



Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy
School of International Affairs and Business

**AZERBAIJAN IN THE WORLD
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**AZERBAIJAN IN THE WORLD:
REVISITING 2012 AND LOOKING FORWARD TO 2013**

As in the past, Azerbaijan in the World once again has surveyed officials and experts on the most important foreign policy developments of the past year. The previous issue featured the reactions of Azerbaijanis. What follows are the reactions of American, Georgian and Russian observers of the Azerbaijani scene.

Azerbaijan in the World: What do you see as Azerbaijan's chief foreign policy achievements during 2012?

Tedo Japaridze, Amb [Chairman, Foreign Relations Committee, Parliament of

Georgia]: Some decisive steps taken in the oil and gas sector's development probably form the short answer. A longer answer is that Azerbaijan has managed to keep itself out of the headlines in a region that offers too many opportunities for sensational news.

Sergey Markedonov [Visiting Fellow, Russia and Eurasia Program, Centre for Strategic and International Studies]: The past year was full of a variety of events. It began with Baku's serious claim for, and a jump into, its special place in the international system. At the beginning of 2012, the representatives of Azerbaijan took part in meetings of the UN Security Council as the non-permanent representative of the East European countries. Although the UN has suffered a decline in its role in the world, for many countries and especially for those who recently acquired independence, any participation in international structures is extremely important. And one could view this as Azerbaijan's success and the recognition of the country's (geo)political role in the East European region. At the same time, of course, this result reflects more than Baku's efforts in the last year; it is a product of the work it has engaged in for some time, especially given its far from simple competition with Slovenia for the position, the latter being a member of the European Union and NATO.

At the start of 2012, Azerbaijan's bilateral relations with Iran became rather tense. This reflected the rapidly developing processes across the Middle East and the confrontation of the West with Iran and the efforts of both Israel and Iran to secure themselves firm positions in the Caucasus region. Ultimately, however, Baku and Teheran were able to pull back from extreme positions and did not cross "red lines." That, too, must be counted as a success.

One can characterize Azerbaijani policy as a seesaw. That is, its course is directed at the preservation of constructive relations with various centers of power: with the West and with Russia, with Iran and with Turkey, with Israel and with the Palestinian Autonomy. However, in the current year, Baku achieved the most in the structuring of relations with the United States and the European Union. The situation around the Gabala radar station expressed a certain cooling of ties with Moscow. But to speak about some kind of failure in relations between Baku and Moscow is not yet appropriate.

One can also consider a definite success the visit of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev to Paris and his meeting with the new French President Francois Holland. Recently, France has begun to show greater activity in the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process, and efforts to develop relations with a country, which inside Azerbaijan has the reputation of being pro-Armenian, is important for Baku. That helps to explain why the negotiations, broken off by the Ramil Safarov affair, were renewed as quickly as they were.

Thomas Goltz [Montana State University and Author, *Azerbaijan Diary*, 1998]: Oddly, it may be the hosting of the Eurovision Song Contest.

AIW: What were the major shortcomings of Azerbaijan's foreign policy in 2012 and what lessons were to be learnt?

Japaridze: Azerbaijan does not take uncalculated risks. Diplomatic shortcomings may exist because of a failure to capitalize on opportunities, but it is hard to point to

a single example of that. One of the lessons of 2012 is that the economic and security landscape is changing rapidly; there are fewer independent variables in 2012 than there were in 2011. Initiative is a form of adjustment that is necessary in a changing environment. Inevitably, risks must be taken.

Markedonov: I would call the Safarov affair the main mistake of Azerbaijan's foreign policy in 2012. I understand the domestic political reasons why he was pardoned, but in foreign policy, it is typically a mistake to act guided by emotions alone. Losses from doing so are typically greater than gains.

Goltz: The Safarov extradition and pardon did not play well outside of Azerbaijan. The government could have been much more discreet in helping him back on his feet after the release from the Hungarian prison.

AIW: How do you assess progress made in the resolution of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 2012 and what do you see as the prospects for a settlement of the conflict in 2013?

Japaridze: On a symbolic level, things did not get better on that issue in 2012. In substantial terms, there was an entrenchment of the status quo, which in essence implies effective crisis management, rather than "stability." But there are no reasons to be optimistic for a settlement anytime soon. Given that instability is detrimental to the region, Baku, Tbilisi and Yerevan should seek a more regionally-based approach. Tbilisi is in no way a disinterested actor, and we can do more for each other during 2013 in this respect.

Markedonov: I cannot evaluate progress in the resolution of the conflict, for I do not see any. On the contrary, the negotiation process was stagnating as I mentioned above. It took much effort to get the parties back to a dialogue. It is difficult to expect progress, because the positions of Baku and Yerevan have not evolved and there is no willingness for compromises by either side. Moreover, the renewed Madrid Principles which diplomats and experts talk so much about only contain general frameworks for the resolution of the conflict. Many of its provisions, as all are aware, are contradictory and there are no mechanisms for putting them in place. In my view, that is what everyone should be focusing on. As Armenian-Turkish normalization has shown, the signing of some paper still does not mean real progress, because in order for the provisions of the document to work, there must be tangible instruments, which do not yet exist.

Goltz: I saw no progress worth mentioning; only greater saber-rattling on both sides, which, because I take the Azerbaijani position on this issue, I find entirely understandable.

AIW: How do you assess Azerbaijan's energy diplomacy in 2012, and what does the future hold for it?

Japaridze: Azerbaijan's energy security is founded on the principle of balanced engagement of state and non-state actors. Rather than being addicted to grand symbolic gestures and attention-capturing declarations, Baku's energy diplomacy has a stealth quality where hard and bottom-line oriented steps are followed by promises that can be delivered. We in Georgia have a lot to learn from Baku.

Baku is now paving the way for the Trans Anatolian Pipeline launch and is building up existing infrastructure. This benefits Tbilisi as well. Making the most of what can be done is not an exercise in stating the obvious. It is hard work. Azerbaijan's energy diplomacy is in this sense solid. There are no recipes for success, but saying that everything that could be done has been done is a great accomplishment. Azerbaijani prospects in the oil and gas sector look today better than they looked by the end of 2011. And things can get better yet in 2013, because stealth and effective measures are being taken toward that goal.

