



**AZERBAIJAN IN THE WORLD
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**AZERBAIJANI CULTURE IN DIASPORA:
A CONVERSATION WITH CHINGIZ ABASSOV**

Below is the seventh in the series of interviews Azerbaijan in the World has conducted with leading figures in the Azerbaijani diaspora on the state of Azerbaijani culture abroad and at home. This seventh discussion is with Chingiz Abassov, a distinguished Azerbaijani artist based in Helsinki, Finland. Mr. Abassov's web page is at www.abassovart.com.

Azerbaijan in the World: How did it happen that you become an artist? Was it a rational choice of conscious mind or a rather spontaneous pursuit of what you felt was your calling in life?

Chingiz Abassov: As far back as I can remember, I was always drawing and painting. The very process of creation was joyful and I would spend hours playing with paints, which my parents were kind enough to constantly supply. They also showed my pictures to Mural Nadzhafov, a professor of art history at the Polytechnic Institute, who—having seen the first products of my creation—strongly recommended that I be allowed to pursue an artistic career. My first step in that direction was to take art classes in Pioneer Palace in Baku. Overall and in many ways, the unfolding of the process of my artistic growth was a natural development. I quickly grew into it as if it were indeed my calling. As the time passed, I became ever more committed to art as the only career option I would wish to pursue. I then went to pursue artistic education at the Azimzade Art College in Baku, a place most of Azerbaijani artists received training. I then continued my studies at St. Petersburg's Mukhina Higher School of Art and Design (now known as the Stieglitz Academy of Art and Design), from which I graduated with honors diploma in Monumental Arts.

AIW: How has the subject matter of your art evolved and what has affected this evolution?

Abassov: Subject does indeed matter. It used to be all about national identity. It started in my years in Art College in Baku and grew stronger in St. Petersburg. Probably, Azerbaijani ancient miniature art and folk art had a greatest influence at that stage of my artistic career. My diploma work in St. Petersburg was the mural, the composition of which was based on stories from Azerbaijani folk tales. I still remember how much I enjoyed creating that composition and putting together all those characters and stories that the process of creation involved. After graduation, I continued to create the works based on Azerbaijani miniature art, but I began including more decorative and abstract elements. I guess it was natural for an artist of my generation in early post-Soviet years to search for national identity, trying to go back to the roots and thus shake off the influence of the dogmatic socialistic art of Soviet era. Unsurprisingly perhaps, camel emerged as an appealing subject for many artists to paint at the time. Whether it served as a symbol of revolt or nostalgia for the past to some or power or eastern mentality to others, to me it symbolized all of these combined together and I therefore did my share, too. (Indeed, I still keep in my studio one of the camels I created at the time, a painting I hold very dear.) Gradually, however, my interest moved beyond the limits of national identity and became more universal. Motherhood, passion, love—the entire range of sensual expressions—have since become the primary focus of my art. There were two sources of the influence underlying the transition in my art from pure national thematic to the more universal ones: the humanistic art of Renaissance and life itself. Michelangelo, whom I consider a greatest artist of all times, was my “hero” in youth. His greatest achievement of showing even tiniest human emotions through expression of body movements had impact on me as an artist. On the other hand, having an opportunity to travel allowed me to become acquainted with many cultures, an experience that eventually prompted me to conclude that—just as the Holy Quran has it—all people are a single nation. Indeed, whether we are Azerbaijani, Finnish, or American, we all are similar in our universal quest for happiness and love. Consequently, I would describe my art as cosmopolitan by its thematic basis, but strongly national by expression and implementation.

AIW: You mentioned Michelangelo as an important influence on you as an artist. Could you name any other individual artists, in Azerbaijan or abroad, who played a role in your artistic journey?

Abassov: There are at least two people I must mention in this respect. One is Tahir Salakhov, the famous Azerbaijani artist: the letter of recommendation he gave me enabled me to continue my artistic education at the Mukhina Higher School of Art and Design. And the second is Steven Garrett, a US-based British architect and former director of the J. Paul Getty Art Museum and Armand Hammer Art Center, whose review of my work helped me to obtain permanent resident status in the United States within the extraordinary talent category.

AIW: Where do you see your art going next?

Abassov: Currently, I am working on the series of works dedicated to Baku. In it, I intend to show both the ancient historical and modern sides of the city. I am also planning to publish in the United States the art album of these works, which will be my contribution to promoting Azerbaijan abroad. In addition to that, high quality prints will be made available through my website and other relevant channels for the world's consumption. I hope Azerbaijan's culture and tourism ministry and other relevant governmental agencies including our embassies will help me distribute these new works, for I believe my art can and should be used to promote Azerbaijan worldwide. I am also planning on staging an exhibition of my original works some time soon in the United States and, if that goes well, some other countries as well. The project is also meant as a gift to myself for my 50th birthday later this year.

AIW: Interesting. What is art for you then? That is, what is driving you in your work? Is it getting your paintings exhibited and sold or is it rather the very process of art creation?

Abassov: Art is a process of creation itself. Hence, it is this creation which drives an artist. The process of creation, in turn, is about the energy an artist communicates. It is the energy, which comes from the heart through the hand to the tip of the brush on the canvas and stays there in different colors, shapes and forms. Consequently, the more sincere an artist's intentions are, the more pure the energy (s)he communicates is, the more profound an impact the ultimate product has on the subconscious world of its audience is. If energy is the matter which never dies, one could argue, that is how artists immortalize themselves by transferring their energy onto canvas, marble or on any other materials. That said, I certainly would not like to diminish the importance of exhibiting and selling. As Picasso said, "If there is a room with paintings on the wall, but no single viewer, that means there is no paintings either." Besides, professional artists need the earnings from their art to be able to support their work further, lest they be prompted to pursue a "real job."

AIW: Which of your exhibitions do you consider a particular success and which of them is the most favorable memory you cherish?

Abassov: Over the last 20 years of my artistic career, I have participated in a wide variety of exhibits, including solo, group, regional, nationwide, retrospective exhibitions, art expos, biennial, art auctions, various mural projects, and the like. However, the one that stays in my memory was my solo "Twins" exhibit in Laguna Beach, California in 1994. That is, perhaps, because I had dedicated it to my two

newly born children, Sarah and Emil. All in all, I am very grateful that most of my exhibitions have proved successful and, as such, generated sales as well.

AIW: What do you see as your next challenge?

Abassov: As I work in the representational style and am by training and commitment a monumental artist, I would like to create several large-scale works dedicated to Azerbaijani history.

AIW: You are an Azerbaijani, yet you are based in Finland and normally are exhibited outside the place of your origins. And you mentioned that you see your art as both national and cosmopolitan. In what ways, then, do you think your art represents Azerbaijan and communicates Azerbaijani identity to the outside viewers and in what ways is it cosmopolitan?

