaijan is growing with each passing day" (<http://news.day.az/culture/418863.html>).

27 July

The Foreign Ministry says that the change in the title of the OSCE office in Baku does not affect Azerbaijan's relations with the OSCE as a whole (<http://news.day.az/politics/418800.html>).

Elin Suleymanov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Washington, takes part in iftars at the White House and at the State Department (<http://news.day.az/politics/418717.html>).

Iosuf Halacoglu, a member of Turkey's Grand National Assembly, says that, "the Turkic ethnos must be the dominant one in the Middle East and in the Caucasus" (<http://news.day.az/politics/418840.html>).

26 July

President Ilham Aliyev receives Philippe Lefort, the EU's special representative for the South Caucasus (<http://news.day.az/politics/418557.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that all issues concerning the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict can be resolved once Armenia withdraws its forces from the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/418688.html>).

Leonid Kozhara, Ukrainian foreign minister and OSCE chairman-in-office, welcomes Baku's decision on the office of that organization in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/418694.html>).

Heydrun Temple, incoming Germany ambassador to Baku, says that she considers her goal to be the further rapprochement of the two countries and the intensification of their economic and cultural ties (<http://news.day.az/politics/418599.html>).

25 July

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva says that, "international society is displaying great interest in Azerbaijani culture" (<http://news.day.az/politics/418071.html>).

Aurelia Grigoriu, Moldovan ombudsman, says she has no regrets about her statement about the occupied territories while she was in Yerevan (<http://news.day.az/politics/418091.html>).

24 July

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with his French counterpart Laurent Fabius (<http://news.day.az/politics/418008.html>).

Siyavush Novruzov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "naturally there exist pro-Armenian forces" within Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/418027.html>).

23 July

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that Baku is interested in equal partnership relations with the European Union and welcomes talks on simplifying the visa regime between the EU and Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/417640.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with his Ukrainian counterpart, Leonid Kozhara (<http://news.day.az/politics/417593.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that despite the closure of the Azerbaijani embassy in

Damascus, Baku is seeking to provide consular assistance to Azerbaijanis in Syria (<http://news.day.az/politics/417741.html>).

Three additional US congressmen join the Azerbaijan Working Group, bringing that body's total membership to 49 (<http://news.day.az/politics/417753.html>).

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will not be sending observers for the presidential election in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/417700.html>).

22 July

Buran Kuzu, a deputy of Turkey's Grand National Assembly, says that, "Armenia conducted a genocide against Azerbaijani Turks" (<http://news.day.az/politics/417506.html>).

20 July

President Ilham Aliyev tells the ambassadors in Baku from Islamic countries that the Islamic world is ever more united (<http://news.day.az/politics/417165.html>).

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva meets with Valerie Fourneyron, French Minister for Sport, Youth, Popular Education and Associative Life (<http://news.day.az/politics/417013.html>).

Mohsun Pakayin, Iran's ambassador to Baku, says that Azerbaijan "understands" Iran's "good intentions" on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/417146.html>).

19 July

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva participates in a session at UNESCO headquarters in Paris on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Azerbaijan's membership in that body (<http://news.day.az/politics/416777.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that, "official Baku is dissatisfied with the activity of the OSCE Minsk Group" (<http://news.day.az/politics/416998.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Baku views all visits to the occupied territories without its permission to be illegal (<http://news.day.az/politics/416990.html>).

The Assembly of Friends of Azerbaijan hosts a conference in Washington on the "Southern Gas Corridor and Its Role in Guaranteeing European Energy Security" (<http://news.day.az/economy/416951.html>).

Turkish Education Minister Nabi Avci says that the Turkic-language countries are successfully carrying out a program of creating a single Turkic language (<http://news.day.az/society/416811.html>).

The legislature of the US state of Hawaii passes a resolution stressing that ties between the United States and Azerbaijan are very important and that Azerbaijan's contribution to international energy security is extremely significant (<http://news.day.az/politics/416839.html>).

18 July

President Ilham Aliyev receives outgoing German ambassador Herbert Quelle on the occasion of the latter's completion of his assignment in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/416696.html>).

Novruz Mammadov, head of the foreign relations department of the Presidential Administration, releases a new book, "Global Policy: Threats, Challenges and Hopes" (<http://news.day.az/politics/416508.html>).

A Milli Majlis delegation led by Samad Seyidov meets with members of the US Congress (<http://news.day.az/politics/416549.html>).

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu says that, "the main obstacle to the establishment of the Caucasus Platform are the frozen conflicts in the Caucasus" (<http://news.day.az/politics/416576.html>).

Jens Spahn, a member of the German Bundestag, says that decisions by the UN are sufficient for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/416687.html>).

17 July

President Ilham Aliyev receives Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu (<http://news.day.az/politics/416421.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives the letters of credence of incoming Swiss ambassador to Baku, Pascual Aebischer (<http://news.day.az/politics/416424.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that talks to end the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will not make real progress until Armenia withdraws its forces from Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/416368.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that Baku supports a meeting between the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/416353.html>).

Novruz Mammadov, head of the foreign relations department of the Presidential Administration, releases a new book, "Foreign Policy: Realities and a View toward the Future" (<http://news.day.az/politics/416232.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that the US Helsinki Commission briefing on Azerbaijani elections was informal and does not reflect the state of relations between Baku and Washington (<http://news.day.az/politics/416487.html>).

The Azerbaijani-German working group on trade and investment meets in Berlin (<http://news.day.az/economy/417500.html>).

16 July

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with Federico Major, former UNESCO director general, who says that, "Azerbaijan as a poly-cultural and tolerant state is an example for the world" (<http://news.day.az/politics/416192.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that the international community should exert more efforts to building trust between the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://news.day.az/politics/415948.html>).

Elin Suleymanov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Washington, meets with Kaprisha Penavik, chief of protocol at the US Department of State (<http://news.day.az/politics/416010.html>).

Mazahir Panahov, chairman of the Central Elections Commission, visits Budapest to take part in the Association of Organizers of Elections in the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe (<http://news.day.az/society/416995.html>).

Fuad Muradov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Freedom House's positive comments on Armenia should not be taken seriously (<http://news.day.az/politics/416123.html>).

Azerbaijan and Turkey begin a joint military exercise (<http://news.day.az/politics/416151.html>).

Carlos Dante Riva, Argentina's ambassador to Baku, says that relations between Argentina and Azerbaijan have a glorious future (<http://news.day.az/politics/416049.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.