Markedonov: As in previous years, Baku sought to use its energy resources to advance its foreign policy interests. 2012 brought nothing new in that respect. In this regard, the declaration of Eric Rubin, a senior American official, is instructive, who suggested that, "America is interested in the continuation and increase of the pumping of oil in Azerbaijan and wants to support this." The main intrigue of the year was the conflict between Baku and the influential British company, BP, but in the last quarter of the year, this conflict was significantly reduced. Indeed, following the visit of Robert Dudley to Baku, President Aliyev spoke about "the solid cooperation" between Azerbaijan and BP.

Goltz: I congratulate SOCAR for continuing its push to become a truly global player.

AIW: How do you assess the evolving dynamics of Azerbaijan's relations with its immediate neighbors—Russia, Iran, and Turkey—over the last year and what is likely to develop over the next twelve months?

Japaridze: Each of these powers requires separate attention. Azerbaijan needs to engage all its neighbors, but also to maintain room for initiative. This is a fine balancing act that Azeri diplomacy has turned into an art. This virtue, however, is driven by necessity; hence there is little scope for failure.

Russia and Iran could be engaged by "a region," or by "an alliance" within the region, much more effectively. And Turkey can play a role in this regional approach. A greater degree of coordination with Tbilisi and Ankara is of the essence. High-level coordination must now "trickle down" to capacity-building and protocol. We need fine tuning of a relationship that works well.

Markedonov: As far as Azerbaijani-Turkish relations are concerned, no principle changes took place in 2012. And there is no reason to think there will be serious changes in 2013. The strategic partnership of the two countries continues and will continue. As concerns Iran, the beginning of 2012 was far from simple. A series of spy scandals and increasingly harsh rhetoric on both sides cast a shadow on that relationship. The Azerbaijani special services arrested several groups suspected of preparing terrorist acts and espionage in favor of Teheran. Further to that, Baku uncovered information about a network of 22 Iranian agents set up by the Corps of Guardians of the Islamic Revolution for use against Azerbaijan. In its turn, representatives of Tehran in February demanded that Baku stop the provocative actions of the Israeli special services against Iran on Azerbaijani territory. However, already in March, there was a meeting of the defense ministers of the two countries, which managed to put an end to this negative trend. And in October, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad visited Baku to take part in the 12th summit of the chiefs of state and heads of government of the Organization for Economic Cooperation (OEC).

I think that Azerbaijan-Iran relations, to a large extent, depend on the general dynamic around the Islamic Republic. If a military confrontation between Iran and Israel and/or the West does not take place, Baku does not have a great deal to worry about. If such a confrontation does occur, again, regardless of the position of Azerbaijan in such a hypothetical conflict, the situation will become difficult. Iran is concerned that Azerbaijani territory could be used by third parties for putting pressure on it. But it seems to me that the seesaw policy practiced by Baku will not lead Azerbaijan to be exclusively on one side or the other of this conflict. One should not forget that presidential elections will take place in Iran in 2013 just as they will in Azerbaijan. And although it is difficult to expect foreign policy surprises from the Iranian campaign, a change in the presidency there may play a constructive role, particularly if a more moderate and pragmatic politician replaces Ahmadinejad.

Russian-Azerbaijani relations evolved in 2012 under the shadow of the Gabala radar station. In this direction, Moscow had contradictory feelings. On the one hand, the military significance of the station has declined significantly as a result of the installation of a more advanced facility in Armavir on the territory of the Russian Federation itself. But on the other hand, a military facility on the territory of the former USSR is by default a symbol of political presence. And its loss is difficult for Moscow to take psychologically. It seems to me that if Baku does not celebrate the Russian exit as some kind of "victory over the empire" and does not begin to make this into a PR case, the problem will gradually recede into the background. We should also not forget that a vacuum is always filled somehow. It is a rhetorical question as to whether Baku needs the US and its allies to exploit the site for their geopolitical games around Iran.

Goltz: Azerbaijan's relations with immediate neighbors in 2012 were a successful continuation of what former US Ambassador Stanley Escudero likes to refer to as the Heydar Aliyev policy of "quadrilateral balance," meaning that Azerbaijan cannot afford to become either too close to or too far from any of its neighbors. I expect that policy to continue in 2013.

AIW: How do you assess the dynamics of Azerbaijan's relations with Georgia over the last year and what is likely to develop over the next twelve months, particularly in light of the change in government in the latter?

Japaridze: It is clear that between Tbilisi and Baku there is a long and established strategic relationship, which may well develop into an alliance. I have long backed the idea that a regionally grounded approach, of the type exemplified by Azerbaijani diplomatic culture, is the way forward for Georgia.

With Georgia's peaceful transfer of power, what can be expected is a less confrontational approach to foreign policy that will be bottom-line oriented. Much of our prospects for growth, be it in the energy sector, logistics, services, or tourism, largely depends upon concerted action with Baku. Moreover, our "frozen conflict issues" are structurally interwoven. We can do more for each other. We cannot afford to idly rest on our previous achievements. We must advance from noting "the potential" for shared growth and security enhancement to concrete action plans. In sum, there is work to be done, amongst partners who know how and have the will to work together. I hope Prime Minister Ivanishvili's visit to Azerbaijan and his talks with President Aliyev have given these relations a new dynamic.

The need for longer-term and multi-dimensional cooperation is clear. Time for planning and execution is not on our side given the volatility of the global and regional environment. There is a need for speedy action and foresight. 2013 must be a year of hard work.

Markedonov: Bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Georgia have gone through a complex period. However, this is the product in the first instance of domestic changes in Georgia, where, following the parliamentary elections, a situation of dual power emerged. There is a president who is losing his power and there is a prime minister who is attempting to come out on top. Don't forget either about the constitutional reforms and the elections of a president in Georgia in 2013. Under such conditions, the foreign policy of Georgia has become less well defined, because Bidzina Ivanishvili is trying to show that he can be a more effective leader than President Saakashvili has been. Among everything else, for example, the prime minister of Georgia wants to show that in its relations with Azerbaijan, his country must be an equal partner and not the one-to-be-led as was the case under Saakashvili. That explains Ivanishvili's declarations about the Baku-Akhalkalaki-Tbilisi-Kars railways and his proposal to unblock the Abkhaz section of the railroad. But it is also worth noting that all these declarations, which generated emotional reactions in Baku, were not realized. And in the course of his visit to Baku just before the new year, Ivanishvili himself adopted a more careful position and confirmed his support for a strategic partnership with the Caspian littoral state.

Goltz: This is difficult to predict, but I hope for continuity in the relationship between Azerbaijan and Georgia.

AIW: How do you assess the evolving dynamics of Azerbaijan's relations with the United States in 2012 and what does the year 2013 promise for the bilateral relations?