Abassov: The last ten or so years, I have divided my time between my native country Azerbaijan, Finland, where my family lives, and the United States, where I have different art projects going on. As I mentioned earlier, I consider my art cosmopolitan by subject, but strongly national by its design. As such, I do certainly feel I represent Azerbaijan. For example, a few years ago I had my solo exhibition in Brussels. The opening reception was attended also by diplomatic representatives of Azerbaijani embassy in Belgium. The name of the exhibition was "Going Rio," theme being a Brazilian carnival, but as everyone noticed, the expressions, colors, temperament, and energy of these paintings were by no doubt purely Azerbaijani! That is what I think is ultimately the most important aspect in visual art—not what a viewer sees, but the way (s)he receives, on a subconscious level, the wave of energy the artist puts into his creation. Another example of my work that would be relevant to mention to this effect is a triptych "Madonna of XXI century," which was exhibited at the Florence Biennale in 2003 and later purchased by prominent German art collector and industrialist Reinhold Wurth. In the central panel, I painted Mother embracing the Child with the worry on her face for the future of her Child in this turbulent world. In the left section of the triptych, I painted the ancient town Gala near Baku with a Karabakh carpet on the foreground, the latter painted from the actually existing carpet woven by my great grandmother long time ago in Shusha. And on the right panel, I showed a serene winter landscape in Finland. The idea was to show how interconnected and interwoven different parts of the world are, including as expressed in universal concerns mothers in either corner of the world exhibit for their children. In addition to my own art, I have sought to promote Azerbaijan through the Finland-based EU-Azerbaijan Cultural Organization of which I am co-founder and chairman. Through it, I have organized a photographic exhibit on Shusha in Helsinki, an event that both started and ended with an image of *Khary Bulbul*, a flower that only grows in Shusha and is widely viewed as a symbol of Karabakh. And I helped organize the march in central streets of Helsinki in the memory of the Khojaly genocide.

AIW: Have there been instances of collaboration between yourself and other artists from Azerbaijan or indeed elsewhere?

Abassov: Several years ago I organized group exhibitions in Finland where I have invited my fellow Azerbaijani artists, who at that time lived in St. Petersburg. The exhibition of three Azerbaijani artists aroused the interest among the public and was well covered by media. Among many projects there was the one I remember most

clearly, which involved the preparation of a mural in Lompoc, a few hours drive north of Los Angeles. There I worked with a variety of artists from various backgrounds.

AIW: Have you ever engaged in any projects with any government agency in Azerbaijan? Have you ever had, or are you planning to have, your exhibition staged in Azerbaijan?

Abassov: In 2011 I was commissioned to design a 17 meters long wall relief for the interior of the new office building of SOCAR in Tbilisi, on the history of Azerbaijani oil. It is one of my works of which I can say that I am very satisfied with the result. As an Azerbaijani artist living and working mostly outside of Azerbaijan I feel an obligation to hold an exhibition in Azerbaijan soon.

AIW: The Azerbaijani government has promoted certain categories of culture and art, such as mugham. Do you feel that art is receiving its due?

Abassov: Our government has put great effort of promoting visual arts of Azerbaijan internationally and domestically as well. I had a very interesting conversation with Elin Suleymanov, currently our ambassador in Washington when he was consul general in Los Angeles. He greatly supported my idea that to be recognized in American art scene we have to have our own permanent art gallery in the United States.

AIW: More generally, what is your assessment of the current state of the artistic field in Azerbaijan and what do you think should be done to contribute to its further evolution? That is, what forms do you think the government's support for art could assume?

Abassov: In my opinion, increasing the numbers of galleries and other venues would be important, in that it would provide artists with greater opportunities to show their works. The current number of the art galleries is quite small. Consider this comparison: in tiny city Laguna Beach with population of near 30.000 people, there are more than hundred art galleries—ten times more than in Baku. I also back the idea of restarting classical art both in educational means and further promotion and support through Government art institutions such as Art Union.

AIW: The government's interest in mugham reflects, among other things, its effort to mould a post-Soviet model of Azerbaijani identity. In that, mugham represents a key component. Is there a way in which you believe art by Azerbaijani nationals could help in these efforts to craft a specifically Azerbaijani national identity?

Abassov: Each type of art has its own unique way to shape national identity. Our musical heritage mugham shaped our national identity for centuries and has direct profound impact on subconscious of every Azerbaijani regardless of where he lives in. I would say mugam is component of our soul; it is in our genes. As far as visual art is concerned, it can and should play a significant role in shaping national identity. The key thing is for it to become the part of everyday scene not only in big cities, but in rural places as well. At the time of Michelangelo, Florence, his hometown was independent state. Everyone who once visited this city can say the whole city is a museum and art can be seen everywhere. And no wonder that the great master always proudly declared, "I am Florentine!" If we are successful in promoting art in our country, all of those born there wherever they may live will say equally proudly "I am Azerbaijani!".

ON EASTERN AND WESTERN MUSIC IN AZERBAIJAN

Jeffrey Werbock
Chairman
Mugham Society of America

Azerbaijan sits on the edge of Eastern Europe and Western Asia and has an indigenous, traditional eastern style “art” music called *mugham*. Mugham is a core feature of the artistic creativity and native genius of the repertoire of the country’s art culture in general. But Azerbaijan is also home to western musical genres, from classical music to jazz, blues, rock and pop. Indeed, the country was the winner of Eurovision 2011 and hosted that competition the following year, attracting large numbers of Azerbaijani fans of pop music. Azerbaijan also plays host to a yearly jazz festival called Jazzerbaijan. Furthermore, one of the world’s greatest cello players and conductors of symphony orchestras was born and raised in Baku, Mstislav Rostropovich.

Azerbaijan thus being home to both “eastern” and “western” music styles and genre, the key distinction between the two is that the former is based on monophonia while the latter relies on polyphonic harmony. In monophonic music, the melody is composed in reference to one note, usually—but not exclusively—the tonic (first note) of the scale that the melody is played in. In polyphonic harmony, melodies are composed in reference to a chord or a chord progression. There is a significant difference between these two basic forms of music, not just structurally but also in terms of the experience of listening to them.

Neither is “better” than the other. Both forms of music have their own measures for what is great about the best expressions in their respective realms, but the same criteria for judging the greatness in one form may not be applicable in the other. The greatness in western music should be self-evident to those in the West, but the greatness in eastern music may need to be articulated.

In monophonic music, the melody is the whole event. There are no chords or chord progressions to frame the melody and serve as the basis for composing them. So the musicality of the musicians and all the creativity that goes into the playing of monophonic melodies must be invested in the artistic expression of the melodic line. Musical virtuosity is a universal concept, and virtuosity in monophonic music can be expressed in the complexity of the composition and the speed at which it can be cleanly executed. It can also be expressed in depth of feeling.

In eastern monophonic melodies, one can express a profound depth of feeling through the expression of only a few notes. The outer musical composition and the inner depth of feeling are not opposed to each other, but an overly complicated melody played at dizzyingly fast speeds does not lend itself to being a good vehicle for the depth of feeling that monophonic music uniquely expresses. Each interval should be given sufficient time to register, and the occasional bursts of speed should be reserved for small clusters of notes that were first played slowly enough so we can savor the depth of feeling in them.

Among the various forms of traditional indigenous musical cultures of the eastern world, there are two fundamental categories that musicologists have identified by the terms "folk music" and "art music." Folk music is played with a definite meter. It has a steady beat that is repeated throughout the composition. Art music does not have a definite meter. It is played without a steady beat and expresses an ambiance that calls to mind classical European opera.

The melodies in both art and folk versions of eastern traditional music follow what is called in musicology "staircase" construction; one note follows the other in a procession that resembles exercise scales. Exercise scales can be rather boring and repetitive, so the musical creativity of eastern musicians seeks to create interesting patterns in the otherwise straightforward melody of a simple exercise scale by altering the progression of the notes.

Perhaps the most significant way of altering the otherwise straightforward progression of a staircase-form melody is the unexpected ways that the notes can be clustered into distinct musical phrases. Especially in eastern art music, which is entirely meter-free, the clusters—or grouping of notes into short phrases—becomes a study in asymmetry. Instead of predictable, symmetrical clustering in even numbers of notes, the clustering is both even and odd, interspersed with pauses of varying duration. The music is thus rendered as an unpredictable unfolding of an otherwise simple melody, yet it must sound complete at the conclusion of the phrase, with nothing hanging in the air so to speak, waiting to be resolved.

