



Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy
School of International Affairs

AZERBAIJAN IN THE WORLD

VOLUME I, 2008

ARTICLES, INTERVIEWS, CHRONOLOGY

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AZERBAIJAN IN THE WORLD

Volume I, 2008

ARTICLES, INTERVIEWS, CHRONOLOGY

Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy

2009

Editors: Paul Goble & Murad Ismayilov

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Contact information:
88, Shamil Azizbayov street
Baku, Azerbaijan AZ1009
adabiweekly@ada.edu.az
www.ada.edu.az

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Preface

Paul Goble and Murad Ismayilov, the co-editors of *Azerbaijan in the World*, will describe both the purposes of that biweekly publication and the contents of this volume which are drawn from it in their introduction. Here, I would like to take the opportunity to tell you something about the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, where *Azerbaijan in the World* is produced and which is as all those who have come in contact with it over the last three years note one of the most remarkable educational institutions to be found anywhere in the world.

Our Academy has three specific purposes and one overarching goal. First, it seeks to provide introductory and advanced training to Azerbaijan's rapidly expanding foreign policy community. It features both a program and more advanced courses intended to help more senior people better serve the people and government of Azerbaijan. And it offers a regular forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences between the current leaders of the country and the next generation of its representatives abroad and foreign policy specialists at home.

Second, the Academy houses a world-class graduate program in international affairs, one intended to provide advanced intellectual training to Azerbaijanis and students from around the world and to serve as a center for the

exchange of information and ideas about international affairs in the broadest sense both by hosting senior scholars and practitioners from Azerbaijan and other countries as well and through a program of research and publications, of which *Azerbaijan in the World* and this volume are among the first fruits.

And third, the Academy, precisely because it is a new institution rather than a reformed version of one that existed before Azerbaijan recovered its independence in 1991, is intended to provide a model for the ways in which higher education in the Republic of Azerbaijan can and should be developed, one that draws on the best thinking of scholars and practitioners from internationally recognized centers of learning in Europe, the United States and even further afield.

We, the faculty and students of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, have already achieved significant successes in each of these areas. Indeed, I believe that it is fair to say that while many other institutions around the world perform one or another of these three tasks, none does all three. And consequently, I am confident not only that we are a unique undertaking but also that we have created the basis for even greater achievements in the future. And I am especially pleased to tell you that this is not just our view, the view of those who can reasonably be expected to take pride in their own work, but also that of President Ilham Aliyev, who has been one of the most active and enthusiastic supporters of our work.

All these steps and all this recognition give us every reason to hope that we will be able to meet our overarching goal, the creation of an intellectually exciting, professionally rigorous, and policy-relevant center that will help Azerbaijan develop into an increasingly important player on the world stage.

And I am pleased to say the volume now in your hands provides evidence that the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy is on its way and that we look forward to the broadest possible cooperation with you who are now our readers and who we very much hope will soon be our colleagues and friends.

H.E. Hafiz Pashayev

Rector

Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy

Introduction

The volume you are holding in your hands constitutes the first hard copy fruits of the first year of our production of the biweekly online newsletter, *Azerbaijan in the World*. Like the Academy itself, our publication is guided and inspired by a multi-purpose mission. It is both intended to provide training for the next generation of Azerbaijani foreign policy specialists and is committed to procreating Azerbaijani scholars capable of producing high quality research and policy-relevant analysis on issues pertinent to Azerbaijan's foreign policy. It also serves to provide a forum for, and looks to encourage, communication not only within the Azerbaijan foreign policy and academic community, but more broadly as well.

This book, like the biweekly itself, consists of three parts. First of all, it includes a selection of the essays, commentaries and book reviews which have appeared in *Azerbaijan in the World* over the past year. These reflect the views of their authors on a wide range of political, historical, and literary subjects, and as editors, we encourage the authors to stake out provocative positions and to challenge one another. That kind of dialogue is a regular feature of academic life, but it is rare in many parts of the policy community. That is why we are trying to develop it here.

Second, it includes interviews with both ambassadors accredited to the Republic of Azerbaijan and other foreign policy practitioners and experts. These conversations are intended to provide a more relaxed setting in which these officials and scholars - and many of them are one and the same - can talk more broadly about what they do and what they think. There are too few places where those interested in foreign policy can find the comments of such people on a real time basis.

And third, it includes a chronology of key developments in Azerbaijan's interaction with the world, including official, working and state visits, and public statements and milestone events. You will note one important feature of nearly each item: It includes a hypertext link to the source from which the news story was drawn, and thus makes it possible for those who want to know more about any event to do so. Such chronologies become more valuable over time, and we believe that this volume will be the first in a long series that will help practitioners and scholars in Azerbaijan and elsewhere keep track of Azerbaijan's foreign policy development.

As you look through this volume, we hope you will find much of interest, both things to agree with and others to dissent from. But more than that, we very much hope that you will join our ongoing conversation by pointing out our shortcomings and offering your own submissions. The editors already receive more proposals than we can publish, but in the electronic world, *Azerbaijan in the World* can grow over time and include a greater share of them. And the expansion of such a conversation is not only the goal of our publication but also of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy of which we are a part.

Paul Goble & Murad Ismayilov

Co-Editors

Azerbaijan in the World

A SELECTION OF ESSAYS AND
ANALYTICAL ARTICLES

Conflict, Security
and Foreign Policy

AZERBAIJAN ON THE CUSP: ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2007, CHALLENGES OF 2008

Paul Goble

Azerbaijan was extraordinarily successful in its foreign relations last year, and many have suggested that there is every reason for it to be even more so in 2008. While that is possible, both the successes it had in 2007 and the specific features of the international landscape of the coming year mean that Baku now faces far greater challenges ahead than it did in the past, challenges that if met will boost Azerbaijan into a new and higher place among the countries of the world but if not recognized and acted upon could easily call into question much of what it has achieved.

Even to list Azerbaijan's most signal achievements in 2007 is to be impressed by what its government and people have been able to do: the fastest growing economy in the world according to the World Bank, the signing of an accord linking Azerbaijan to the West by rail and the coming on line of the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline, the hosting of Turkic leaders in Baku, the completion of its presidency of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the involvement of Poland and Japan in GUAM under its chairmanship, an expansion in the activities of the Economic Cooperation Organization, a bid for the Olympic Games, increased diplomatic influence in key countries and the United Nations, and the announcement of plans to expand the number of its missions abroad.

Last year was marked as well by more visits by Azerbaijan's president and senior leaders to other countries and more visits by senior officials to Azerbaijan than had been the case earlier. Such visits became so common that they were viewed as something entirely expected, as "part of the furniture." Indeed, in 2007, Baku has become a regular stopping point for the leaders of other nations and international institutions, not a place they visit only once or not at all.

Equally important in the short term and perhaps more significant in the years ahead, Baku dramatically expanded its ties with the millions of Azerbaijanis living beyond its borders. In December, Azerbaijanis in more than 70 countries around the world took part in celebrations of their continuing ties to their homeland. As a result, Baku now has some important new allies in other countries. It does not yet have the same influence some other diasporas have, but for the first time, Azerbaijan can participate in this competition.

And in addition to these and many other accomplishments, over the course of the last 12 months, Azerbaijan assumed a growing role in the international fight against terrorism, providing troops for battles abroad, information about terrorist activities in its neighborhood, and demonstrating its capacity to interdict threats to foreign missions on its territory. The last of these steps was especially important. It underscored Azerbaijan's maturation as a state, and together with everything else, it is why analysts in both Baku and Washington identified 2007 as the best year ever in Azerbaijani-American relations.

Baku then used these enhanced ties to work with its friends in the U.S. Congress and the White House to force the State Department to edit a document that tilted against Baku, and it showed growing diplomatic skill in its negotiations with the Russian Federation, the Minsk Group, and the countries of the region. Even if Azerbaijan did not achieve all its goals – especially the liberation of the occupied territories – it laid the groundwork for doing so by developing the most sophisticated multi-channel diplomacy in its post-Soviet history.

In short, as the calendar turned from 2007 to 2008, the government and people of Azerbaijan had much to be pleased about. Such good feelings are

not misplaced. But there are three sets of reasons – some related to developments inside Azerbaijan, others reflecting the political calendars of other countries, and still additional ones that are the direct product of what Baku achieved last year – that mean 2008 will be a more challenging and potentially fateful year than the one just past.

First, Azerbaijan faces a presidential election. Regardless of how certain many are that President Ilham Aliyev will win that vote, the campaign will generate much discussion about what Baku has done in the world and where it should be headed diplomatically, and the aftermath will likely to be occasion for changes in one or more key positions in the government. Both of these inevitably complicate the lives of those engaged in foreign policy, undercutting the certainties of continuity that allow the careful planning successful diplomacy normally requires.