Japaridze: Washington's policy in the South Caucasus is in a transitional or "reflective" phase. Shifting attention from Eurasia to the Pacific, withdrawal from Afghanistan, contemplation on "a restart" of relations with Moscow, reflecting upon the Greater Middle East/Greater Caucasus positioning: these are the signs of an identity-building process that leaves little room for certainty.

There are certain independent variables concerning the scope of engagement in the South Caucasus, not least security challenges both *vis-a-vis* Iran and the more enduring questions of Russia and of the revitalization of the Silk Road. It should be remembered that that the hardware of the energy relationship between Europe and the South Caucasus owes much to Washington's initiative. By intent or default, Azerbaijan is always a point of departure when considering US "structural stakes" in the region.

It is clear that in a fluctuating security landscape, Washington can probably count on Baku's predictability as an actor in the region. The fundamentals of this relationship are in this sense solid. And the future of this relationship is promising, as far as Baku ensures effective and continuous communication.

Markedonov: This dynamic was on the whole positive for Azerbaijan. The United States and its allies are withdrawing their forces from Afghanistan. And already

today, Azerbaijan is playing an important role in the Afghan logistics of NATO. In December 2011, Azerbaijan replaced the Georgian airline company *Sky Georgia* in the shift of alliance forces from Europe to Afghanistan. In addition, energy policy is an important matter for the United States, as confirmed during the visit to Baku of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. One should note that the administration and the State Department have been much less critical of Azerbaijan on such issues as human rights. That is one of the ways Azerbaijan has a better position than does Georgia or do other countries of the post-Soviet space. American criticism of Azerbaijan was greatest over the Safarov affair, but that did not last long.

Goltz: I do not foresee any significant changes in the status quo, even though I do not really like that status quo: The United States will continue to take Azerbaijan for granted; and the Armenian lobby in the US will continue to make mischief. The presumed elevation of Senator John Kerry—one of the architects of Section 907—to secretary of state is a little disturbing. But so long as the US and its allies remain engaged in Afghanistan, at least the Pentagon will endeavor to keep relations on a steady keel.

AIW: How do you assess Azerbaijan's activities in the public diplomacy sector in 2012?

Japaridze: Baku has effectively projected the image of a capital that is at one and the same time ancient on one hand and young and dynamic with its own sense of glamour on the other, thanks in large part to the Eurovision context. As the latter's side effect, Baku—largely unknown to a European audience—has presented itself as a rapidly emerging transportation, energy, and logistics hub in Central Eurasia. This boost for Azerbaijan was a welcome one, but it provided a foundation for further work in public diplomacy.

Markedonov: I cannot name any clear achievements in that area, all the more so because public diplomacy has serious limitations in terms of resources and possibilities for having an influence on the situation.

Goltz: They may cost money, but continued sponsorship of visiting delegations from small member countries of the UN is a sound idea, as is the hosting of conferences such as the Second Annual International Baku Humanitarian Forum, which I had the pleasure to attend. All these things showcase Azerbaijan.

AIW: What specific challenges do you think Azerbaijan's foreign policy faces as the country moves to the year 2013 and what needs to be done to address those challenges?

Japaridze: Caught in between the Greater Caucasus and the Greater Middle East, Azerbaijan has as its greatest challenge ensuring that it will remain in a position to make its own choices. This is not always easy, but it is an art that Azerbaijani diplomacy has mastered. As a number of key regional and global stakeholders in the region have anything but an effectively predictable behavior these days, this art must continue to be developed. Vigilance is advisable as is remaining out of the headlines.

Another challenge is to detect and act upon opportunities that present themselves in each and every crises. Maintaining foresight in the midst of a changing geopolitical and economic environment is no small a challenge. Unfortunately, there is a limit to how calculated risks can be, when economic, diplomatic and security fundamentals seem to be changing. But, in the midst of a crisis, assuming the initiative is fundamental. The next year will require it.

Markedonov: Background factors will remain extremely important. The situation in the Middle East (Iran, Syria, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) is far from stable and therefore difficult to predict. Any intensification of these conflicts will have a negative role on the broader region. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict still remains unresolved, and—most importantly—the two sides are still unwilling for compromises. In this regard, for Baku it is extremely important not to give way to emotions and not to try to use this conflict for domestic political gains. And, of course, at the same time, it is important to use the various diplomatic ties it has in the West and in the East for lowering Baku’s geo-political risks—in the Caucasus, in the post-Soviet space as a whole, and in neighboring regions as well (e.g. Middle East).

Goltz: Aside from the possibility of a flash start of the Nagorno-Karabakh war, the most worrisome thing on the horizon is the situation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Israel, and how that may affect Azerbaijan.

**ARMENIA’S PLAN FOR AN AIRPORT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES
VIOLATES INTERNATIONAL LAW, UNDERMINES THE PEACE PROCESS,
AND OFFENDS MEMORY OF KHOJALY VICTIMS**

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Yerevan’s plan to open an airport at Khojaly in the occupied territories is a direct violation of international law as embodied in the Chicago Convention that governs air travel, undermines the peace process as many governments around the world have warned, and deeply offends the memory of the victims of the Khojaly tragedy in February 1992, which Azerbaijan and Azerbaijani diaspora groups are working hard to have declared a genocide by the international community.

These are all points Azerbaijani officials, including senior members of the Presidential Administration and Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov, have repeatedly made over the last month. (For these statements, see the Chronology of Azerbaijan Foreign Policy at the end of this issue of *Azerbaijan in the World*). But Armenia and its closest allies seem set to go ahead anyway, arguing as Yerevan does that an airport is necessary as a confidence-building measure for the Armenians of Karabakh or seeking to shift the blame for any problems to the Azerbaijanis by suggesting as Nikolay Bordyuzha, the secretary general of the Organization of the Collective Security Treaty, has done that Azerbaijan will “shoot down” even civilian planes that might make use of such a facility.

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov has provided a straightforward comment about the situation, its meaning for Baku and the international community, and Azerbaijan's response if Yerevan goes ahead with its plans in violation of international law, the interests of peace in the South Caucasus, and the memory of those who died at the hands of Armenian forces in Khojaly. [1]

Azerbaijan, Azimov told news outlets in Baku, "will not allow illegal flights to take place in its air space," but at the same time and "of course, Azerbaijan does not intend to shoot down civil aircraft." His remarks come in response to Bordyuzha's statement that Baku might do exactly that, a statement that Azimov suggested might be nothing more than a joke. Instead, the Azerbaijani diplomat noted that the Chicago Convention, which governs air traffic around the world, provides for a specific set of rules, "which are recognized by the Azerbaijani side," but which Armenia is ignoring.