Staircase melodies have the power to influence our state of mind that is not evoked by ordinary melodies which skip around. Music played in a series of tones beginning with the tonic, the Do of Do, Re, Mi, and proceeding "up" the scale, conveys the inexplicable feeling of being transported from one "place" to another. Depending on the number of notes selected from the possible number found within one octave, that feeling can be intensified or mitigated. Scales composed of seven notes relatively evenly distributed across the octave interval produce the most profound examples of the mystical sense of transport when played in the ordered sequence of Do, Re, Mi and so on, up to the octave Do.

I employ the word "mystical," because there is no explanation as to why listening to a series of musical tones will affect everyone the same way—making them feel transported—and one can only marvel at the inexplicability of the power of music to have such a profound effect. Not only does it make us feel transported, but it gives us a palpable sense that the first note in the series is "home" and the last note is the "destination" evoking an even more palpable sense of "arrival." Furthermore, when a musician plays that sequence in a scale and deliberately delays the sounding of the final note in the series, a profound sense of incompleteness dominates the mind of the listener and can even induce a state of true anguish until that last note is played.

We should stop and marvel at the power of music, a power that cannot be explained, at least not in normal terms, that (one), we feel transported, and (two), we feel anguish at being denied the expected sensation to "arrive" at the "destination" of that last note. In addition to those two inexplicable phenomena, there are a few other features of monophonic music we ought to know about. Thanks to the absence of chords, it is possible to play all the tonalities existing within the framework of the octave interval, not just the familiar twelve notes on the piano.

Researchers who measure what is called the "just noticeable difference" in all our sensory modalities determined that the untrained human ear is capable of distinguishing the difference in pitch between two notes that are only $1/84^{\text{th}}$ of an octave apart in frequency of vibration. Between every one of the 12 notes on the piano keyboard, there thus exists a veritable micro-octave of seven divisions that anyone is capable of hearing and responding to. Musicologists refer to the notes on these micro-octaves as microtones.

Eastern musicians have access to the 12 standard (in western terms) notes in an octave plus an additional 72 microtones. To the best of my knowledge, no musical composition exists which employs all the tones and audible microtones in a single composition. Usually, only a few or several select microtones are used in conjunction with a seven-tone scale to compose traditional eastern melodies.

There is something strange about microtones: unless the listener is convinced that the musician intended to play that microtone, it will sound "off," as if the musician had played out of tune. How is it possible that one and the same frequency of vibration will have two completely diametrically opposite effects on the listener, depending exclusively on how the listener feels about the musician's intent? But that is exactly what eastern musicians do every day. They deliberately play microtones, some of them so noticeably different from the "normal" tone nearby, with the intent to induce a specific effect. The intended effect is to increase the profoundness of the depth of feeling that monophonic music is especially good at inducing in an attentive listener.

Azerbaijani *Mugham*, like the related musical traditions in neighboring countries, makes extensive use of meter free, asymmetrical phrasing and heavy microtones to induce the most profound depth of feeling. The origins of this unique musical tradition are from (at least) two ancient sources. The first is ancient Egypt. The same people who built the great pyramids and invented a language from scratch that conveys a deeply spiritual philosophy also discovered the power of musical scales to induce extravagant states of mind, what we can call transcendence.

When Pythagoras studied sacred geometry in Egypt, he also discovered musical scales there. Exhibiting a strong preference for the neat geometry associated with the most harmonious intervals, Pythagoras sanitized the Egyptian musical scales of all microtones and brought those simple scales of only harmonious intervals back with him to Greece, which launched the western tradition of music based on chords.

Meanwhile, the original concept of Egyptian musical scales with their microtones spread across North Africa and also migrated to Mesopotamia, the Middle East, Central Asia and East Asia. The esoteric idea of using monophonic meter free microtonal scales for transcendence met with the native indigenous folk music already a part of the local cultures throughout the east and produced a synthesis of musical forms of great diversity. By the time the Egyptian idea of scales reached the South Caucasus, the tradition of the Ashiq, the bard or minstrel singer/storyteller was well developed, and the two great musical traditions merged and evolved into the eastern style art music we call *mugham*.

Like many native indigenous cultural elements around the world, *mugham* appears to be threatened by the upsurge of interest in all things western by the young generation. Many people in Azerbaijan recognize the importance of their native indigenous art music as an integral part of the Azerbaijani national identity.

Currently, there is a resurgence of interest in *mugham* in Azerbaijan, but in order for the children who are learning *mugham* to have a future in the performing of *mugham*, they must have an audience, and most children in Azerbaijan consider *mugham* to be grandpa's music, and not appropriate for them. I feel confident that when they grow up, they will rediscover the magic of *mugham* and treasure it as much as my generation does.

* For more information about Azerbaijani *mugham*, please visit the website www.mugham.net.

AZERBAIJANI DIASPORA IN RUSSIA INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT

Paul Goble
Publications Advisor
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On March 4, the North-South Center of the Historical Faculty of Moscow State University hosted a roundtable on "Azerbaijanis in Russia: Business, Culture and Benevolence." Chaired by Aleksey Vlasov, the deputy dean of that faculty and editor of *Vestnik Kavkaza*, it attracted intellectuals and activists from various communities in the Russian capital and featured two speakers who provided new evidence of the growing role that the Azerbaijani diaspora is playing not only within the Russian Federation, but in relations between Moscow and Baku as well. [1]

In his introductory remarks, Vlasov pointed out that an assessment of the current role of the Azerbaijani community in the Russian Federation cannot be separated from the broader context of relations between two states that are now strategic partners, but "from an even broader global context" of their relationship as peoples and states.

Emin Hajiyev, deputy chairman of the Azerbaijani Youth Union of Russia (AMOR), described how that organization was set up in 2008. He indicated that AMOR's "main task" is "the support of the integration of our youth into the community where they are studying and where they live. At present," he continued, "we observe a tendency toward assimilation," with young people from Azerbaijan who are living in the Russian Federation "even feeling themselves to be more [ethnic] Russian than Azerbaijani."

"We are glad that we feel ourselves here as non-aliens, but rather practically as if we were at home," the AMOR leader said, "but at the same time we try to ensure that young people remember their historical roots, know their own culture, and their own traditions." To that end, AMOR has helped to establish Azerbaijani clubs in 30 Moscow universities, set up branches in more than 70 federal subject, and even run its own mini-football competition, in which teams must have at least two Russians and sometimes foreigners as well.

In Soviet times, Hajiyev continued, Azerbaijanis frequently came to Moscow for higher education, especially in the fields of medicine, law, and economics. But now, "more than 6,000 Azerbaijanis are enrolled in Russian higher schools with 300 in

each of the three medical schools of the Russian capital. Increasingly popular among Azerbaijanis are the law faculties of Russian universities.

The second speaker, Ismail Aghakishiyev, an instructor in Moscow State University's history faculty, provided context for Hajiyev's comments. He noted that in Russia, "everyone knows" about Azerbaijani writers and intellectuals, but he pointed out that "the Azerbaijanis, unlike the two other South Caucasus peoples, the Georgians and the Armenians, began to come and live in Russia later," with most of them arriving in the 1990s, when Azerbaijan was experiencing serious economic difficulties.