Moreover, both the campaign and Azerbaijan's recent diplomatic successes are likely to lead some Azerbaijanis to demand more changes at home or a redirection of its diplomatic efforts to those issues – first and foremost the recovery of the occupied territories – that most excite the public. Demands for changes at home will mean that Azerbaijan's top leaders will have less time to focus on foreign affairs and thus be less willing to take on new initiatives in the short term. And calls by politicians and the public for a focus on the recovery of the occupied territories will, as one American official described the impact of the Middle East on the Bush Administration's foreign affairs, “suck all the air” out of everything else.

And finally, among the domestic changes ahead that will make the prosecution of foreign policy more difficult is one that is more diffuse but perhaps even more significant. That is the revolution of rising expectations that Baku's diplomatic ascent has sparked among Azerbaijanis. Given the success their country has had in the last year, many are certain to demand that it be even more successful in the future. Not only can that make judicious decisions on what the government should do more difficult, but it can lead to the kind of overreaching that is often fatal to diplomatic work.

Second, there are some important changes abroad that will affect Baku's ability to advance diplomatically. Azerbaijan is not the only country with elections this year. Georgia already has had such a vote, and in coming months, the Russian Federation, the United States, and Armenia will conduct them as well, with a change at the top nearly certain in all three. Such turnover will make it more difficult for these countries to engage diplomatically for the same reasons that the election in Azerbaijan will have that effect here. And while this turbulence might offer some short term opportunities, it more likely will lead to a slowdown in activity as these countries too go into a wait-and-see mode.

In addition, the international economic situation in the year ahead is likely to be increasingly problematic. Not only will an economic slowdown in the United States and several other countries have an impact on demand for Azerbaijan's chief export, but shifts in the relative economic position of the major players in international trade will force Baku to look in some new and unexpected directions, again changes that will require careful consideration and thus likely lead to a pause in some sectors of diplomatic activity.

And there are the uncertainties of conflict in the Middle East. Continuing fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, the possibility of a military confrontation with Iran, and the all too real threat that the world will not be able to get through another year without the kind of terrorist attack that will suddenly reorder the diplomatic map are going to complicate the lives of Azerbaijan's foreign and security policy elites. Depending on how things develop in this regard, Baku may find itself under pressure to do more from its foreign partners or pushed by its own elites and people to change course in order to minimize the impact of these dangers on the country's domestic life.

And third, as so often in life, Baku's signal achievements in recent years and especially in 2007 have brought in their wake some new problems. In addition to greater expectations at home for uninterrupted success, there are three that Azerbaijan will have to face this year and well into the future. First of all, as Azerbaijan has become more important internationally, it has gene-

rated expectations in many capitals that it will be able to carry an ever greater part of the load of the work of the international community. That puts enormous pressure on its inevitably limited diplomatic capacity. More and more often, other countries will want Azerbaijan to participate or take the lead in one or another sphere. Baku will have to make choices, and those choices in turn will be limited unless it both expands its capacity and develops a more coherent national security and foreign policy apparatus.

That is not something that is going to be easy to do especially in the short term: It takes decades to “grow” an ambassador or a national security advisor, and unfortunately given its impressive recent successes, Azerbaijan does not have that much time before it must field a much larger foreign policy team.

Second, not all of Azerbaijan’s neighbors or interlocutors are entirely happy about Baku’s diplomatic ascent. Some like Turkey may welcome it, but others have more negative views and are certain to become more active both diplomatically and in other ways. Neither Yerevan, Tehran nor Moscow is entirely happy about Azerbaijan’s achievements. And all of them have levers they can employ against Baku, some of them diplomatic, some economic, and some involving other means.

Countering those efforts without falling into carefully laid traps designed to make Azerbaijan look incompetent, authoritarian or paranoid will not be easy.

And third, and this may prove to be the most difficult challenge, although it is one that many Azerbaijanis already understand and know what to do. As an increasingly significant player in international affairs, Azerbaijan will attract more attention from other countries and from their media. Much of this expanded coverage will be positive and welcome, but some of it could be negative and harmful.

In the past, the Azerbaijani government could take actions at home relatively confident that few abroad would pay attention. Now, as Baku has risen in prominence and as the international media have gone global 24/7, it does not have that luxury. If they take an action at home that governments or human rights activists elsewhere believe is a violation of fundamental human

rights, the government and people of Azerbaijan are going to suffer politically and diplomatically as a result.

On the one hand and most immediately, Azerbaijan's diplomats must become more skillful in explaining what is taking place in their country and capable of responding to the inevitable criticism important countries attract. But on the other, Baku needs to recognize, as the recent criticism of certain actions against journalists showed, that its success in the world will depend not only on the skill of those at the top and in the foreign ministry but also on the way in which the Azerbaijani officials at all levels act.

If Azerbaijan's leaders and people recognize these challenges and act in ways that will allow Baku to present the best possible face to the world, there is every chance that Azerbaijan will continue its march from the margins of the international community to the very first ranks. But if its leaders and people are not able to do so, then Azerbaijan will face the prospect that it will not be able to do so, however many friends it has attracted so far and however much oil it may be able to export now and in the future.

The year ahead thus promises to be even more interesting than the one just past. Azerbaijan is clearly on the cusp of great things, with the possibility for further progress very real but the downside risks to its newly won status equally and all too obviously present.

KOSOVO'S INDEPENDENCE AND THE FUTURE OF NAGORNO-KARABAKH

Rick Fawn

Kosovo's declaration of independence on February 17, 2008 has sparked extensive discussions about its possible implications for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, with some statements, including some by Armenians, suggesting that it completely changes the situation in the South Caucasus, and others including those by the Azerbaijani and some Western governments arguing that it has no applicability to territorial disputes there.

Recent Armenian statements suggest that Kosovo's declaration of independence and the international recognition it has received have the potential to change security dynamics in the region. The Karabakh de-facto leader Bako Sahakyanfoll stated that "If Kosovo's independence contributes to Karabakh's independence, we will only be happy." [1] Armenian Prime Minister Sarkisyan warned that Kosovo "will boost Karabakh recognition drive", a position he claimed was viewed favourably. [2] His views were echoed by Georgy Petrosyan, Nagorno-Karabakh's de-facto foreign minister, who argued that "We are confident that the recognition of Kosovo by the international community or by individual countries will strengthen our position in negotiations to resolve the conflict with Azerbaijan." [3] Armenia's foreign minister stated on February 24 that "granting independence to Kosovo, the interna-

tional community violated the legal norms but forgot Karabakh. Unlike Kosovo, no one granted independence to Nagorno-Karabakh.” [4]

The Azerbaijani government expressed its opposition to Kosovo’s recognition, declaring, unlike many states that remain equivocal, that it would not offer recognition. It further announced, as what can be taken to be a tangible expression of protest, that its 34-soldier contribution to the peacekeeping mission in Kosovo will be withdrawn. [5]

Thus, Kosovo has unquestionably featured in recent Armenian and Azerbaijani statements over Nagorno-Karabakh. However, despite Armenian hopes and Azerbaijani fears, there are many reasons to think that Kosovo will in fact have little impact on the course of events concerning this conflict. Some of them have to do with the US-led position on Kosovo’s new status and others with the Russian Federation which would be the major outside actor that might institute changes.

The United States and other Western countries have stressed that Kosovo is a unique case. The rationales for this can be elaborated and debated; for practical purposes, however, this signals that the West will not allow for a “Kosovo precedent” to be appropriated for any other purpose and to any other geopolitical context (see Fawn 2008). That stance is unlikely to deter some committed secessionist movements from trying to exploit such an idea, but it means that anyone who does is unlikely to secure the international recognition that effective independent statehood requires. Indeed, when Kosovo declared independence, its leaders reiterated the Western view that Kosovo is unique and is not a precedent for elsewhere, a view that senior American officials have welcomed and repeated in conversations with the Azerbaijani government. [6]

To say this, however, is not to suggest that the West is entirely united on this point. The European Union, for example, has been unable to agree on a common approach to Kosovo, and as of this writing, only 21 of its 27 member states have extended recognition, among them the United Kingdom, France and Germany.

Meanwhile, the Serbian government has tried to minimize Kosovo's success in attracting international recognition of its independence. Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremić noted that "others in Europe" (naming only three) had withheld recognition, as had many other leading global and regional players, including Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Israel, Russia and South Africa, and that Kosovo had only been recognized by 40 of more than 200 UN member states. [7]

With respect to the implications of Kosovo's status for the South Caucasus, of course, the exact number of governments that have recognized its independence may be less important than the attitude of the Russian Federation. Moscow, along with Beijing, seems intent on blocking Kosovo's admission to the United Nations and insists that any decision about Priština's status must be approved by the UN Security Council where both Russia and China have the power of veto. This is essential because Resolution 1244 of June 1999 which ended the NATO bombing campaign ensures that Kosovo's fate must – again, at least in *de jure* terms – be settled there.

Kosovo, according to American diplomat Richard Holbrooke, was President Vladimir Putin's "biggest international test." [8] The Russian leader may feel compelled to take a stand for both domestic and foreign policy reasons. But Moscow's ability to exploit the situation further is limited by six factors, all of which are relevant to the possible implications of Priština's action for Nagorno-Karabakh.