No country can send its aircraft, civilian or not, over the territory of another without the latter's consent, Azimov pointed out. And if a country does so, then the country whose airspace is violated has the right to "force the violator to land at a specified airport." These rules have been in place for more than 50 years, and consequently it is "unprofessional" for anyone and especially a diplomat from a third country to suggest that Azerbaijan would shoot down violators flying to or from an airport in the Armenian-occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

The fundamental fact of the case is that Armenia's plans to open an airport in the occupied territories are a clear violation of international law. Moreover, Azimov says, "the opening of an illegal air corridor means the occupation of the air space" of Azerbaijan. Armenia has already occupied Azerbaijani territory and the opening of an air corridor would "add to this" the occupation of Azerbaijan's air space. But in addition, Azimov points out, these plans have "a political and ideological subtext," one that clearly offends the "memory of the Azerbaijani victims who died at Khojaly in 1992.

Azimov says that in his opinion Armenia has taken this step in the pursuit of "other goals," possibly including the torpedoing of talks between Azerbaijan and Armenia on the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. As US, French, and British diplomats have all pointed out, the Armenian plan to open the airport not only violates international law but creates new problems for the peace process. "Many governments," Azimov concludes, "have appealed to Armenia with calls to refrain from such actions," adds that he "hopes that Armenia will not take this step."

If Yerevan does, it should be clear to everyone who cares about international law and progress toward a settlement in the South Caucasus, and equally important, who does not.

Notes

[1] See <http://vestikavkaza.ru/news/Azerbaydzhan-ne-budet-sbivat-armyanskie-samolyety-no-saditsya-v-KHodzhal-y-ne-pozvolit.html> (accessed 04 February 2013).

THERE CAN BE NO BIGGER HUMANITARIAN CONCERN THAN REFUGEES

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In his interview to *News.az*, an Azerbaijani information portal, Dennis Sammut, executive director of LINKS, while admitting the imperfectness of the Minsk Process, puts the blame for the failure of the negotiation process on *both* sides of the conflict. [1] However, were he asked to justify his position, he would certainly find it difficult to explain what exactly the fault of the Azerbaijani side is, particularly given that it was Baku who has for the last 20 years waited for Armenia to honor the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, NATO, the OSCE, the OIC, and the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as numerous appeals by national parliaments and world leaders. It was also Baku who accepted the modified Madrid Principles and even agreed to the legally binding voting of the entire population of the Nagorno-Karabakh region at one point in future. Armenia, in turn, has rejected the Madrid Principles and, instead, responded by launching its program of settling non-Karabakhis in that region and establishing Armenian settlements in seven regions where there had never been any Armenians before.

Moreover, Baku has never raised—and perhaps, it should have—the issue of the repatriation of Azerbaijani refugees to their native places in Armenia and the establishment of a symmetrical autonomy for them akin to the one Armenians enjoyed and will enjoy in Azerbaijan's Nagorno-Karabakh region following the end of the latter's occupation by Yerevan. A good question would therefore be why Armenians should continue to live in Azerbaijan and still upgrade their autonomy further, indeed to the highest possible, while the expulsion of Azerbaijanis from Armenia is viewed as irreversible and a parallel autonomy for the former following their repatriation in Armenia is not even considered. Perhaps, Mr. Sammut could clarify his equalization of faults of the two sides.

Further, rejecting isolationism in the context of opening the airport, Mr. Sammut is fair to suggest that, "Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh feel like a community under siege and this does not help create an atmosphere of peace." However, speaking about the feelings of the Armenian Karabakhis and not saying a word about what it feels like living for twenty years in exile and being denied the right to return home—the plight of the Azerbaijani Karabakhis—does not help foreign observers, especially those with limited knowledge of the conflict, to better understand the complexity of the 20-year-long stand-off. After all, what is worse: to live quite comfortably at home, yet far from the nearest airport—a situation of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh today—or to live in temporary refugee shelters in inhumane conditions far from one's ancestral home, yet close to a functioning international airport—a situation in which Azerbaijani IDPs from Shusha and Khankendi have found themselves for the last two decades?

That is, unless the plight of Azerbaijani refugees and IDPs is understood and attended to by the international community, it will be difficult to understand and, consequently, end the conflict.

Finally, Mr. Sammut argues in favor of “the opening of the airport from a humanitarian perspective... under some kind of international supervision” and “purely for civilian traffic.” If we are to speak about the humanitarian content, it is certainly hard to disagree that in the Nagorno-Karabakh context there is no greater humanitarian concern than refugees and IDPs. It is entirely wrong to think, however, that the problem can be solved by addressing the feelings and concerns of one side only. Rather than limiting the scope of humanitarian attention to the airport—particularly doing so prior to the return of the Azerbaijani community to the region and thus making the Armenian Karabakhis the sole beneficiaries of the airport’s operation, something that would divide the two communities still more deeply—it would be more effective, in terms of confidence-building, to designate the entire region of Nagorno-Karabakh a zone of international humanitarian concern and help the Azerbaijanis who used to live there return to their homes under the very same kind of international supervision. Following the latter measures, all communications, including the airport, could be re-opened and used purely for civilian traffic, something that would have both communities benefit from the measure. The opening of the airport before and/or without the prior move to restore the bi-communal structure of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh will only invite the Armenian side to rejoice in their interpretation of the developments as a political victory of sorts that adds credence to their position regarding the status of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Indeed, one finds it hard to understand—still harder to accept—a humanitarianism whereby an airport is more important than a human and the right to fly is more important than the right to live at home.

Notes

[1] See <http://news.az/articles/politics/74739> (accessed 25 January 2013).

A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN’S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan’s Foreign Policy

President Ilham Aliyev says in Davos that, “the Azerbaijani economy is one of the most rapidly developing in the world” (<http://news.day.az/politics/379425.html>).

Ali Hasanov, Deputy Prime Minister, says that the OSCE Minsk Group must present more specific proposals for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 2013 (<http://news.day.az/politics/377979.html>).

Ali Ahmadov, deputy chairman and executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that Russian President Putin’s order about increasing Russian cooperation with Armenia in the military sphere does not represent a change and that he does

not want to believe that it is directed against Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/378318.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

Mohsun Pakayin, Iran's ambassador to Baku, says that Tehran does not consider that the Minsk Group has succeeded in its mission and that Iran is ready to offer its own proposals and serve as an intermediary in the talks between Azerbaijan and Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/380541.html>).