Today, he continued, there are "hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis" working and studying in the Russian Federation, and it is worth noting that "the largest Russian diaspora" in the South Caucasus is in Azerbaijan. In Armenia, there are only about 3,000 Russians, while in Azerbaijan there are "about 150,000." In all Azerbaijani higher educational institutions, there are Russian sections, and the most widely read newspapers in Baku, *Zerkalo* and *Ekho*, appear in Russian. In short, in Azerbaijan, the presence of the Russian language and of Russians is "natural," rather than something exceptional. And Russians there and in Russia itself appreciate that.

For Azerbaijanis, in turn, Aghakishiyev continued, "Moscow for many of them remains not the capital of some foreign state, but somehow a native one." Despite these positive feelings, he said, before the 1980s, few Russians knew much about Azerbaijan or Azerbaijanis, a situation that changed when Heydar Aliyev was the leader there both in communist and post-communist times.

"When I served in the [Soviet] army in the early 1980s and when I was asked who I was by nationality, my fellow soldiers were surprised. They knew Georgians, they knew Armenians, but they did not know Azerbaijanis." However, by the end of Soviet times, Russians "had begun to recognize Azerbaijanis as a people."

Russians still have a lot more to learn about Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis, the history instructor said. They simply do not know as much about them as, say, Azerbaijanis know about Russia and Russians. Sometimes, Aghakishiyev said, his students will say such things as "Nazarbayev is the president of the entire Caucasus." But he continued, there are young people in Moscow "who are interested and support ties with Azerbaijan."

Unfortunately, some of these Russian students are not able to satisfy their interest. The instructor said that in his eight years at the history faculty of Moscow State University, he had "not heard a single lecture on the history of Azerbaijan or on the history of Central Asia" even though there were many on other countries. Naturally, there is not a huge demand for such talks, but there are several students in each class who are interested and who are "real friends of Azerbaijan." "Someone who studies the history and language [of that country] by definition will be [its] most genuine friend."

Russia has benefited from the entrepreneurial talents that are so widespread among Azerbaijanis. During the difficult 1990s, many Azerbaijani businessmen came to Russia and acquired great wealth. They have been accepted, the instructor added, because for entrepreneurs, that skill is more important than nationality. The Azerbaijani diaspora has also made an important contribution to Russia through its charitable work, with its commitment to helping others reflecting that nation's Islamic heritage.

Russians need to learn more about Azerbaijan and about some of the difficult pages in its history like Sumgait and Black January in Baku, he continued, so that they can go beyond the stereotypes that sometimes circulate concerning Azerbaijanis past and present. They need to learn about the contributions Azerbaijanis made to the Soviet war effort during World War II when it was an Azerbaijani who came up with the idea of the Molotov cocktail, they need to know that "more than 50 percent" of the top oil and gas officials in Russia are Azerbaijanis and others who lived in Baku, and they need to know that Azerbaijan today is making an enormous contribution to the development of the economies of the North Caucasus where unemployment remains very high.

Aghakishiyev concluded that in his view, "there is not a single problem" that would limit the development of relations between Russia and Azerbaijan and between Russians and Azerbaijanis. There is, of course, still a problem "of particular people which do not want this," but they are not numerous.

And he noted that he was a beneficiary of Azerbaijan's commitment to developing these ties. He was selected to be one of the 700 young Azerbaijanis who are being supported by Baku to study in Russian universities. Before leaving, then-President Heydar Aliyev told him and his fellow students: "Remain there!" We did not then understand why, but he saw what ordinary people did not see. We have remained here and thereby built a bridge between Russia and Azerbaijan."

Notes

[1] See <http://vestikavkaza.ru/analytics/Azerbaydzhantsy-v-Rossii.html> (accessed 15 March 2013).

A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

President Ilham Aliyev says that, "Azerbaijan has the decisive word on the transport of energy resources from the Caspian basin" (<http://news.day.az/politics/391310.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev says that, "acts of aggressive separatism and terrorist attacks against Azerbaijan led to the occupation of almost 20 percent of the internationally recognized territory" of the country and "Azerbaijan was subjected to a policy of ethnic cleansing as a result of which more than a million Azerbaijanis were expelled from their native places" (<http://news.day.az/politics/390656.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that cooperation among Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan sends "a clear message" to Armenia about its isolation and need to withdraw its forces from Azerbaijani territory (<http://news.day.az/politics/392396.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that Baku considers the possible opening of an air route between Van in Turkey and Yerevan in Armenia as indirect support for Armenia's occupation regime (<http://news.day.az/politics/390350.html>).

Milli Majlis deputies say that reports that Iran would provide Azerbaijan with military assistance in the event of war are false and that Tehran would be more likely to help Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/388920.html>).

Ogtay Asadov, Milli Majlis speaker, says that several countries and seven US states have adopted resolutions identifying the Khojaly tragedy as genocide (<http://news.day.az/politics/387969.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili says that he is opposed to opening the railroad through Abkhazia, because he believes that such a step would harm the interests of both his country and Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/economy/391538.html>).

Tunc Ugdul, a senior official of the Turkish foreign ministry, says that Ankara "continues to cooperate with Azerbaijan on the basis of the principle of 'one nation, two states.' The problems of Azerbaijan are our problems as well as the reverse. We are trying to resolve all problems together" (<http://news.day.az/politics/390723.html>).

The European Commission says that Azerbaijan is making progress in its cooperation with the EU but that "unfortunately," there has been little progress toward the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/391259.html>).

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili says that, "no government has done as much for Georgia as Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/387159.html>).

Shneur Siegal, chief rabbi of the Community of European Jews, says that, "there is no other country in the world where all nationalities live as freely and peaceably as in Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/society/389164.html>).

James Clapper, director of US national intelligence, says that the conflict between Yerevan and Baku over the occupied territories could spark broader tensions in the region (<http://news.day.az/politics/389572.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

31 March

Necdet Unuvar, a deputy in Turkey's Grand National Assembly, says on the occasion of the Day of the Genocide of Azerbaijanis that the Turkic world will never forget that tragic event (<http://news.day.az/politics/392959.html>).

30 March

Elchin Amirbayov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Paris, takes part in the opening of an art exhibit on Azerbaijan in the French city of La Rochelle (<http://news.day.az/politics/392906.html>).

The Heydar Aliyev Center of Azerbaijani Language and Culture opens in Kyiv's National Linguistic University (<http://news.day.az/politics/392762.html>).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov discusses the Nagorno-Karabakh situation with his Ukrainian counterpart, Leonid Kozhara, who is also chairman-in-office of the OSCE, and tells him that Russia positively evaluates the first three months of the Ukrainian presidency of that organization (<http://news.day.az/politics/392607.html>).

The Estonian education ministry announces the establishment of a scholarship program for Azerbaijanis who want to enroll in Estonian higher educational institutions (<http://news.day.az/society/392797.html>).

29 March

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov and his Turkish and Georgian counterparts at a meeting in Batumi issue a joint communiqué calling for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the basis of international law (<http://news.day.az/politics/392553.html>).

Elnur Aslanov, head of the political analysis and information support department of the Presidential Administration, says that the major powers have been "passive" with regard to the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/392491.html>).

Elchin Mirzabayli, deputy chairman of the Party of the Popular Front of United Azerbaijan, says that Baku must carefully monitor any foreign financing of NGOs in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/392688.html>).

Sevindzh Fataliyeva, a Milli Majlis deputy, is elected coordinator of the Youth Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the CIS (<http://news.day.az/politics/392654.html>).

Shamsaddin Khanbabayev, head of the Khachmaz region, receives Richard Morningstar, US ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/392661.html>).