First, despite its rhetoric against Kosovo, Moscow has not taken any concrete steps either against Priština's or in favour of the so-called "unrecognized" states, despite their efforts to get the Russian government to do so. Consequently, it appears unlikely that the Kremlin is planning to move anytime soon.

Second, Russia finds itself in a position that could prove counterproductive. If it opposes recognition of Kosovo based on the moral and legal high ground, it can hardly move to recognize anyone else, something that would undercut what Moscow presents as its principled position.

Third, and probably far more important, are the practical implications for Russia itself from such a stand. Moscow cannot afford taking any step

that might create additional precedents for declarations of independence, or border redrawing, by non-Russian republics in its own North Caucasus.

Fourth, any changes by Russia to boundaries in the Caucasus could also give Georgia irrefutable evidence to support its claims that Russia is seeking to dismember it. While NATO and the EU do not welcome a conflict-ridden state as a new partner or member to be, Western support for Georgia is nevertheless very strong and recognition of Abkhazia or South Ossetia could realize a Western presence, including military, something the Russian government certainly does not want to see happen.

Fifth, even Russian statements have moved away from the arguably principled idea of “universal application” to differentiated between which of the post-Soviet *de facto* states are eligible. In official Russian statements, it is the two entities in Georgia that feature most often, then to a lesser degree Transdniestria; with infrequent, and indeed in many cases, no mention of Karabakh (Fawn 2008).

Given this Russian position, the leaders of the first three *de facto* states have been careful not to extend the Kosovo “precedent” to Karabakh. [9] Indeed, they prepared a joint statement in response to Kosovo that made no reference to the fourth “unrecognized” state. [10] And even Yerevan has suggested that it does not view international recognition for Kosovo as the occasion for Armenia itself to recognize Karabakh’s independence immediately. [11]

And sixth, Moscow’s approach to all of these conflicts is a product of its relationship with the countries immediately involved. Many commentators see Russia as seeking to use Abkhazia and South Ossetia as tools to influence Tbilisi, and Transdniestria to influence Chisinau. In contrast, Russia retains good relations with both Armenia and Azerbaijan and stands inevitably to lose one set of those relations by a policy stand that changes Nagorno-Karabakh’s current, if also disputed, status.

Given all these reasons, it appears likely that Moscow will be satisfied by what it is packaging as a moral victory, even though Kosovo is likely to remain independent. After all, President Putin has argued that “Russia’s position on

[Kosovo] is now winning support among those politicians in Europe who, despite the political pressure of bloc discipline, particularly within NATO's structure, show political courage, demonstrate independence of judgment and, in the best traditions of European political culture, seek to extend the principles of democracy and justice to international affairs." [12]

There have been recent positive views by outsiders that Nagorno-Karabakh could be solved. At least Kosovo's independence is unlikely to enflame the conflict, or even to have a serious negative impact on the status quo; but it is also extremely unlikely to afford new possibilities in resolving it.

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Notes

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THE UNITED STATES AND AZERBAIJAN: CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AT WORK

Jeffrey Werbock

In the early days of my earnest pursuit of the grand old musical traditions of Azerbaijan, I found myself sharing living quarters with my first teacher, an old oriental Jewish man from Derbend, Daghestan, Mr. Zevulon Avshalomov. Besides my being utterly mesmerized by his playing style on kaman-cha, I found him to be a unique human being, and well worth taking the time to be near to him. His sense of humor was superb, if different from the usual – I learned much later that his brand of mirth was typically “Kavkazi,” that is, Caucasian, if such a category of humor could be allowed.

My fascination with Mr. Avshalomov was not only regarding his personality. He seemed to radiate a quality of presence that I could only find among those few who also came from this part of the world, and although my interest was experiential, not scholarly, I often wondered whether anyone had done any proper anthropological studies on the peoples of the Caucasus. For such a strategically critical part of the world, it seemed that the amount of material on the subject was disproportionately spare and hard to come by.

Serious scholarship on the region and its peoples was beyond the scope of my activities in those early days beginning in 1972. I read what was available, most notably *The Sabres of Paradise* by Lesley Blanch (1960). The my-

stique of the Caucasus was a compelling force which led to many fascinating conversations with my elderly teacher. Our teacher/student relationship, one very much like father and son or perhaps master and disciple, lasted until his death at the age of 77 in the year 1987. But the main aim of my association with Mr. Avshalomov – learning his music – took on momentum and public presentations increased in frequency and the profile of the venues rose to some prominence.

Four appearances at Merkin Hall by Lincoln Center, NYC, four at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, countless at the American Museum of Natural History, the World Music Institute, colleges, universities, community centers, and so on, all added up to some great exposure for the name of Azerbaijan among the cultural and intellectual elite of America and Europe.

All these experiences and more led me to take on the unofficial role of what is sometimes called second tier diplomacy, a position that can have significant reach that can be every bit as effective as official efforts to promote good relations between countries. Thus, it seemed only natural that some instructors of Caucasus Studies at the US State Department's Foreign Service Institute (FSI), now known as the George P. Schultz Foreign Service Training Center in Arlington, Virginia, would invite me to share my insights into the socio-psychology and folkloric mind-set of the people of the Caucasus, with a particular emphasis on Azerbaijan. Of course, there has to be music, not just talk, and I am always happy to comply with these requests.

The thrust of my message, usually to a class constituting the consolidation of the foreign service workers and diplomats to be assigned to the three Caucasian republics, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia, and the five Central Asian States of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, is to encourage the future assignees to try to find some genuine interest in some aspect of the local culture, and not be shy to show their hosts that they are enthusiastic about that.

It appears to be a common complaint that Americans in general do not show enough interest in the rest of the world, but those who choose a career

in foreign service should be the exception to this. Undoubtedly, anyone attracted to the idea of being assigned to work in a foreign country would presumably have a greater than average interest in world affairs and possibly even the cultures of other peoples. With this in mind, who could be a better, more receptive audience to the message such as the one contained in a presentation of music and other folkloric items from one of the least known and understood parts of the world, the Caucasus.

Thus, I see my main task in the presentations at FSI is to share my enthusiasm for the cultures and peoples of the Caucasus and to a certain extent Central Asia – I should mention that for several years, a number of musicians who performed with me in NYC venues were from Uzbekistan and who were able to play the Azerbaijani tar, a plucked skin faced fretted “lute” and the gaval, and a frame drum somewhat resembling a large tambourine but without the metal cymbals around the edge of the frame. Thus I had some contact with members of that community and was a guest in their homes countless times.

And the message is that we do our best diplomacy when we find ourselves genuinely interested in some aspect of the culture of the host country. Our tendency is to feel that just because we have the world's most powerful military and economy, and just because we are successfully exporting much of our culture and values, that our culture is therefore somehow superior. In certain respects, we Americans do have much to offer the world, and that is not under examination here. But there is much for us to delight upon that comes from other cultures, some of which are much more ancient than ours and have a richness that may not be evident upon first look, or listen.

One recent and excellent example of using culture for conducting second tier diplomacy took place in North Korea when the NY Philharmonic performed an orchestrated version of a popular Korean folk song. Reported that the performance brought tears to the eyes of what had been up until that moment a sea of stony faced North Koreans, I read that the idea to do such a thing was suggested by someone from the State Department. I would like to

congratulate you, whoever you are, for not only thinking of this kind of soft diplomacy, but I imagine that it took a bit of lobbying, given the degree of commitment to learn and rehearse what is essentially a foreign musical genre, and for that you must have had a solid conviction in the power of music to bridge the wide gap that had opened between USA and North Korea.

Thankfully, there are no such yawning gaps to be closed between America and Azerbaijan, nevertheless the same principles of culture as an effective diplomatic tool can be implemented to bring these two great countries even closer.

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GIVING MOSCOW A TASTE OF ITS OWN MEDICINE: AZERBAIJAN'S STRATEGY ON RUSSIA

Heidi Kjærnet

Russia has increasingly used its economic power to promote strategic foreign policy goals, an approach that has forced other countries to modify the way they conduct their relations. Azerbaijan is one of those countries, and it has responded by employing its own economic resources as a foreign policy tool, thus giving Moscow what might be called a taste of its own medicine. [1]

"Economization," the term for the assignment of particular importance to economic priorities and instruments in foreign policy reflecting the heightened influence of business and economic actors in decision-making (Wallerander 1997), has acquired special importance under President Vladimir Putin, but it has also been a part of Moscow's foreign policy in earlier periods, because the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the ensuing decay of Russia's military machinery left Russia with few other effective foreign policy tools. And that is particularly the case in Russia's policy toward the former Soviet republics: it is primarily through economic strength that Russia has been able to exercise a measure of indirect control in these states (Lo 2006, pp. 63-64).

Because Moscow views the "near abroad" as lying within Russia's undisputed sphere of interest, the Kremlin, according to Bobo Lo (2006, p. 62),

has reserved to itself both the right and the duty to exploit every advantage at its disposal to promote Russian national interests. Among these advantages, the Russian government believes, are its economic strengths, and consequently “economic trumps serve not only commercial ends but also larger political and strategic aims” (Lo 2006, p. 63). Thus, for Moscow, the economization trend can be defined as “the use of economic tools to reach strategic aims,” a definition that calls attention to the distinction between Moscow’s belief in the efficacy of this tool and its actual success in doing so.