Pascual Munier, French ambassador to Baku, says that Paris "always wants to see Azerbaijan as a powerful, independent, tolerant and secular state" (<http://news.day.az/politics/377987.html>).

Richard Morningstar, US ambassador to Baku, says that US-Azerbaijani relations in 2012 were very good and that he is confident they will continue to be so in 2013 (<http://news.day.az/politics/379315.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

31 January

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov meets with Takeshi Hikihar, the special representative of the Japanese Foreign Ministry for the Caucasus, Central Asia and GUAM (<http://news.day.az/politics/381099.html>).

Hidayat Orudzhev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Bishkek, presents his letters of credence to Kyrgyzstan Minister of foreign Affairs Erlan Abdyldayev (<http://news.day.az/politics/380925.html>).

Ali Ahmadov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Akram Aylisli, who wrote "Stone Dreams" for a Russian publication, does not have the right to be called an Azerbaijani writer (<http://news.day.az/politics/381116.html>).

The US embassy in Baku says that incoming US Secretary of State John Kerry will continue the policies of President Barack Obama to promote peace and stability in the South Caucasus (<http://news.day.az/politics/380990.html>).

The Turkish Grand National Assembly's foreign relations committee ratifies an agreement with Azerbaijan on archive cooperation (<http://news.day.az/politics/381126.html>).

Four French senators distribute a letter to their colleagues expressing concern about the possibility that Armenia will open the Khojaly airport in violation of international law (<http://news.day.az/politics/381167.html>).

Katarina Reich, a member of the German Bundestag, says that it would be a violation of international law if the Armenians were to open the Khojaly airport (<http://news.day.az/politics/381139.html>).

30 January

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov tells Japanese Special Representative Takeshi Hikihara that Armenia's occupation of Azerbaijan's territory and its unconstructive position in talks are preventing the establishment of peace in the region (<http://news.day.az/politics/380858.html>).

Labor and Social Security Minister Fizuli Alakparov receives Mark Hereward, head of the Baku office of UNICEF (<http://news.day.az/society/380792.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Azerbaijan will act within the terms of the Chicago Convention if there are illegal flights over the occupied territory from the Khojaly airport (<http://news.day.az/politics/380861.html>).

Fahradin Gurbanov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to London, meets with Peter Robinson, the first minister of Northern Ireland, to discuss cooperation (<http://news.day.az/politics/380844.html>).

Deputy Interior Minister Zakir Hasanov signs an agreement with his Turkish and Kyrgyzstan colleagues on the creation of an Association of the Law Enforcement Organs of Military Type in Eurasia (<http://news.day.az/politics/380478.html>).

Aydin Aliyev, chairman of the State Customs Committee, says that Azerbaijan and Iran have agreed to increase the frequency of their cooperation meetings in the customs sphere (<http://news.day.az/politics/380736.html>).

Ramaz Najafov, head of the Defense ministry's military cooperation administration, meets with his Pakistani counterpart, Tariq Gafur, to discuss cooperation (<http://news.day.az/politics/380841.html>).

The State Commission for the Affairs of Prisoners, Hostages, and MIAs says that 553 Azerbaijanis died or were killed during Armenian captivity (<http://news.day.az/politics/380876.html>).

29 January

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets in Paris with Jean-Paul Ortiz, a foreign policy advisor to the French president (<http://news.day.az/politics/380452.html>).

Transportation Minister Javid Gurbanov meets with Georgia's economic development minister, Irakly Kvirikashvili to discuss construction of the Georgian segment of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway (<http://news.day.az/economy/380643.html>).

Education Minister Misir Mardanov signs a cooperation agreement with Choy Suk-In, Korea's ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/society/380633.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov meets with Afghan officials in Kabul to discuss expanding bilateral cooperation (<http://news.day.az/politics/380492.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, a Milli Majlis deputy and deputy executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that if quotations that have been published in Baku from Akram Aylisli are accurate, the author should apologize to the Azerbaijani people (<http://news.day.az/politics/380593.html>).

Asim Mollazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that political conditions in Armenia do not allow for a normal election in that country (<http://news.day.az/politics/380495.html>).

Azerbaijan's IDEA campaign hosts a seminar on the International Day of Mobilization Against Nuclear War (<http://news.day.az/politics/380564.html>).

Representatives of the Russian community of Azerbaijan issue a statement disputing media reports that Russians are mistreated in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/380629.html>).

Mohsun Pakayin, Iran's ambassador to Baku, says that Tehran does not consider that the Minsk Group has succeeded in its mission and that Iran is ready to offer its own proposals and serve as an intermediary in the talks between Azerbaijan and Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/380541.html>).

Alper Cosgun, Turkey's ambassador to Baku, says that Armenia's talk about reopening the Khojaly airport is intended to distract attention from Yerevan's continuing occupation of Azerbaijani territory (<http://news.day.az/politics/380496.html>).

Pascual Meunier, France's ambassador to Baku, says that media reports that the French president will visit Yerevan are "only speculation" (<http://news.day.az/politics/380455.html>).

Ioannis Metaxas, Greece's ambassador to Baku, says that Greek media are publishing ever more materials about Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/society/380579.html>).

28 January

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets in Paris with his Armenian counterpart Edvard Nalbandyan and the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (<http://news.day.az/politics/380366.html>).

Novruz Mammadov, deputy head of the Presidential Administration, says that official Baku hopes that Yerevan will not use the presidential campaign there to drag out further Nagorno-Karabakh talks and that instead the Armenian government will take immediate steps to resolve the conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/380327.html>).

Defense Industry Minister Yaver Jamalov receives Daniel Christiana Cobanu, Romania's ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/380372.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov says that Baku plans to increase assistance to Afghanistan for its counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism efforts (<http://news.day.az/politics/380268.html>).

Eynulla Madatli, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Kyiv, speaks at a reception devoted to the International Day of the Memory of Victims of the Holocaust about the Khojaly genocide (<http://news.day.az/politics/380360.html>).

The Azerbaijani embassy in Cairo says that no Azerbaijanis have suffered during the

recent disorders in Egypt (<http://news.day.az/politics/380299.html>).