The State Migration Service announces the introduction of new rules for the registration of foreigners living in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/society/392708.html>).

The US embassy in Baku issues a statement saying that media reports that Secretary of State John Kerry telephoned Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov are not true (<http://news.day.az/politics/392605.html>).

The Russian foreign ministry issues a denial on its Facebook page of media reports that Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is about to visit Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/392415.html>).

28 March

President Ilham Aliyev names Galey Allahverdiyev Azerbaijan's ambassador to Malaysia, retains Tahir Karimov as ambassador to Brunei and Cambodia while removing him as ambassador to Malaysia, and retains Eldar Hasanov as ambassador to Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina while removing him as ambassador to Romania (<http://news.day.az/politics/392457.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives the letters of credence of Amangeldy Zhumbayev, the incoming Kazakhstan Ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/392341.html>).

Elmar Mammadyarov, Maia Panjikidze, and Ahmet Davutoglu, the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey respectively, meet in Batumi and agree to intensify their cooperation over the next three years (<http://news.day.az/politics/392291.html>).

Azay Guliyev, chairman of the Presidential Council for State Support of NGOs, receives Rafael Harpaz, Israel's ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/392400.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, deputy executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party and a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the recent rapprochement of Israel and Turkey will have a positive impact on ties between Azerbaijan and Israel as well (<http://news.day.az/politics/392340.html>).

Fuad Muradov, a Milli Majlis deputy, receives Sergio Piazzi, the secretary general of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean Countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/392342.html>).

Rovshan Rzayev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that changing Armenia's foreign minister will not change Yerevan's difficult position (<http://news.day.az/politics/392240.html>).

The International Forum of Azerbaijanis Who Have Studied Abroad (ASAIF) meets in Rome (<http://news.day.az/politics/392384.html>).

The Congress of Azerbaijanis of Europe calls on the German Bundestag to mark March 31 as the Day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis (<http://news.day.az/politics/392334.html>).

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, commenting on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, says that, "no country has the right to occupy the territory of another state" (<http://news.day.az/politics/392387.html>).

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu says that his country, Georgia and Azerbaijan, will complete the Baku-Tbilisi-Ankara rail project (<http://news.day.az/economy/392382.html>).

Richard Morningstar, US ambassador to Baku, says the current situation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is unacceptable and that everyone involved must intensify their efforts to reach a settlement (<http://news.day.az/politics/392316.html>).

Peter Bateman, British ambassador to Baku, says that ties between London and Baku are good and that London hopes for their further expansion (<http://news.day.az/politics/392279.html>).

The Ankara city government condemns the Khojaly genocide committed by Armenians against Azerbaijanis (<http://news.day.az/politics/392385.html>).

The Senate of the US state of Kansas adopts a resolution calling for expanded cooperation between Azerbaijan and the US (<http://news.day.az/politics/392233.html>).

27 March

The Defense Ministry says that Azerbaijani forces control the situation along the ceasefire line and are fully capable of responding to any challenges (<http://news.day.az/society/392106.html>).

The Turkish foreign ministry sends a diplomatic note to Vilnius expressing its opposition to the formation of a Karabakh friendship group in the Lithuanian parliament on the eve of Turkish President Abdulla Gul's visit to Lithuania (<http://news.day.az/politics/392103.html>).

26 March

Asim Mollazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says the rapprochement of Israel and Turkey means that Jewish groups will not support Armenia in its efforts to have the events of 1915 declared genocide (<http://news.day.az/politics/391792.html>).

Georgian Energy Minister Kakha Kaladze says that the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline can be expanded to carry 16 billion cubic meters of gas a year (<http://news.day.az/economy/391911.html>).

The lower house of the legislature of the US state of New Jersey adopts a resolution declaring March 31 the Day of Memory of Azerbaijanis there (<http://news.day.az/politics/391948.html>).

24 March

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili says that Tbilisi must continue to support all the international projects begun by the previous Georgian government and its partners (<http://news.day.az/politics/391817.html>).

22 March

The Foreign Ministry says that Baku will continue to cooperate with the OSCE office in Baku, but has sent a letter to that office in order to clarify its status in the Azerbaijani capital (<http://news.day.az/politics/391506.html>).

21 March

President Ilham Aliyev says that, "Azerbaijan has the decisive word on the transport of energy resources from the Caspian basin" (<http://news.day.az/politics/391310.html>).

Elchin Efendiyev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Ashgabat, meets with Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammadov (<http://news.day.az/economy/391256.html>).

Aydyn Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan should retire (<http://news.day.az/politics/391235.html>).

Georgian Foreign Minister Maia Panjikidze says that, "Azerbaijan and Georgia must develop their strategic partnership further" (<http://news.day.az/politics/391242.html>).

The European Union, according to its representation in Armenia, is continuing to call on Yerevan to close the Metsamor atomic power station as soon as possible (<http://news.day.az/politics/391279.html>).

The European Commission says that Azerbaijan is making progress in its cooperation with the EU but that "unfortunately," there has been little progress toward the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/391259.html>).

Vladimir Fekete, the Vatican's representative to Baku, says that relations between Rome and Baku will continue to strengthen (<http://news.day.az/politics/391353.html>).

20 March

Hasan Mammadzade, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Vilnius, tells Vidas Gedvilas, the speaker of the Lithuanian Sejm, that Baku opposes the existence of a parliamentary friendship group with Karabakh (<http://news.day.az/politics/391220.html>).

The House of Representatives of the US state of Kansas adopts a resolution noting the contribution of Azerbaijanis to the development of the state and of relations between Kansas and Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/391268.html>).

The Union of the Fatherland-Lithuanian Christian Democrats, the largest party in the Lithuanian parliament, votes against participation by its deputies in that body's Karabakh friendship group (<http://news.day.az/politics/391184.html>).

19 March

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov and his Georgian counterpart Maia Panjikidze say that relations between their two countries are at a high level and will remain so in the future (<http://news.day.az/politics/391037.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with Valery Chechelashvili, the secretary general of GUAM (<http://news.day.az/politics/390952.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that the opening of an air route between Van and Yerevan is the work of a private company and in no way reflects a change in Ankara's position about Azerbaijan and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/391039.html>).

Economic Development Minister Shahin Mustafayev meets in Doha with Qatar Prime Minister Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al Thani to discuss expanding bilateral cooperation (<http://news.day.az/economy/391135.html>).

Elshad Iskandarov, the chairman of the State Committee for Work with Religious Groups, receives ISESCO director general Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri (<http://news.day.az/society/391082.html>).

Bakhtiyar Sadykhov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says Armenia is pursuing a dangerous course in its relations with Europe (<http://news.day.az/politics/390847.html>).

Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius says that Vilnius wants to help resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/391050.html>).

18 March

President Ilham Aliyev says that "acts of aggressive separatism and terrorist attacks against Azerbaijan led to the occupation of almost 20 percent of the internationally recognized territory" of the country and "Azerbaijan was subjected to a policy of ethnic cleansing as a result of which more than a million Azerbaijanis were expelled from their native places" (<http://news.day.az/politics/390656.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Xiaoyu Zhao, vice president of the Asian Development Bank (<http://news.day.az/politics/390813.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Peter Bateman, British ambassador to Baku, on the occasion of the latter's completion of his appointment to Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/390813.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Moroccan Interior Minister Mohand Laensar (<http://news.day.az/politics/390813.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Georgian Defense Minister Irakly Alasania (<http://news.day.az/politics/390813.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Georgian Foreign Minister Maia Pajikidze (<http://news.day.az/politics/390813.html>).