The sector in which the Russian government has exerted its economic muscle for political gain most forcefully has been the energy sector, although it has employed trade embargoes and labour migration restrictions toward that end as well. Several former Soviet republics are totally dependent on Russia for their energy supplies, and this has allowed Moscow the chance to maintain economic and political leverage in what it sees as its legitimate sphere of influence. And even in those former republics which are net exporters of energy, Russia has used its control of transit routes and its market power to exert influence. Kazakhstan, for example, competes with Russia in the same oil markets, but it remains dependent on Russian pipelines, allowing Moscow to limit Kazakh export volumes (Dodsworth et al. 2002, p. 23).

Azerbaijan was subject to the same kind of pressures until the BTC pipeline from Baku via Tbilisi to Ceyhan went online in 2005 and broke the Russian monopoly on the transit of Caspian petroleum. But demonstrating that other countries can make use of economic power to promote political ends and reflecting the fact that Russia no longer can block its oil flows, Azerbaijan has exploited this new situation to position itself as an increasingly powerful and independent actor in the South Caucasus.

In the first instance, this means that Azerbaijan need not defer to Russian pressure to survive, be that in the form of transit blockade or stops in Russian gas deliveries. When Gazprom in 2006 sought a steep price increase for the gas it delivered to Azerbaijan, Baku was in a position to respond by simply stopping the import. And in pursuit of its own political goals, Azerbaijan sup-

ported Georgia during the latter's 2006 gas feud with Russia, something Baku was able to do without suffering any reprisals from the Russian side. [2]

Unlike Russian relations with Baku, the relationship pattern between Russia and Georgia provides a clear example of the consequences of energy dependence if one is not sufficiently accommodating. After a troublesome year in Georgian–Russian relations in 2006, Gazprom demanded a more than twofold increase in gas prices (from USD 110 to 235 per 1000 m³) from both Georgia and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan's response was not only to cut the Russian gas import but also to offer Georgia gas at only USD 120 per 1000 m³, thereby helping its neighbour out of a tight situation. [3]

In doing so, Azerbaijan managed to strike a balance between maintaining good working relations with Georgia, an important partner due to the transit of Azerbaijani oil through its territories, and accommodating Russia, a central actor in the negotiations over Nagorno-Karabakh. That Azerbaijan chose to support Georgia through the crisis points up the new possibilities available to Baku now that it is no longer dependent on Russia for transit. But in contrast to Georgian rhetoric on this issue, Azerbaijan has struck a more conciliatory tone, thus showing both skill and caution in its own use of economic leverage.

Despite this, there is still the risk that Azerbaijan's energy interests and ambitions may collide with the Russian ambitions and interests in the future. Discussions concerning the possible construction of a Trans-Caspian Pipeline that would provide BTC with Central Asian oil after the expected peak in Azerbaijani production already have become a source of tension with Russia, which wants to monopolize the transit of Central Asian petroleum to Western markets.

At the same time, Russia, its weakened economic sanctions opportunities toward Azerbaijan notwithstanding, still holds a rather strong hand in the economic sector. On the one hand, the large Azerbaijani diaspora working in Russia, one whose members send remittances home, may become subject to Russian pressure, just as the Georgian one was in 2006. And on the other, Moscow's status as a Minsk Group co-chair means that it plays a key role in the policy area of greatest concern to Azerbaijan, thus reducing Baku's abili-

ty to ignore Russian demands. Indeed, Russia's leverage in this area may be one of the most important reasons for Baku's decision to build up its military capacity, something that could give it more independence in that area as well.

The military build-up and an independent energy policy are only few of several ways Azerbaijan is employing its economic strength to reduce Russia's influence. And it is striking that, at least in comparison to the other post-Soviet states, Azerbaijan has shown that it is ready, willing and to a large extent able to give Russia a taste of its own medicine by pursuing an economic-centric foreign policy.

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Notes

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- [3] One could perhaps go so far as to argue that Azerbaijan has undertaken the cost of subsidizing Georgia, with all the implications this could have for political influence.

HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE IDP CRISIS IN AZERBAIJAN

Ali Hasanov

Karabakh and the surrounding mountainous area are considered one of the ancient and culturally rich regions of Azerbaijan. Azykh grotto is one of the first places of human origin and also it is a source of pre-Islamic culture. Albanian-Christian temples and cultural monuments of the Islamic era, generated throughout thousands of years, compose this rich cultural heritage and wealth. Karabakh is a fundamental part of Azerbaijan's history, culture and national identity.

Azerbaijan's geo-strategic location and rich natural resources are key components of interest in the region. Therefore, the territory of Azerbaijan has been the site of various bloody wars, with the foundation of these conflicts being laid in the late 18th century. To best understand the current IDP crisis in Azerbaijan it is important to examine the progression of events that shaped the history and foreshadowed the future of the country.

In 1721-23, Peter I invaded Azerbaijani territories along the Caspian, including Baku. Having faced strong resistance from local people, Peter the Great decided to use the so called "Armenian card" and ordered to settle Armenians in historical Azerbaijani lands, especially in Baku and Derbend.

This historical heritage addressed by Peter I to his successors formed the policies of the Russian Empire, but also provided the core of Bolshevik

Russia's South Caucasus policy. In 1768, Ekaterina II announced a decree of imperial trustee over Armenians and in 1802 Tsar Alexander I conveyed an order to the Caucasus police Sisianov when he declared that: "Armenians should be used at any cost to occupy the Azerbaijani khanates." This was the start of the occupation of Azerbaijani territories.

As a result of war of 1826-1828; 18,000 Armenian families were moved to the South Caucasus from Iran and southern lands of Azerbaijan. In the next two years, 40,000 Armenians from Iran and 84,000 Armenians from Turkey were moved to Elizavetpol and Irevan provinces. In March of 1828, immediately after the Turkmenchay Treaty, the decree of Emperor Nikolay I established the "Armenian province" within the Irevan and Nakhchivan khanates.

As a result of these policies, the foundation of the future Armenian state within the Azerbaijani lands was laid. According to the official statistics of the period; 7,331 Azerbaijanis and 2,369 Armenians were living in the Irevan city, which was the center of the "Armenian province." In addition, according to the Turkmenchay Treaty; 40,000 Armenians from Iran were moved to Azerbaijani lands, namely Irevan, Karabakh and Nakhchivan. A similar process unfolded during the Russian-Turkish wars of 1829 and 1878, when about 85,000 Armenians were moved to the above-mentioned regions from Turkey. Consequently, this process contributed to the displacement of thousands of Azerbaijanis from their homelands.

In the second half of the 19th century, the massacre of Azerbaijanis by Armenians acquired stronger organizational character and was implemented as a more integrated planned policy. Armenians with the intention of building "Great Armenia" in the territories of Azerbaijan, Turkey and Georgia instigated the activities of the political-terrorist organizations like "Hnchaq" (1887, Geneva), "Dashnaksutyun" (1890, Tbilisi), and "Union of Armenian Patriots" (1895, New-York).

One of the main goals of these organizations was to intimidate and pressure Azerbaijanis to move out from their homeland. The revolution of 1905-1907 created more opportunities for these organizations and during this rev-

olutionary period many Azerbaijanis in Baku, Shusha, Zangezur, and Garabagh were massacred by Armenians. Even after the 1905-1907 revolution, mass deportation of Azerbaijanis continued while many Armenians were moving into the occupied territories. According to the Russian statistical reports published in 1916, during the 1830-1914 years the population of the Irevan province had increased 40 times to nearly 570,000 people. However, the Azerbaijani population living in the region increased just 4.6 times. Despite this oppression and deportation, in 1916 about 45% of the population of the Irevan city, that is 247,000, were Azerbaijanis.

World War I and the Great Russian Revolution of 1917, created another opportunity for Armenians to accomplish their "Great Armenia" plan. In 1915, over the course of World War I, the majority of Armenians living in the northeast regions of Turkey were deported to Irevan, Karabakh and Zangezur provinces. Supported by Moscow and their Russian army, Armenians continued to persecute Azerbaijanis in Nakhchivan, Irevan, Karabakh and many other regions of Azerbaijan.

In December of 1917, according to the Arzinjan agreement signed between the Ottoman state and the Bolsheviks' Caucasus Commissariat, Armenian armed forces replaced the Russian army that was withdrawn from the Caucasus. As a result, by the end of March 1918, nearly two hundred Azerbaijani villages were destroyed in the Irevan province, while thousands of Azerbaijanis were massacred by Armenians.