Siyavush Novruzov and Mubariz Gurbanly, Milli Majlis deputies of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, receive a delegation of chiefs of staff of the US congressmen (<http://news.day.az/politics/380376.html>).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov discusses the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with his Belgian counterpart Didier Reinders (<http://news.day.az/politics/380346.html>).

Ramil Hasanov, secretary general of the Turkic Parliamentary Assembly, says that discussions have begun on the creation of a free trade zone among the Turkic language countries (<http://news.day.az/economy/380270.html>).

Bart Staes and Ulrich Lunacek, two Green deputies in the European Parliament, express concerns about the security at the Metzamor atomic power station in Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/380336.html>).

The senate of the US state of New Mexico adopts a resolution condemning the Khojaly tragedy (<http://news.day.az/politics/380900.html>).

26 January

Samad Seyidov, head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that PACE during its recent session showed that it is prepared for constructive cooperation with Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/380065.html>).

Ali Huseynli, deputy head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that one of the co-rapporteurs for PACE on Azerbaijan said that, "Armenia had occupied Azerbaijani territories" (<http://news.day.az/politics/380079.html>).

Ali Huseynli, deputy head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that Azerbaijani delegates have provided information to that body about the mistreatment of religious minorities in Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/380071.html>).

Ramil Hasanov, secretary general of the Turkic Parliamentary Assembly, says that discussions have begun on the creation of a free trade zone among the Turkic language countries (<http://news.day.az/economy/380270.html>).

25 January

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that Christopher Strasser, after his failures at PACE, should apologize to the Azerbaijani people or resign (<http://news.day.az/politics/379887.html>).

Elkhan Suleymanov, a member of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that Christopher Strasser mistakenly chose the path of confrontation rather than cooperation in working with Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/379891.html>).

Asef Hajiyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the US has decided to prohibit a group of Armenian citizens from entering the United States lest they engage in illegal activities (<http://news.day.az/politics/379765.html>).

Govhar Bakhshaliyeva, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that recent Armenian statements reflect the desperation of the leaders of that country (<http://news.day.az/politics/379755.html>).

Nasimi Aghayev, Azerbaijan's consul general in Los Angeles, speaks to the American Jewish Community meeting in San Francisco (<http://news.day.az/politics/379731.html>).

Baku hosts the first congress of heads of state structures responsible for the diasporas of the member states of the Council for Cooperation of the Turkic Language Countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/379721.html>).

Richard Morningstar, US ambassador to Baku, says that the issue of the airport in Nagorno-Karabakh undoubtedly will be discussed by the Azerbaijani and Armenian foreign ministers at their Paris meeting (<http://news.day.az/politics/379820.html>).

Amureli Grigoriu, the ombudsman of Moldova, expresses his support for Azerbaijan's understanding of Black January (<http://news.day.az/politics/379939.html>).

24 January

President Ilham Aliyev meets his Israeli counterpart Shimon Peres at Davos (<http://news.day.az/economy/379116.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev meets Suma Caarbarti, president of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, at Davos (<http://news.day.az/economy/379116.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev meets with Leonid Kuchma, the former president of Ukraine, at Davos (<http://news.day.az/economy/379116.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev meets with Swiss President Veli Maurer at Davos (<http://news.day.az/economy/379116.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev meets with Jin-En Kai, executive general director of the International Financial Corporation, at Davos (<http://news.day.az/economy/379116.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev meets with Karl-Henrich Svanberg, chairman of BP, at Davos (<http://news.day.az/economy/379116.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev meets with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu at Davos (<http://news.day.az/economy/379116.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev meets with Klaus Swab, the executive chairman of the World Economic Forum, who tells him that Baku will be the host of an April meeting of the Davos Economic Forum in April 2013 (<http://news.day.az/politics/379492.html>).

Fuad Alaskarov, head of the law enforcement department of the Presidential

Administration, says that it would be "a black day" for the Council of Europe if its parliamentary assembly adopted the Strasser report (<http://news.day.az/politics/379576.html>).

The Foreign Ministry condemns the terrorist attack on the gas complex in Algeria (<http://news.day.az/politics/379657.html>).

Defense Industry Minister Yaver Jamalov receives Ismail Alper Cosgun, Turkey's ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/379656.html>).

Elnur Sultanov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Brazilia, presents his letters of credence to Brazilian President Dilma Rouseff (<http://news.day.az/politics/379590.html>).

The Azerbaijani embassy in Brussels convinces Belgian tour firms not to take people to the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/379666.html>).

Samad Seyidov, head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says the defeat of the Strasser report on political prisoners in Azerbaijan is a victory for Azerbaijan and its president (<http://news.day.az/politics/379498.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, a Milli Majlis deputy and deputy executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that PACE will not approve the Strasser report about political prisoners in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/379697.html>).

Fuad Muradov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that it is completely unclear what Serzh Sargsyan will do if he is reelected president of Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/379530.html>).

Elmar Gasymov, rector of the Baku Higher Oil School, receives Daniel Christian Cobanu, Romania's ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/379620.html>).

Alekandr Mishchenko, Ukraine's ambassador to Baku, says that Kyiv as chairman in office of the OSCE will seek to move talks about the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict forward (<http://news.day.az/politics/379604.html>).

23 January

President Ilham Aliyev says in Davos that, "the Azerbaijani economy is one of the most rapidly developing in the world" (<http://news.day.az/politics/379425.html>).

The Communications and Information Technology Ministry says that 11 mobile phone companies have stopping roaming connections via Karabakh Telecom on the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/379383.html>).

Samad Seyidov, the head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that the report prepared by Christopher Strasser on Azerbaijan "harms European values" (<http://news.day.az/politics/379494.html>).

Ali Ahmadov, a Milli Majlis deputy and deputy chairman of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that, "the question of political prisoners is nothing other than a means of putting pressure on Azerbaijan by certain circles in Europe"

(<http://news.day.az/politics/379442.html>).

Azay Guliyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan's statements about Azerbaijan are simply election propaganda (<http://news.day.az/politics/379328.html>).

Adil Aliyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Baku's position concerning the OSCE Minsk Group is not as presented by the Armenian side (<http://news.day.az/politics/379340.html>).

Maia Christova, Bulgaria's ambassador to Baku, says that relations between Bulgaria and Azerbaijan are good and developing rapidly (<http://news.day.az/politics/379471.html>).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says that Russia will no longer use the Gabala radar station because Azerbaijan wanted too much rent (<http://news.day.az/politics/379355.html>).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says that Russia, along with the other OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries, will continue its efforts for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/379356.html>).