National Security Minister Eldar Makhmudov says that extremist groups, some with ties to foreign countries, have been using the Internet and social networks in an effort to destabilize Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/society/390662.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov receives Arturas Jurauskas, Lithuania's ambassador to Baku, who assures him that the existence of a Karabakh friendship group in the Seim in no way reflects the views of the Lithuanian government (<http://news.day.az/politics/390860.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov receives Igor Bratchikov, special representative of the Russian president for demarcation and delimitation of borders (<http://news.day.az/politics/390850.html>).

Ziyafat Askarov, vice speaker of the Milli Majlis, says that Azerbaijan has been "subjected to terror by Armenia" (<http://news.day.az/politics/390704.html>).

Ziyafat Askarov, vice speaker of the Milli Majlis, says that Baku has the right to know why Ankara has agreed to the opening of the Yerevan-Van flights (<http://news.day.az/politics/390689.html>).

Fazail Aghamaly, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Yerevan's tilt toward Moscow is costing it the support of the Armenian diaspora in the West and threatening to end the support of the latter for the former (<http://news.day.az/politics/390625.html>).

Georgian Foreign Minister Maia Panjikidze says that one of the main threats in the international arena is the existence of territories, which "are becoming safe harbors for criminal elements" (<http://news.day.az/politics/390667.html>).

Richard Morningstar, US ambassador to Baku, says that, "the status quo in Nagorno-Karabakh is unacceptable" (<http://news.day.az/politics/390630.html>).

Sergey Lebedev, executive secretary of the CIS, says that terrorism and the illegal trade in narcotics and arms represent growing problems generally and in the CIS (<http://news.day.az/politics/390680.html>).

Yury Fedotov, executive director of the UN Administration on Counter-Narcotics and Crime, says the Baku meeting on terrorism has helped produce new ideas in those areas (<http://news.day.az/politics/390748.html>).

Tunc Ugdul, a senior official of the Turkish foreign ministry, says that Ankara "continues to cooperate with Azerbaijan on the basis of the principle of 'one nation, two states.' The problems of Azerbaijan are our problems as well as the reverse. We are trying to resolve all problems together" (<http://news.day.az/politics/390723.html>).

The UN Administration for Refugee Affairs says that Baku should simplify procedures for refugees and IDPs who may be seeking work (<http://news.day.az/society/390794.html>).

16 March

President Ilham Aliyev confirms the February 14 cultural agreement with Kuwait (<http://news.day.az/politics/390489.html>).

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva receives Arturas Jurauskas, Lithuania's ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/390352.html>).

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva receives Choy Suk-yin, Korea's ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/390352.html>).

Ali Ahmadov, deputy chairman and executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says Baku expects Turkey to explain why it permitted the opening of a Van-Yerevan air route (<http://news.day.az/politics/390458.html>).

Bahar Muradova, deputy chairman of the Milli Majlis, meets with Pakistani parliamentarians to discuss cooperation (<http://news.day.az/politics/390508.html>).

Mohsen Pakayin, Iranian ambassador to Baku, greets Azerbaijanis on the occasion of

the Novruz holiday (<http://news.day.az/politics/390454.html>).

Mohsen Pakayin, Iranian ambassador to Baku, says his embassy is working to create a Union of Iranian Entrepreneurs in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/economy/390410.html>).

Macedonia extends the visa-free regime for Azerbaijanis for another year (<http://news.day.az/politics/390385.html>).

15 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives Lamberto Zannier, OSCE secretary general (<http://news.day.az/politics/390225.html>).

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva receives Rubina Saadat Gaimkhani, a Pakistani parliamentarian, who presents her with the 2012 Symbol of Humanity Award (<http://news.day.az/politics/390347.html>).

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva receives Richard Morningstar, US ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/390352.html>).

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva receives Arturas Jurauskas, Lithuania's ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/390352.html>).

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva receives Choi Su-kin, Korea's ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/390352.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that Baku is investigating reports that the National Democratic Institute of the US was involved in the organization of protests in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/390244.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that the Azerbaijani government has taken note of media reports about the activities of the National Democratic Institute of the US in Azerbaijan, but points out that "no international structure or NGO can put pressure on Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/390348.html>).

The Justice Ministry says that it is considering proposals from the Venetian Commission of the European Union concerning the simplification of registration procedures (<http://news.day.az/society/390299.html>).

Elin Suleymanov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Washington, says that bilateral ties between Azerbaijan and the United States are good and growing (<http://news.day.az/politics/390285.html>).

Fuad Iskandarov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Belgium and Luxembourg, presents his letters of credence to Grand Duke Henri (<http://news.day.az/politics/390207.html>).

The Azerbaijan-Lithuania Inter-parliamentary Group of the Milli Majlis send a protest to the Lithuanian Seim concerning the organization in that body of a friendship group with the separatist regime in Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://news.day.az/politics/390330.html>).

Govhar Bakhshaliyeva, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenia has refused to join Turkey in a bilateral commission to investigate the events of 1915, because it "knows that it is lying" about them (<http://news.day.az/politics/390084.html>).

Lamberto Zannier, OSCE secretary general, says that Azerbaijan is an important player in the region and in the OSCE (<http://news.day.az/politics/390237.html>).

Koray Torgay, head of the Baku office of the OSCE, says that, "the Azerbaijani government is on a true path in all directions" (<http://news.day.az/politics/390061.html>).

Arturas Jurauskas, Lithuania's ambassador to Baku, says that every member of his country's parliament has the right to express his personal opinion, but that the formation of a friendship group with the separatist regime in Nagorno-Karabakh "contradicts the position of the Seim" (<http://news.day.az/politics/390332.html>).

Robert Blake, US assistant secretary for South and Central Asia, says that the development of regional transportation links in that region is very important for the economic development of the region (<http://news.day.az/economy/390200.html>).

Richard Morningstar, US ambassador to Baku, hosts a reception in honor of Novruz and issues a message of greetings to all Azerbaijanis on the occasion of that holiday (<http://news.day.az/politics/390318.html>).

Eric Rubin, US deputy secretary of state, says that the status quo in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is unacceptable (<http://news.day.az/politics/390285.html>).

14 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives Simon Frazier, Permanent Secretary of Britain's foreign affairs and commonwealth ministry (<http://news.day.az/politics/390010.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Valeriu Zgonea, chairman of the Romanian parliament's Chamber of Deputies (<http://news.day.az/politics/390010.html>).

The State Border Service says that the portions of Azerbaijan occupied by Armenia are currently being used for the trafficking of illegal drugs (<http://news.day.az/politics/389905.html>).

Romanian Minister for Foreign Investment and Infrastructure Dan Shovan says that Bucharest is ready to create the necessary conditions for the development of Azerbaijani firms in Romania (<http://news.day.az/economy/389906.html>).

Ismail Cosgun, Turkey's ambassador to Baku, says that Turkish and Armenian plans to open an air route between Van and Yerevan will not have a negative impact on Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/389996.html>).

Toyli Komekov, Turkmenistan's ambassador to Baku, describes his country's tourism industry and invites Azerbaijanis to visit (<http://news.day.az/economy/390029.html>).

Simon Frazer, Permanent Under-Secretary and Head of the Diplomatic Service of

Britain's foreign affairs and commonwealth ministry, says that he is not informed about Armenian plans to open an airport at Khojaly, but that he is aware how serious an issue this is for Azerbaijan and would not want to see any action that would interfere with the resolution of the conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/390004.html>).