In December 1917, Stepan Shaumyan, who was appointed an emergency commissar in the Caucasus by Russia's People's Commissars Soviet, was given the authority to implement the sovietization policy in the South Caucasus and create "Turkish Armenia" in the Turkish territories under Russian occupation. As a consequence of the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty (March 1918), Russian troops left Kars, Ardagan, and Batumi, and these territories were returned to Turkey. However, some of the Russian and Armenian troops that returned from Iran and Turkey were placed in Baku. Commissar Shaumyan utilized this opportunity against Azerbaijanis.

In March 30, 1918 Armenian-Bolshevik united forces launched an attack on Azerbaijani settlements and during 3 days of violence some 17,000 people were massacred in Baku. The Armenian-Bolshevik forces confiscated many properties and destroyed many historical landmarks of Baku. In March and April of 1918, close to 50,000 Azerbaijanis in Baku, Shamakhy, Guba, Mugan and Lankaran were killed, and many more people were forcefully displaced.

On April 13, 1918 the organizer of this massacre Shaumyan confessed in his letter to the Russian People's Commissars Soviet: "We used the armed attacks on our infantry as an excuse and attacked along the front. We already had 6,000 armed forces. Dashnaks also had 3-4 thousand military forces, which were under our authority. Their participation especially gave the attribute of national massacre to the civil war. But it was impossible to prevent it. We went on this while being conscious. If the Azerbaijanis would prevail, then Baku could be announced capital of Azerbaijan."

Nevertheless, after the dissolution of the Caucasus Seym on May 27, 1918 Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia announced their independence. The Emergency Investigation Commission established by the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) on July 15, 1918 collected a number of documents and materials related to these events. Unfortunately the collapse of the ADR in April of 1920 terminated the investigation process that would otherwise reveal adequate information and the scale of this massacre and destruction.

In order to prevent the spread of bolshevism, the western states considered the existence of independent Caucasus states important. However, they stated that ADR's independence would be recognized only if Irevan was given to Armenia as a capital. Azerbaijan had to compromise in order to defend its independence and gain recognition by the international community. As a result, thousands of Azerbaijanis living in Irevan province were forced to move out of the region.

In 1920, as a result of Bolshevik Russia's military aggression, Azerbaijan's independence was brought to an end. The Dashnak Armenia was also occupied by the Soviets. In 1920, Soviet Russia handed in Azerbaijan's Zengezur

province to Armenia; and in 1923, the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast was artificially created.

Almost 70 years of the Soviet regime significantly altered Azerbaijani history. The forced displacement of Azerbaijanis from their homeland continued during the Soviet period. The deportation of 100,000 Azerbaijanis living in Armenia to the Kura-Araz valley of Azerbaijan perpetrated during Stalin's regime in 1948-1953 is worth a separate note.

In 1985, with the beginning of Michael Gorbachev's rule Armenians and the others supporting them tried to materialize the plan for "Great Armenia" that they had been cherishing for decades.

Beginning in 1988, some more than 250,000 Azerbaijanis living in Armenia were turned out of their native land by the way of terror. As a result of this policy of ethnic cleansing, 216 people were killed. Thus the last stage of the Armenian nationalists' policy of "Armenia without Turks" was realized; Armenia became a mono-ethnic state.

By the summer of 1991, the war in Nagorno-Karabakh became evident. The collapse of the Soviet Union gave a push to the organized Armenian military groups to begin large-scale military activities in Nagorno-Karabakh. On February 25-26, 1992 Armenian military units that were positioned in Nagorno-Karabakh supported by Khankendi-based 366th Russian motorized infantry regiment made a massive assault on Azerbaijani town of Khojaly killing 613 peaceful citizens.

Between 1991-1993, Armenian armed forces occupied some 20% of Azerbaijani land, namely Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent regions. Nearly 700,000 Azerbaijanis became refugees in their native land, and almost 20,000 people were killed, 250,000 were injured. As a result of the military aggression, the damage to the state economy has been more than 60 billion US dollars. Many Azerbaijani refugees driven out of their native country were obliged to live in unbearable conditions.

After coming to power again in 1993, Heydar Aliyev began work towards eliminating the results of this humanitarian misfortune. For this a legal basis

was established according to international norms, and many state programs were adopted. The very first oil revenues were spent for social security and to better the life of refugees and internally displaced persons. The decree signed on March 26, 1998 by Heydar Aliyev is the first legal-political assessment of the crimes and terror of this ongoing conflict. The decree revealed many facts that had been banned for decades and confirmed that March 31 will be the Day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis.

Ilham Aliyev informed the public before the presidential elections that there would not be any refugee tent settlement during the next five years of his tenure. President Aliyev kept his promise and in December 2007 the last tent was disassembled.

With the growth of the economic potential of the state, the measures relating to the social protection of internally displaced persons grow as well. Over 270,000 internally displaced persons are provided with monthly food products and basic necessities. Continuous improvement and development of the temporary settlement is among the highest priorities of our government.

Apparently, the sustainable solution to the refugee problem may only be possible after the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh is resolved. Our leadership will continue to make every effort to resolve this issue. Our occupied territories will be freed and our internally displaced persons will return back to their homeland.

RUSSIA'S INVASION OF GEORGIA: WHAT IT WAS AND WHAT IT MEANT

Vugar Seyidov

August this year was a hot month and not just in terms of the weather. Within a single week, two parallel wars began and ended. One was an intra-state war between Georgia and South Ossetia which Tbilisi won quickly and decisively. The other was an international war between Russia and Georgia, which Tbilisi lost equally decisively. This second war was the second time (after the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict) that two former Soviet republics have fought.

But if this was a military defeat in which Georgia lost many of its people and much of its key infrastructure, it was not a complete loss because NATO countries have pledged to rebuilt and improve on what was there before. And if this was a military victory for Russia, it was truly the pyrrhic one because it entailed a diplomatic loss of enormous proportions. Yes the Russian army triumphed in the field. But never in its history had Moscow been as isolated after a military victory. Except for Cuba and Venezuela, not one country came out in support of what Moscow had done.

Most analysts and governments around the world dismissed Moscow's claims about defending its citizens and Georgian aggression and identified actions of the Russian Federation as an invasion of a sovereign country. Indeed, Moscow's isolation has been so complete that in Sochi on August 15, President

Dmitry Medvedev complained about how the world was covering and treating what Russia had done without asking the question, "who started this war?"

But even if it is the case that Georgia's moves in South Ossetia provided Moscow with a pretext for action, it certainly did not justify Moscow's drive deep into parts of Georgia which have never been in dispute. And consequently, both people in the West and people in Russia itself soon recognized that Moscow had gone to war primarily to overthrow the pro-Western government of Mikheil Saakashvili, prevent Georgia from joining NATO, and re-establish Russian control over oil and gas pipelines from the Caspian basin to the West.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov admitted that Moscow wanted Saakashvili out during a telephone call with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, a desire that no Russian official has contradicted. [1] And Lavrov added that Moscow will not negotiate with Saakashvili whom he called "part of a special US project" and whose actions the foreign minister said prove that "he cannot be our partner." [2] The US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice immediately dismissed this argument by pointing out that "Georgia is a democratic government in the Caucasus that has elected its leaders. To call it a project of anyplace, of anybody, perhaps belies more about the way Russia thinks about its neighbors than the way it thinks about US policy." [3]

A closer look at what happened in South Ossetia unveils many similarities with other regional crises of the past. One way or the other, Mikheil Saakashvili, by his attempt to emulate Russian actions in Chechnya to restore his country's territorial integrity, proved to be the best student of Vladimir Putin who himself proved to learn much from the West by applying the Kosovo blueprint in Georgia to return the boomerang to the Euro-Atlantic camp. Indeed, on August 16 during the course of the current crisis, Russia's representative at NATO Dmitry Rogozin said that "if someone doesn't respect Serbia's territorial integrity and sovereignty over Kosovo and Metohija, then they better shut up about the territorial integrity of Georgia," adding that "our critics behave like wolves that want to eat their sheep when hungry. But we are not a sheep, we are the Russian bear." [4] Two days later,

on August 18, Alexander Konuzin, Russian ambassador to Serbia, said his country would ask the UN Secretary General for an explanation of how it had been possible to declare Kosovo's independence without the UN Security Council's approval. "We want to know this to apply the same knowledge in South Ossetia and Abkhazia," Ambassador stated. [5]

But at the same time, many in the West now stress that official Russian recognition of these "unrecognized" states could boomerang on Russia. The most obvious consequence as Carmen Eller pointed out in *Spiegel* would be that "Russia would have to explain why independence is right for South Ossetia and Abkhazia but not for Chechnya." [6] It is thus unclear how many boomerangs should be flying back and forth for the great powers to decide to stop this spiral of mutual vengeance.

A major reason behind Moscow's move was a desire to block Georgia's entrance into NATO, an organization that had always regarded protracted conflicts as an obstacle for a membership. This discourse was broken, thus paving the way for the moves Russia opted for in Georgia, by the German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier who on February 19, 2007 stated that the conflicts in Georgia would not prevent NATO from taking in Georgia, [7] a position that Georgian parliament speaker Nino Budzhanadze quickly welcomed. [8] Indeed, history provides numerous examples when divided nations nonetheless gained membership in international and regional organizations: West Germany became part of NATO, Cyprus was included in the European Union without its northern part, and consequently including Georgia in NATO should not be a problem.