The Youth Forum of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation says that the Khojaly tragedy was "an act of genocide" and that Armenia is guilty of crimes against humanity (<http://news.day.az/politics/379432.html>).

Jean-Claude Minon, chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, hosts a meeting of the heads of the Azerbaijani and Armenian delegations to that body (<http://news.day.az/politics/379401.html>).

Maia Christova, Bulgaria's ambassador to Baku, says that relations between Bulgaria and Azerbaijan are good and developing rapidly (<http://news.day.az/politics/379471.html>).

Roland Kobia, head of the EU office in Baku, says with regard to the possible opening of an airport in the occupied territories that the EU countries oppose any actions, which might destabilize the situation in the South Caucasus (<http://news.day.az/politics/379428.html>).

Roland Kobia, head of the EU office in Baku, says that he hopes that there will be positive steps forward toward the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the near future (<http://news.day.az/economy/379434.html>).

The Turkish embassy in Baku says that bilateral trade between Azerbaijan and Turkey now exceeds four billion US dollars annually (<http://news.day.az/economy/379454.html>).

22 January

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva is named person of the year by Pakistan's Organization of Women Volunteers (<http://news.day.az/politics/379237.html>).

Tofiq Zulfugarov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Tallinn, publishes an article in

Postimees on Armenian lies about Azerbaijan
(<http://news.day.az/politics/379144.html>).

The Defense Ministry hosts officials of its Turkish counterpart to discuss expanding cooperation (<http://news.day.az/politics/379176.html>).

Jacques Forre, French co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, says that the Armenians have not submitted any request concerning the possible opening of the Khojaly airport (<http://news.day.az/politics/379234.html>).

FIFA President Joseph Blatter says that Baku's hosting of the world championship for women under 17 was an important milestone in the organization's history (<http://sport.day.az/football/20130122085658693.html>).

Diego Canera, state secretary of the Uruguayan president, says that Montevideo is interested in expanding cooperation with Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/379227.html>).

Herbert Quelle, Germany's ambassador to Baku, says that it is unacceptable and impermissible for any plane to fly over the territory of a country without its permission (<http://news.day.az/politics/379231.html>).

Pascual Monier, France's ambassador to Baku, says that Azerbaijan and Armenia must avoid any provocations such as those that might arise with the opening of the airport at Khojaly (<http://news.day.az/politics/379215.html>).

Mustafa Kabakci, a deputy in Turkey's Grand National Assembly, says that there cannot be any talk about the normalization of the Turkish-Armenian relations until Yerevan withdraws its forces from Azerbaijani territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/379171.html>).

Kyrgyzstan's economics ministry says that it would like Azerbaijan to take part in bidding for gold mining operations in that country (<http://news.day.az/economy/379233.html>).

21 January

President Ilham Aliyev receives Lord Sebastian Cow, director of the London Olympic Games (<http://news.day.az/politics/378912.html>).

Emergency Situations Minister Kamaladdin Heydarov receives Diego Canera, special representative of the president of Uruguay (<http://news.day.az/society/378979.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Azerbaijan's new rules on flights over its territory are completely consistent with the Chicago Convention despite what the Armenians say (<http://news.day.az/politics/379005.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that the Armenian defense ministry cannot conduct fight corruption, because its leader was one of those responsible for the Khojaly genocide (<http://news.day.az/politics/378810.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that even the Armenian leadership now recognizes that the

lack of a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is working against their country (<http://news.day.az/politics/379012.html>).

Polad Bulbuloglu, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Moscow, hosts a ceremony devoted to the 23rd anniversary of Black January (<http://news.day.az/politics/378850.html>).

Fuad Iskandarov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Brussels, hosts a meeting on the 23rd anniversary of Black January (<http://news.day.az/society/378840.html>).

Asef Hajiyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Russia will never make its decisions on the basis of what Armenia wants (<http://news.day.az/politics/378548.html>).

Elmar Gasymov, rector of the Baku Higher Oil School, receives Silvia Maier-Kaibic, Austria's ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/378952.html>).

Gunther Ottinger, EU commissar for energy issues, says he would be happy to live in Baku, which he considers "a synthesis of Moscow, Monte Carlo and Paris" (<http://news.day.az/politics/378944.html>).

Herbert Quelle, Germany's ambassador to Baku, says "tolerance in Azerbaijan is not an idea; it is a reality" which Azerbaijanis can be proud of (<http://news.day.az/politics/379019.html>).

Jean-Claude Minon, president of PACE, says that the OSCE Minsk Group is doing important work toward the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/378978.html>).

Joseph Migash, Slovakia's ambassador to Baku, says the international community must give a serious evaluation of Black January (<http://news.day.az/politics/378888.html>).

20 January

President Ilham Aliyev leads the nation in marking the 23rd anniversary of Black January (<http://news.day.az/politics/378731.html>).

Novruz Mammadov, head of the foreign relations department of the Presidential Administration, says that the opening of the Khojali airport would have a negative impact on the negotiating process (<http://news.day.az/politics/378742.html>).

Eynulla Madatli, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Kyiv, speaks to a meeting on the 23rd anniversary of Black January (<http://news.day.az/politics/378854.html>).

Isfandiyar Vahabzade, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Minsk, hosts a meeting on the 23rd anniversary of Black January (<http://news.day.az/politics/378946.html>).

Ziyafat Asgarov, vice speaker of the Milli Majlis, says that Baku has no intention of backing down in its opposition to the opening of the airport in the occupied territories or its willingness to use all possible means to prevent flights going to or leaving such an airport (<http://news.day.az/politics/378747.html>).

Mohsun Pakayin, Iran's ambassador to Baku, says that Tehran is ready to be a

mediator between Azerbaijan and Armenian concerning the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/378735.html>).

19 January

President Ilham Aliyev receives Diego Canera, special representative of the president of Uruguay (<http://news.day.az/politics/378689.html>).

Agriculture Minister Ismet Abasov meets with his Lithuanian counterpart Vilgilius Ukna to discuss cooperation (<http://news.day.az/economy/378708.html>).

Education Minister Misir Mardanov receives Gekhan Cetinsaya, president of Turkey's Higher Education Council (<http://news.day.az/society/378702.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Mahmoud Mammadgulyev says that Azerbaijan has now completed talks with China concerning Baku's application to join the World Trade Organization (<http://news.day.az/economy/378695.html>).

Hasan Mammadzade, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Vilnius, speaks on Black January to a session at the Hall of the Constitution in the Lithuanian capital (<http://news.day.az/society/378659.html>).