Koray Torgay, head of the Baku office of the OSCE, says that he welcomes the suggestion by Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, that the government will begin a dialogue with the opposition and says that his office is prepared to help facilitate such conversations (<http://news.day.az/politics/390000.html>).

The Baku office of the OSCE says that no one has searched its premises as some Baku media outlets had suggested (<http://news.day.az/politics/389866.html>).

13 March

President Ilham Aliyev says that, "the international community must increase its efforts for the just resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" (<http://news.day.az/politics/389711.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev says that, "Azerbaijan is ready to make its contribution to guaranteeing the energy security of European countries" (<http://news.day.az/politics/389443.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives the participants of the Gabala International Conference on Civil Defense and the Preparation of the Population for Reducing the Risks of Catastrophes (<http://news.day.az/politics/389792.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev makes an official visit to Montenegro where he meets with the senior officials of that government (<http://news.day.az/politics/389697.html>).

Industry and Energy Minister Natic Aliyev says that Azerbaijan is capable of meeting all its own energy needs (<http://news.day.az/economy/389693.html>).

Culture and Tourism Minister Abulfas Garayev signs a memorandum of cooperation with Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, the president of Saudi Arabia's general commission on tourism (<http://news.day.az/economy/389769.html>).

Samad Seyidov, chairman of the Milli Majlis international relations committee, leads an Azerbaijani delegation to Sacramento, the capital of the US state of California, to meet with officials there and discuss expanding cooperation (<http://news.day.az/politics/389684.html>).

Rufat Guliyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Yerevan has already received from Russia all that it is going to receive regardless of what it does (<http://news.day.az/politics/389602.html>).

Rovshan Rzayev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the recent voting in Armenia was not an election, but a PR show since the outcome had been decided upon in advance (<http://news.day.az/politics/389464.html>).

AZPROMO signs a cooperation agreement with the Hungarian economic development

ministry on agricultural cooperation (<http://news.day.az/economy/389731.html>).

Queen Sofia of Spain presents ancient miniatures of the Azerbaijani poetess Mahsati Ganjavi on the 900th anniversary of the latter's birth to the International Nizami Ganjavi Center (<http://news.day.az/culture/389729.html>).

James Clapper, director of US national intelligence, says that the conflict between Yerevan and Baku over the occupied territories could spark broader tensions in the region (<http://news.day.az/politics/389572.html>).

Col. Gen. Musa Avsever, chief of the Turkish general staff, says that "Azerbaijan is one of the strongest countries in the region" and military ties between Azerbaijan and Turkey are intensifying (<http://news.day.az/politics/389694.html>).

A group of 21 senior officers of the Turkish armed services visits Baku to discuss the expansion of bilateral military ties (<http://news.day.az/politics/389649.html>).

12 March

Industry and Energy Minister Natic Aliyev meets with Eduard Stavitsky, Ukraine's energy and coal industry minister, who proposes that Ukrainian facilities could process Azerbaijani oil (<http://news.day.az/economy/389441.html> & <http://news.day.az/economy/389353.html>).

Interior Minister Ramil Usubov says that Azerbaijan's internal forces are vigilant in their protection of stability and security of the country (<http://news.day.az/politics/389457.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov meets in Berlin with German officials as part of the latest round of political consultations between the foreign ministries of the two countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/390055.html>).

Ayдын Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the recent admission by the ombudsman of Armenia about corruption in that country shows that "it is now impossible to hide the truth" about that problem (<http://news.day.az/politics/389325.html>).

Asef Hajiyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan's visit to Moscow shows the weakness of his country's position and that "even Moscow will not be in a position to help it" (<http://news.day.az/politics/389264.html>).

The Council for State Support of NGOs hosts a meeting of Turkish and Russian officials working in that area and signs agreements with the Russian representatives (<http://news.day.az/politics/389465.html> and <http://news.day.az/politics/389401.html>).

Cornelia Piper, state minister in the German foreign ministry, says that re-opening the Khojaly airport without Baku's permission would violate the ceasefire accord of 1994 and harm the prospects for progress on resolving the conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/389462.html>).

Dermot Ahem, former Irish foreign minister who served as an observer of the Armenian elections, says that he saw serious falsifications in the voting there

(<http://news.day.az/politics/389514.html>).

Roland Kobia, head of the European Union representation in Baku, says that progress is being made toward the simplification of the visa regime between the EU and Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/389526.html>).

The US embassy in Baku says Azerbaijani media reports that the US National Democratic Institute was involved in organizing or supporting recent protests in Baku are baseless (<http://news.day.az/politics/389405.html>).

11 March

President Ilham Aliyev meets in Zagreb with Croatian President Ivo Josipović (<http://news.day.az/politics/389006.html>).

Lt.Gen. Zakir Hasanov, commander of Azerbaijan's Internal Troops, says that the government is working hard to resolve all social problems in the military and that the units under his command are at a high level of readiness (<http://news.day.az/politics/389241.html>).

Zakir Hashimov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Astana, meets with Kayrat Mami, speaker of the Senate of the Kazakhstan Parliament, to discuss cooperation on religious questions (<http://news.day.az/politics/389216.html>).

Polad Bulbuloglu, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Moscow, presents the Russian-language book of Namik Aliyev on the legal aspects of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to a Russian audience (<http://news.day.az/politics/389168.html>).

Fuad Guliyev, head of the State Administration for Civil Aviation, signs a cooperation agreement with his Sri Lankan counterparts (<http://news.day.az/economy/389244.html>).

Azay Guliyev, head of the Presidential Council for State Support of NGOs, hosts a meeting of representatives of 40 international organizations and embassies to discuss work in that area (<http://news.day.az/society/389089.html>).

Bahar Muradova, vice speaker of the Milli Majlis, says that the OSCE needs to correct its internal problems if it is to become effective (<http://news.day.az/politics/389274.html>).

Milli Majlis deputies say that reports that Iran would provide Azerbaijan with military assistance in the event of war are false and that Tehran would be more likely to help Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/388920.html>).

Iranian officials say that they are building two hospitals in Tabriz for Azerbaijanis who travel to that northern Iranian city for medical treatment (<http://news.day.az/economy/389151.html>).

Turkish Interior Minister Muammer Guler says that more than 15,000 Azerbaijanis have taken Turkish citizenship over the last decade (<http://news.day.az/society/389045.html>).

10 March

Nazim Ibrahimov, head of the State Committee for Work with the Diaspora, speaks to a Frankfurt meeting of the Azerbaijani diasporas in Europe (<http://news.day.az/politics/388986.html>).

Inayatullah Kakar, Pakistan's ambassador to Baku, says Pakistan is the only member of the UN which did not recognize Armenia because of Yerevan's occupation of Azerbaijani territory (<http://news.day.az/politics/388745.html>).

9 March

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva tells the World of Mugham celebration that, "Azerbaijan is a country with an ancient and rich history and culture" (<http://news.day.az/politics/388954.html>).

Ali Hasanov, head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that Baku expects the European Union to press for a just settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and believes that the EU should be represented in the OSCE Minsk Group not just by France, but by its own special representative (<http://news.day.az/politics/388912.html>).

8 March

Ambassador Agshin Mehdiyev, Azerbaijan's permanent representative to the United Nations in New York, participates in a meeting of GUAM ambassadors there (<http://news.day.az/politics/388655.html>).

Farid Shafiyev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Ottawa, discusses Azerbaijan's contribution to energy security in a speech to a Canadian audience (<http://news.day.az/politics/388726.html>).

Bahar Muradova, vice speaker of the Milli Majlis, says that no one is talking about EU membership for Armenia, because that country could hardly qualify for such status (<http://news.day.az/politics/388684.html>).