A variant of this reason is that Russia invaded Georgia not to keep it out of NATO but rather because it was not yet a member. That argument rests on an expansive reading of Article Five of the North Atlantic Treaty [9] which says that an attack on one member is an attack on all but only commits the alliance to consult on how to respond. But if Moscow hoped to delay Georgia's entrance into NATO, it has in fact almost certainly accelerated Tbilisi's admission by its action. [10] Still worse from Moscow's perspective, Ukraine will join Georgia

in pressing for rapid admission and will likely succeed. And given that Russia has shown that it is prepared to use force in violation of international law, other former Soviet republics are likely to pursue NATO membership as well.

What lessons should Azerbaijan draw from all this? Is Moscow likely to move against Azerbaijan? As far as Russian interests are concerned, there are many similarities between Georgia and Azerbaijan. Both are linked to the hydrocarbon transportation infrastructure, both cooperate with NATO, and both have problematic regions that look to the north for the military, political and moral support, and thus can be manipulated by Moscow. And there are additional reasons for a Russian focus on Azerbaijan: it is a far bigger fish to catch than Georgia and from Moscow's point of view deserves to be "punished" for its role in re-routing the flow of hydrocarbons to the West.

Moscow's actions in Georgia highlighted the fragility of the security system in the South Caucasus. Baku has been supportive of the West's campaign against terrorism, and it has cooperated closely with NATO in many ways. [11] But the Georgian events show that Baku cannot rely on its balanced foreign policy and that it needs to declare its desire to join the Western alliance soon and work hard to become a full member of the only security system that provides any real guarantees of national sovereignty.

Notes

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TURKEY'S PUSH FOR CAUCASUS STABILITY AND COOPERATION PLATFORM

Saban Kardas

In the course of the Georgian crisis, Turkey has engaged in extensive shuttle diplomacy in the aftermath of the conflict in Georgia, Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan visiting Tbilisi, Moscow and Baku to push Ankara's plan for a Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform. That plan, which aims to bring together Turkey, Russia and all three South Caucasus countries, has received support across the region, and Turkish diplomats are now arranging working level meetings with their counterparts.

Since Erdogan announced this proposal, Ankara has tried to work in close cooperation with Russia on its details. Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan had a phone conversation with Sergey Lavrov about this proposal on August 22. A Turkish delegation visited Moscow four days later to explore the details. [1] Other countries were very much drawn in as well: Azerbaijan's foreign minister, Elmar Mammadyarov, visited Ankara on August 29 and his Georgian counterpart, Eka Tkeshelashvili, came to Istanbul on August 31. And Armenian officials have welcomed Turkey's proposal. On September 6, Turkish President Abdullah Gul is expected to visit Armenia to discuss it (Kardas 2008a).

The current plan, the full scope of which has not yet been announced, has its origins in discussions in the late 1990s. Inspired by the European

Union-led Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, Turkey's president at the time, Suleyman Demirel, suggested in November 1999 a similar arrangement as a conflict prevention strategy for the Caucasus. [2] Over the next several years, Turkey pushed this idea at the OSCE as well as in the United States, Europe and the region. Some European think-tanks picked up the idea and published reports discussing its feasibility and relevance (see for example Celac, Emerson, Tocci 2000). Notwithstanding the expressed interest among the regional leaders, the lack of an agreed upon Western strategy for the Caucasus, political divisions in the region and Russian opposition to the formation of any new groupings within the Commonwealth of Independent States with an external power involved prevented any real progress. [3]

But Turkey has never abandoned this project because, since the end of the Cold War, Turkey has sought to prevent crises in its neighborhood from becoming violent. Given its experience in the Middle East, Ankara does not want to see the Caucasus drifting toward similar violence or having violence spread to Ukraine. And encouraged by the relative success of the European idea of cooperative security in the Balkans, Turkey believes it has a chance now to introduce a similar notion to the Caucasus and thus to achieve stability and peace through close regional interaction. It hopes to find solutions to long-running conflicts in the region through the promotion of economic interdependence, including energy, transportation and communication cooperation. [4]

Turkey has an additional reason for advancing such a program. The crises around Turkey have the effect of reminding the West of Turkey's geostrategic position and political importance, something Ankara can and does use as a bargaining chip in its relations with the major powers. Moreover, when Turkey has been reluctant to assume such an assertive role, some of the outsiders suggest that it do so (see for example Zaman 2008).

At present, such an approach fits in with the AK Party government's new foreign policy line intended to present Turkey as a peace broker in its surrounding regions. [5] That line emphasizes the multi-dimensional nature of Turkish foreign policy. Prior to the conflict in Georgia, the government had

come under criticism for ignoring the relations with the Caucasus and Central Asia as it sought to expand ties in the Middle East, and even Africa. Now, with this project, it has responded to that criticism. [6]

Economic considerations have always played a key role in Turkish foreign policy, and because of that, Ankara has always been very sensitive to the ways in which political crises and instability can prevent countries from reaping the benefits of economic cooperation. In recent years, it has acted like a “trading state” (Rosecrance 1986), one that uses soft power in its foreign policy and does not engage in traditional hard power politics. [7] The crisis in Georgia served as a reminder of the importance of those ideas and calculations.

However, Turkey’s growing economic power also makes it more dependent on its trading partners. At the present time, Russia is Turkey’s largest trade partner and within the last years Russia has been a major destination for Turkish investments and exports. Despite Turkey’s support of projects like the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, two-thirds of Turkey’s gas comes from Russia, in large measure because Ankara’s effort to diversify its sources by closer cooperation with Iran has been opposed by the United States. Turkey’s overlapping dependencies on Russia are now a major foreign policy challenge for Ankara. [8]

These various factors explain Turkish policy during the Georgian crisis. Caught between its traditional ally the United States and its regional ally Georgia on the one hand and its increasingly assertive trading partner Russia on the other, Turkey has pursued a policy intended to avoid offending either side. Ankara was especially careful to avoid offending Moscow and decided not to protest forcefully Russia’s recognition of Georgia’s breakaway regions. [9] It acted with caution and followed a restrained policy vis-à-vis American demands as in the case of allowing the passage of American ships to the Black Sea (Kardas 2008b), something that even led some analysts to conclude that Turkey might be slipping away from the West (Baran 2008).

Against this background, Ankara’s proposal for a Caucasus pact serves well Turkey’s apparently ambivalent policy trying to balance the conflicting

requirements of its multifaceted political and economic relationships. By involving all the parties of the region's many hotspots in a multilateral platform, Turkey thus can avoid taking sides, especially against Russia. And it offers a way to resolve its difficulties with Armenia. Indeed, in exchange for its role as a mediator in the Russian-Georgian crisis, Turkey expects Moscow to use its influence in Yerevan and play a similar role there. [10] Any progress in the Turkish-Armenian relations will represent a major achievement even if the broader aspects of the pact are not realized.

Because the Caucasus has so many problems both bilateral and multilateral, the ability of this initiative to address them is limited. And the absence across the region of respect for the territorial integrity of states, a centerpiece of the modern international system, means that there is little reason to hope that the various potential participants will be able to find a common language or set aside their differences long enough to consider the possibilities such conversations might offer. Moreover, some countries, like Russia and Armenia, benefit from the status quo, while others like Azerbaijan and Georgia, suffer from it and want change, a divide that makes such discussions even more difficult.

A fundamental problem with the proposed pact is that as long as the major regional power is seen as the aggressor, smaller countries will seek powerful external supporters. When Russia was weaker, it opposed a Caucasus Pact fearful that this would open its sphere of influence to others; now, as it has gained strength, it will be inclined to support a group that ratifies its advantages but not one that will force it to retreat. Since Turkey will hardly be able to balance Russia on its own, and guarantee the security of the smaller countries, the viability of the project, is highly questionable. In fact, Turkey's ambivalent attitude toward Russian aggression can be seen as appeasing Russia due to Ankara's own dependence on Moscow, something that might undermine its credibility in the eyes of Georgia and Azerbaijan. [11]

Armenia's ongoing occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh continues to poison its relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey. Ankara still does not have

diplomatic ties with Yerevan, and Azerbaijan considers itself at war with Armenia. The continuation of the *status quo* thus favors Armenia vis-à-vis Turkey and Azerbaijan. It helps Armenia sustain its occupation of Azerbaijani territory and consolidate its gains, and the Armenian diaspora has been successful in having the events of 1915 termed genocide by many western parliaments, positions Yerevan has few reasons to retreat from.

Many argue that Turkey's approach to Armenia, largely a product of its ties with Azerbaijan, has damaged its relations with the West without doing much to help Azerbaijan (Amberin 2008). Moves to normalize ties with Armenia thus require resolving some historical problems and ending Armenia's geographic isolation. Despite the objections of some, Turkey's AKP government is determined to move in that direction, but unless Armenia responds in ways that now seem improbable drifting away from its uncompromising position, Turkey may find itself alienating Azerbaijan with whom it must work if it wants the regional pact to work. [12]

Such problems make the achievement of Turkey's goal of a regional security platform highly problematic, but these same problems, including Russia's willingness to act as a spoiler, [13] highlight why just such an arrangement is worth pursuing.