Surkhay Aliyev, charge d'affaires at the Azerbaijani embassy in Chisinau hosts a meeting in memory of Black January (<http://news.day.az/society/378683.html>).

18 January

President Ilham Aliyev confirms the TANAP agreement with Turkey (<http://news.day.az/politics/378520.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev confirms a series of agreements between Azerbaijan and Belarus (<http://news.day.az/politics/378553.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Antonius Broek, resident coordinator for Azerbaijan of the UN's development program (<http://news.day.az/politics/378571.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Kathlyn Hicks, an advisor to the US secretary of defense (<http://news.day.az/politics/378334.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Mahmoud Mammadgulyev says that Azerbaijan is restarting its talks with the European Commission on an association agreement (<http://news.day.az/politics/378590.html>).

Elin Suleymanov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Washington, hosts a meeting in memory of Black January (<http://news.day.az/society/378733.html>).

Farid Shafiyev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Ottawa, hosts a meeting on the 23rd anniversary of Black January (<http://news.day.az/politics/378342.html>).

Elkhan Gahraman, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Dubai, hosts a meeting on the 23rd anniversary of Black January (<http://news.day.az/politics/378508.html>).

Elnur Aslanov, head of the political analysis and information support department of the Presidential Administration, says that the Freedom House report on human rights and democracy is inaccurate and distorts the situation (<http://news.day.az/politics/378544.html>).

Bakhtiyar Sadykhov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Yerevan's talk about the need to open the Armenian-Turkish border so that Armenians can return from Syria is a political game (<http://news.day.az/politics/378346.html>).

The State Committee on Work with Religious Organizations says that assertions by the Open Doors Organization about limits on Christian communities in Azerbaijan are false (<http://news.day.az/politics/378455.html>).

Azerbaijani custom officials meet with their Russian counterparts to resolve problems with lines at the border (<http://news.day.az/politics/378551.html>).

The OSCE extends the mandate Andrzej Kasprzyk, personal representative of the OSCE chairman in office, for another year (<http://news.day.az/politics/378510.html>).

Aleksey Pushkov, chairman of the Russian Duma's foreign relations committee, says that Moscow will not support in the PACE the adoption of the Strasser report on political prisoners in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/378462.html>).

Gunther Ottinger, EU commissioner for energy, welcomes the ratification of the TANAP accords (<http://news.day.az/economy/378573.html>).

Matthew Bryza, former US ambassador to Baku, says that Azerbaijan has many legal means available to block the opening of an airport in the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/378528.html>).

17 January

President Ilham Aliyev names First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva head of the organizing committee for the 2015 European Games in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/378319.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Kathlyn Hicks, an advisor to the US secretary of defense (<http://news.day.az/politics/378224.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says in its summary report that Azerbaijan significantly strengthened its position in international affairs in 2012 (<http://news.day.az/society/378196.html>).

Ali Ahmadov, deputy chairman and executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that the Freedom House rankings are inaccurate and not objective (<http://news.day.az/politics/378310.html>).

Aydin Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Freedom House is violating international legal norms by describing occupied Nagorno-Karabakh as "partially free" (<http://news.day.az/politics/378231.html>).

The European Union supports the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group (<http://news.day.az/politics/378449.html>).

Turkish President Abdulla Gul confirms series of agreements with Azerbaijan, including those about TANAP (<http://news.day.az/politics/378133.html>).

Georgian Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili says in Yerevan that it will be difficult to solve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the near future (<http://news.day.az/politics/378217.html>).

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Leonid Kozhar, chairman-in-office of the OSCE, says that he is focusing on the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/378216.html>).

16 January

President Ilham Aliyev receives Fahd ibn Ali ad-Doseri, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Baku, on the completion of his service in the Azerbaijani capital (<http://news.day.az/politics/378098.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev names Rovshan Jamshidov Azerbaijan's ambassador to Canberra (<http://news.day.az/politics/378117.html>).

Prime Minister Arthur Rasi-zade receives Slovenian Prime Minister Yanez Yanshan (<http://news.day.az/politics/378122.html>).

Ali Hasanov, Vice Prime Minister, says that the OSCE Minsk Group must present more specific proposals for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 2013 (<http://news.day.az/politics/377979.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives incoming Tajikistan Ambassador Zokhir Saidov (<http://news.day.az/politics/378115.html>).

Interior Minister Ramil Usubov receives Antonius Broek, UN resident coordinator for Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/378096.html>).

Economic Development Minister Shahin Mustafayev receives Slovenian Prime Minister Yanez Yanshi who says that bilateral ties have great potential (<http://news.day.az/economy/378032.html>).

Shahin Abdullayev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Cairo, speaks about Azerbaijan's national liberation struggle and its conflict with Armenia in an interview on Egyptian satellite television (<http://news.day.az/politics/378646.html>).

Parviz Ismailzade, Azerbaijan's consul general in Dubai, tells Emir Said bin Sadr Al-Gasimi that Azerbaijan plans to expand cooperation with the UAE (<http://news.day.az/economy/377971.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, deputy executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that Baku hopes that Ukraine will be able to move the talks on the Nagorno-Karabakh forward during its chairmanship of the OSCE (<http://news.day.az/politics/377993.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Armenia's efforts to present itself as "an innocent victim" show that Yerevan is quite prepared to continue to crudely violate

international law (<http://news.day.az/politics/378094.html>).

The Defense Industry Ministry receives an Indonesian delegation headed by Marshall Eris Herrianton to discuss cooperation (<http://news.day.az/politics/378047.html>).

Aydin Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenia could not compete with Azerbaijan if military operations were to begin (<http://news.day.az/politics/378057.html>).

Rovshan Rzayev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that conditions in Armenia preclude honest elections (<http://news.day.az/politics/377910.html>).

Firuddin Nabiyev, head of the State Migration Service, receives Pascual Munier, French ambassador to Baku, who says that Paris "always wants to see Azerbaijan as a powerful, independent, tolerant and secular state" (<http://news.day.az/politics/377987.html>).

Elmar Gasymov, rector of the Baku Higher Oil School, receives Mario Baldi, Italy's ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/society/377998.html>).

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili recalls Tbilisi's ambassadors to Baku and to 14 other capitals (<http://news.day.az/politics/378034.html>).

The World Bank predicts that Azerbaijan's GDP will grow 4.2 percent in 2013 (<http://news.day.az/economy/378095.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.