Musa Gasymlı, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenia remains in an ever-deepening crisis (<http://news.day.az/politics/388673.html>).

Jiri Mastalka, a deputy in the European Parliament from the Czech Republic, says that the development of many European countries now depends on gas from Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/388749.html>).

7 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives Juja Cahon, deputy director of the IMF's department for the countries of the Middle East and Central Asia (<http://news.day.az/politics/388568.html>).

Garib Mammadov, head of the Azerbaijani State Committee on Land and Cartography, says that Azerbaijan has worked to counter the systematic politicization of maps and names by the Armenians in the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/388455.html>).

Ali Ahmadov, the deputy chairman and executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, receives Richard Morningstar, the US ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/388576.html>).

Samad Seyidov, a Milli Majlis deputy, heads an Azerbaijani delegation to Austin, Texas, where it meets with senior government and business officials (<http://news.day.az/economy/388420.html>).

Rasim Musabayov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that he is certain that Moscow will avoid any support for Armenian provocations (<http://news.day.az/politics/388544.html>).

Rufat Guliyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenia's relationship with its diaspora is deteriorating (<http://news.day.az/politics/388434.html>).

Elmar Gasymov, rector of the Higher Oil School, receives Peter Uiterlind, Dutch ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/388438.html>).

Jose Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission, says that the EU supports the OSCE Minsk Group in opposing the opening of the Khojaly airport in the occupied territories without Baku's approval (<http://news.day.az/politics/388524.html>).

The legislature in the US state of Texas adopts a resolution condemning the Khojaly massacre in 1992 (<http://news.day.az/politics/388898.html>).

The upper chamber of the legislature of the US state of Indiana adopts a resolution on US-Azerbaijani cooperation (<http://news.day.az/politics/388392.html>).

6 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius (<http://news.day.az/politics/388310.html>).

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva opens the Flight to Baku exhibition in Rome (<http://news.day.az/politics/388132.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that if media reports are correct, Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg has insulted Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/388376.html>).

Hasan Hasanov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Warsaw, speaks at a ceremony there of the presentation of medals on the 20th anniversary of the restoration of diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Poland (<http://news.day.az/politics/388362.html>).

Azerbaijani officials have determined that Armenia has falsified lists of missing persons submitted to the International Committee of the Red Cross (<http://news.day.az/society/388276.html>).

Argentinian President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner appoints Carlos Dante Riva to be her country's first resident ambassador in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/388169.html>).

Fritz Neugebauer, president of the National Council of Austria, says that Azerbaijan is a reliable partner of European countries in the area of energy security (<http://news.day.az/politics/388303.html>).

Claude Bartolona, president of the French National Assembly, criticizes the use of force by Armenians against Azerbaijanis in the National Assembly building (<http://news.day.az/politics/388341.html>).

Karl Ollender, head of the Austria-Azerbaijan parliamentary friendship group, says that "the present situation concerning the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict smells of war" (<http://news.day.az/politics/388249.html>).

Gen. William Frazer, commander of the US transportation command, says Azerbaijan is playing a special role in handling material for Afghanistan (<http://news.day.az/politics/388464.html>).

5 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives Fritz Neugebauer, president of the National Council of Austria (<http://news.day.az/politics/388020.html>).

Ogtay Asadov, Milli Majlis speaker, says that several countries and seven US states have adopted resolutions identifying the Khojaly tragedy as genocide (<http://news.day.az/politics/387969.html>).

The European Court for Human Rights rejects an appeal by the Juma Mosque in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/388044.html>).

NATO sea transport experts meet with the Azerbaijani counterparts in Baku to discuss maritime security in the Caspian (<http://news.day.az/economy/388032.html>).

4 March

Justice Minister Fikrat Mammadov receives Koray Targay, head of the Baku office of the OSCE (<http://news.day.az/society/387800.html>).

Akram Zeynalli, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Bern, meets with Mario Gattiker, head of the Swiss Federal Migration Service (<http://news.day.az/politics/387758.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, deputy executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that the falsification of recent elections in Armenia has only deepened the crisis, which affects all spheres of life in that country (<http://news.day.az/politics/387793.html>).

US President Barack Obama says in a letter to Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan that Washington continues to back the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the basis of international law (<http://news.day.az/politics/387681.html>).

The Turkish foreign ministry says that Yerevan could "demonstrate a constructive position only after it recognizes that Turkey will always support Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/387813.html>).

The legislature of the US state of Oklahoma adopts a resolution on the Khojaly genocide (<http://news.day.az/politics/388115.html>).

3 March

Ziyafat Askarov, a Milli Majlis deputy, leads a parliamentary delegation to China (<http://news.day.az/politics/387579.html>).

The Center of Accord fraction of the Latvian Parliament condemns the Khojaly genocide (<http://news.day.az/politics/387606.html>).

2 March

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that Armenia's "unconstructive position" continues to bloc progress toward a settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/387561.html>).

The State Commission on Property Questions and the German Finance Ministry sign a memorandum of cooperation (<http://news.day.az/economy/387462.html>).

The European Court for Human Rights is not considering a case against Ramil Safarov, the Azerbaijani officer who was extradited to Baku and then pardoned, despite Armenian media claims to the contrary (<http://news.day.az/politics/387466.html>).

1 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives Inayatullah Kakar, Pakistan's outgoing ambassador to Baku on the occasion of the latter's completion of his appointment in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/387288.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Armenia has repeatedly shown itself to be an uncivilized country by its actions in Khojaly and elsewhere (<http://news.day.az/politics/387199.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that Baku seeks the punishment of those responsible for the beating of two Azerbaijanis in the building of the French National Assembly (<http://news.day.az/politics/387210.html>).

Azerbaijan's State Customs Committee presents its Afghanistan counterpart with computers and other equipment (<http://news.day.az/society/387362.html>).

Hasan Mammadzade, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Vilnius, meets with Benediktas Juodka, chairman of the foreign relations committee of the Lithuanian parliament (<http://news.day.az/politics/387371.html>).

Elshad Iskandarov, chairman of the Azerbaijani State Committee on Work with Religious Structures, presents the Baku Platform to the fifth World Forum of the UN's Alliance of Civilizations in Vienna (<http://news.day.az/politics/387192.html>).

Aydyn Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, sends an open letter to the French parliament demanding that steps be taken against the Armenians who beat two Azerbaijanis in the building of the French National Assembly

(<http://news.day.az/politics/387285.html>).

Leyla Aliyeva, president of AMOR, receives the leader of Russian youth organizations (<http://news.day.az/politics/387139.html>).

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili says that, "no government has done as much for Georgia as Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/387159.html>).

Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich says that Kyiv is interested in purchasing gas from the Shahdeniz field in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/economy/387396.html>).

The Indonesian Parliament is preparing an appeal on the Khojaly genocide for that country's president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (<http://news.day.az/politics/387335.html>).

Ed Pastor, a member of the US House of Representatives, says that the Khojaly massacre was "the most tragic event" in the history of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/387143.html>).

The House of Representatives of the US state of Mississippi adopts a resolution on the 21st anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and the United States (<http://news.day.az/politics/387180.html>).

Robert Koptash, the editor of Turkey's Armenian newspaper *Agos*, says that Armenians must take responsibility for the Khojaly genocide (<http://news.day.az/politics/387138.html>).

Matthew Bryza, former US ambassador to Baku, says that both the Southern Gas Corridor and the Southern Stream will be successful (<http://news.day.az/economy/387181.html>).

Note to Readers

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