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**GUAM AFTER GEORGIA:
MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER OR SOON TO DIE?**

Paul Goble

This is a defining moment in the history of GUAM, one more important than the initial agreement that launched this regional grouping a decade ago, more difficult than the accession and departure of Uzbekistan from its ranks, and more uncertain than any time before, with the possibility that Russian actions in Georgia will make GUAM a more significant body than it has ever been before and the threat that those same actions will result in the death of GUAM as a player in the geopolitics of Eurasia.

On the one hand, Moscow's invasion of Georgia and Georgia's decision to leave the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) opens the door to the possibility that GUAM as one of the most important organizational alternatives will become more important, either by attracting new members or perhaps even more importantly by serving as a model for the emergence of other regional groupings within Eurasia. There are at least five ways in which these positive outcomes might occur.

First, the United States and the European Union may increase their political investment in GUAM, seeing it as a useful tool for countering Russian influence, a development that will be more likely if GUAM can develop more bilateral ties with countries like Poland and Japan beyond the borders of the former Soviet Union.

Second, with Georgia's exit from the CIS and with Kazakhstan's declaration that Tbilisi's move will not have any consequences for bilateral ties, more countries, starting with Ukraine may leave the CIS, and some of them may look to GUAM as a possible new home.

Third, even if these countries do not make that choice, they are certain to consider GUAM's principles and history as a model for what they might do elsewhere. Indeed, it is conceivable that there could be a series of multiple, overlapping mini-GUAMs that would contribute to the further decomposition of the post-Soviet space.

Fourth, the four countries now in GUAM may decide not to articulate any NATO Article Five type accord but agree to speak out in common whenever they are threatened. Ukraine's backing of Georgia is a model of what this might look like, but for GUAM to succeed, its members will have to speak with a more united voice in defense of one another.

And fifth, the multilateral experience of the GUAM states may lead to the creation of a variety of new institutions, including peacekeeping units, that will make it a more attractive partner for other countries in the region and for the Western powers who will be interested in investing political capital in a group of countries that understands both the nature of the Russian threat and what it takes to counter it.

And on the other hand, Moscow's invasion of Georgia and Georgia's apparent inability to attract the kind of support in the West that that would not only force Moscow to retreat to the status quo ante but also prompt the Kremlin to disavow the use of force against its neighbors means that GUAM may rapidly become a dead letter, an interesting but remarkably short-lived artifact of the period between the collapse of the Soviet Union and the return of Russian imperial ambitions.

There are at least five ways in which these negative outcomes would be likely.

First and most important, the Russian invasion of Georgia changes the rules of the game. For the first time since 1991, every post-Soviet state other than Russia has to deal with the reality that the use of force is not off the table, that Moscow

is willing to end its military across international boundaries. That inevitably will promote in some countries a greater willingness to defer to Moscow – Russia's goal in all this – and the kind of hyperbolic nationalism based on an appeal to do whatever it takes to promote national survival. Neither of those developments will dispose countries in GUAM to expand cooperation; indeed, such attitudes, especially if they divide the member states as seems likely, will help kill it.

Second, it is an unfortunate reality that all four of the GUAM states have on their territories what the Russians have called frozen conflicts. Moscow will certainly play up this to divide the alliance, promising as it did in mid-August that it would support Chisinau against Tiraspol if Moldova remained committed to the CIS. And because of Russian power, Moscow's decision to support now one and now another of these countries will place severe strains on the alliance by sparking suspicions that one or another member is getting a better deal by selling out the other three.

Third, in the wake of the Russian invasion of Georgia, a GUAM country, many both within the countries of the grouping and others outside it are going to ask what this alliance means? And why should we have any faith in it? Like a religion, when no one believes in an alliance any more, it is dead, regardless of the meetings that its operatives may hold. Fewer people believe in GUAM today than did a month ago; if that decline continues, it is difficult to see how the grouping could survive.

Fourth, the achievement of one of the primary functions of GUAM at least from the point of view of the West – the organization and support of the export of Caspian hydrocarbons – is almost certainly in trouble. Either the oil and gas will now flow through Russia giving Moscow leverage, through Iran giving the West problems, or flow through Baku-Ceyhan but with that route increasingly under Russian influence or even control. In such circumstances, the foundation of GUAM will crumble, and many in the West first and then in GUAM itself will ask why there is any reason to continue.

And fifth, this group, which was created by one set and even one generation of leaders, may not fit with the plans of new leaders and a new gener-

ation. They will see GUAM not as a mistake but as something of the past, and they will seek to create something new, possibly broader, possibly not, but in any case something where GUAM would no longer be at the center of the calculations of these countries.

What then is the likely future of GUAM? No one can say for sure, but three things are fairly obvious. First, the future of GUAM will depend not only on its members alone; it will reflect both Russian actions and the West's response, two things that are difficult to predict. Second, the future of the organization will depend importantly on the ability of its current members to attract new ones, especially those beyond the old Soviet borders. If that happens, the group will certainly survive; if it doesn't, there is a much greater chance that it won't. And third, GUAM's future is to a greater extent in the hands of the new generation of leaders who have come to power in these countries. If they are prepared to devote more attention to GUAM and to give it new tasks and meaning, it will survive. But if they assume that they need not worry about this future, then GUAM won't have one.

National Identity, History, and Foreign Policy

AZERBAIJANI NATIONAL IDENTITY AND BAKU'S FOREIGN POLICY: THE CURRENT DEBATE

Murad Ismayilov

Ever since Azerbaijan regained its independence in 1991, there has been an intense debate among scholars, officials and ordinary Azerbaijanis over how the country should define itself. And while such discussions are taking place in other former Soviet republics, those in Azerbaijan have been particularly intense, especially because there is a widespread consensus in Baku that how Azerbaijan defines itself will determine what kind of a foreign policy it pursues. Consequently, a brief review of the current state of this debate is important both intellectually and politically.

Many of the debate participants, both in Azerbaijan and abroad, have stressed the important role that the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918-1920) has played in shaping the identity of Azerbaijan today (Suleymanov 2001; Altstadt 2002; Swietochowski 1985). They point to the ADR's commitment to building a modern democratic society, with free and fair elections, proportional representation, and universal adult suffrage (Asgharzadeh 2007; Altstadt 2002; Volkhonski and Mukhanov 2007, p. 148). Indeed, Azerbaijani commentators note with pride that Azerbaijan was "the first country in the history of Islamic nations ever to enfranchise women" and that it did so even before the United States (Asgharzadeh 2007, p. 9).

A second legacy of the ADR was a commitment to form a new and uniform national identity based on “Azerbaijanism,” which Mustafa-zade (2006, p. 106) has defined as “a synthesis of principles of Turkism, Islamism, and modernism, that is, a non-contradictory amalgam of ethnic, confessional and European heritage of Azerbaijanis”. All these forces, Swietochowski (1985) argues, were present during Azerbaijan’s national awakening, none so dominant that Azerbaijanis could ignore the others, and the ADR leadership explicitly chose Azerbaijanism over Turkism. Atabaki’s (2002) account of the failure of pan-Turkism in pre-Soviet Azerbaijan and the broader region is suggestive on this point.

According to Asgharzadeh (2007), the multiple sources of Azerbaijanism, especially as developed by President Heydar Aliyev, served as a guarantee that after the recovery of independence, the country would have an identity based on citizenship rather than ethnicity, culture or religion, something that sets it apart from many other countries in the region. Other writers – Shaffer (2002, p. xii), Suleymanov (2001 and 2004, p. 22) and Priego (2005) make similar points.

But at the same time, scholars like Altstadt (1998 and 2002) stress that as important as the legacy of the ADR has been, a variety of other factors are at work, given the “deep gulf” separating the first republic and the current one. The leaders of the former “were products of 19th century European thought,” while “today’s leadership, in and outside government, grew up under Soviet rule” and were profoundly affected by its efforts to russify the population and wipe out the influence of religion.

Suleymanov (2001 and 2004, p. 5) concurs, saying that because of Soviet “ideological domination” and Moscow’s massive efforts at cultural and linguistic engineering (including alphabet reforms), the “direct extrapolation” of Azerbaijan’s pre-Soviet identity “has not been as helpful as it was hoped.” Hence, Suleymanov (2001) and other writers have pointed to other intervening developments as defining factors: the rise of the Turkish republic, the Caucasus environment (also Tokluoglu 2005, p. 733), the “two Azerbaijanis” (also Shaffer 2002; Hajizade 1998; Tokluoglu 2005, pp. 728-729), the war with Armenia (also Altstadt 1992; de Waal 2003; Tokluoglu 2005, pp. 725-727;

Priego 2005, p. 9), Black January of 1990 (also Tokluoglu 2005, p. 727), the influx of refugees and the emergence of a culture of victimization, and Western influence associated with the development of Caspian energy resources.

In the course of the 1990s, Azerbaijani leaders in their search for identity selectively drew on both the ADR and Soviet-period legacies. Under President Abulfaz Elchibey, Baku defined its language as Turkish, thus stressing one set of pre-Soviet values, but his successor President Heydar Aliyev, picking up on the Soviet decision in 1937 to call the people and language of the republic “Azerbaijani” rather than “Turkish” opted for Azerbaijani. (For a discussion of these changes, see Altstadt 1998; Hajizade 1998; Tokluoglu 2005, pp. 742, 754).

As important as these decisions were, they did not end the debate on the nature of Azerbaijani identity and its proper application. Mutalibov attempted to redefine it in a way that would support a pro-Moscow foreign policy. Elchibey tilted toward Turkism to support a pro-Western and anti-Russian approach. And more recently, both President Heydar Aliyev and President Ilham Aliyev have invoked Azerbaijanism as the foundation of a more balanced foreign policy. And this evolution in and of itself has sparked more discussion about the specific content of that idea at the beginning of the 21st century.

Such selectivity in the meaning of Azerbaijani identity or, one might say, its lack of a precise definition, affects Azerbaijanis at all levels. Tokluoglu (2005) and Hajizade (1998) have explored these tensions in the programs and agendas of Azerbaijani political parties. And Tokluoglu (2005, esp. p. 728) has pointed to the tensions among the Azerbaijanism which has been accepted by the governing New Azerbaijan Party, Turkism, an ethnocentric nationalism that informed the thinking of the Popular Front, and liberal nationalism of the Musavat Party.

Many scholars have discussed Azerbaijani identity, but three in particular – Houman (2003), Suleymanov (2004) and Priego (2005) – have specifically focused on the impact that identity has had on Baku’s foreign policy.

While his was a pioneering work in employing internal variable-based explanation of foreign policy decision making in Azerbaijan, Houman did not treat constructed identity as an independent variable. Suleymanov went

further, discussing the ways in which identity issues define domestic politics and those then play a role in defining foreign ones, but like Houman, he did not discuss more direct linkages between identity and foreign policy.

Priego's work thus represents an important breakthrough, albeit one not without some important limitations. He focused on the ways Azerbaijani national identity has shaped the country's foreign policy choices, but his study addressed only the thinking of the leaderships of the New Azerbaijan and Musavat parties, thus limiting the value of his conclusion and preventing him from examining the impact of broader, if more diffuse understandings of Azerbaijanism and its alternatives.

As seen, apart from a few partial individual studies, a comprehensive analysis of the linkages between different discourses on Azerbaijan's political identity and foreign policy choices the latter suggest has so far been missing; a scholarly vacuum this paper was set to call attention to.

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A NOT SO DISTANT MODEL:
THE AZERBAIJAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF 1918-1920
AND BAKU'S POST-SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

Sevinç Yusifzade

I met with a very dignified and interesting group of gentlemen from Azerbaijan, men who spoke the same language I did about ideals and concepts of liberty, rights and justice.

Woodrow Wilson

President of the United States

May 1919

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Azerbaijan had a distinct advantage compared to most of the other “new” states when it came to developing its foreign policies. It could look back to the first Azerbaijan republic of 1918-1920 for a model of how they should proceed, something many of its leaders and people did because to an uncanny degree, post-Soviet Azerbaijan faced many of the same challenges and opportunities that republic faced during its brief existence more than 70 years earlier.

Indeed, Azerbaijan's post-Soviet leaders have been explicit about the impact of that experience on the decisions they have taken. The late President Heydar Aliyev frequently said that Baku's policies now must reflect “the

history and national traditions” of the Azerbaijani people, including those manifested in the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR). Consequently, anyone interested in Azerbaijan’s foreign policy now must begin by examining the ADR’s diplomatic activities, carefully separating the realities of that time from the myths that have grown up around it.

On May 28, 1918, the leaders of Azerbaijan declared their independence from Soviet Russia and the formation of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. They expected that the United States and the other great powers would quickly recognize them because most of those behind the declaration had been inspired to take this step by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson’s 14 Points speech in which he had proclaimed support for the right of all peoples to national self-determination. Moreover, they believed that the secular, democratic political system their country was creating would be especially attractive to the European and American governments. And the ADR’s leadership was confident that recognition would lead to the kind of support that would guarantee their independence.

But such recognition did not come as the ADR leaders expected, and as many of the most thoughtful in Baku recognized even then but some do not even now, it would not have been the solution to all their problems even if it had. Instead, they found themselves forced to get involved in the complicated and often trying business of diplomacy, untying the bonds which had linked them to the crumbling Russian empire, establishing relations with various neighbors, and seeking a place in the international system that would best help the people of Azerbaijan to have a better life – all at a time of great uncertainty and from a position of weakness relative to many of the other players.

Like any new country, Azerbaijan in 1918 faced three interrelated sets of extraordinarily difficult problems: sorting out the problems with neighboring states arising from the collapse of an empire, recruiting a diplomatic corps to implement its national goals abroad, and attracting the attention of the great powers and securing their recognition and support. In each of these cases, the ADR made some remarkable progress even though it lasted only two years as the result of an act of *force majeure* by Soviet Russia.

Coping with challenges like defining borders or dividing property when an empire collapses and setting up relations with the former imperial center when other countries are going through the same process and with other neighbors who did not expect to have new ones was the first set of challenges the new ADR had to face. Given that it had to address these issues during a period of enormous instability and from a place where some of the other countries involved were hostile and aggressive, the ADR did remarkably well.

On the negative side, Baku never overcame the unwillingness of Soviet Russia to acknowledge its independence, a failure that ultimately presaged the invasion of the Red Army and the extinction of the ADR. Nor did it overcome the hostility and aggressiveness of the Armenians, who were never prepared to cooperate with Azerbaijan even when the Americans worked to mediate the dispute between the two countries and whose invasion seriously weakened the ADR. Indeed, at the time of the Soviet invasion, most Azerbaijani troops were arrayed not on the northern border but along the Armenian front.

But on the positive side, not only is it unlikely that diplomacy alone could have changed that situation in any fundamental way, but within that difficult environment, the ADR did manage to develop close cooperative relations with Georgia, quickly agreeing on borders and the division of property, creating a postal-telegraph union and reaching an agreement on tariffs and railroads, working to promote greater cooperation in the Southern Caucasus despite Yerevan's opposition when the Western powers called on the countries of the region to do so, and even forming a military alliance when threatened by General Denikin's anti-Bolshevik White Army.

Azerbaijan faced an equally mixed picture in dealing with its two largest neighbors that had not been part of the Russian Empire: Turkey and Persia. Turkey was an enthusiastic supporter of Azerbaijan, but like many such backers, it wanted to exert more influence on the internal life of the ADR than that country's leadership were prepared to accept. And consequently, with this closest friend, Azerbaijani diplomats frequently had to work to get Turkey to be less involved rather than more.

Dealing with Persia was far more difficult. Not only were its rulers suspicious of the ADR's possible links to the ethnic Azerbaijanis in the north-western portion of the country, but Tehran had designs on parts of Azerbaijan itself. That situation makes the achievement of Baku's diplomats there all the more important. After an ADR delegation visited Tehran in March 1919, the two sides agreed to hold a conference beginning in December of that year which resulted in an accord on trade.

The ADR achieved its greatest success in creating a diplomatic corps from scratch. It attracted intellectuals and businessmen who quickly demonstrated a natural gift for diplomacy. The ADR recruited the distinguished writer Chemenzemenli to go to Ukraine, and its delegation to the Versailles Peace Conference, led by Ali Topchibashev, who was supported by M.G. Gajinsky, M.Mir-Mekhtiyev and D. Gajibekov, was skilled enough to impress Woodrow Wilson as the epigraph to this article attests even if the constellation of forces working on him and on the leaders of the other major powers did not allow them to achieve their goal.

Despite their efforts, the ADR was not able to achieve the diplomatic recognition it hoped for. There were many reasons for this. First of all, the situation on the ground in the Caucasus was far from clear. There were White Armies, Red Armies, and the armies of the newly emerged states. In this situation, even those like the British who did not want to see a united Russia emerge again, felt it was best to wait.

Lord Curzon, the British foreign secretary at the time, famously observed that "we are not obligated to recognize all small countries immediately." While many people have extrapolated his comment to apply to a wide range of situations, Curzon made it at a time when it was unclear whether the White Russian army would win and thus European countries would not want to undercut it by recognizing new states on its borders or whether the Red Army would win and the West would have good reason to limit its influence. In the event, of course, by taking this wait-and-see attitude, the European powers provided an opening for the latter while doing little to help the former.

Second, most of the major powers represented at Versailles had been approached by Armenians or missionaries who recounted the sufferings of that community in the Ottoman Empire. In many cases, these people did not make a clear distinction between that state and Turkey or even between both of them and Azerbaijan. As a result, and in an entirely unfair way, Azerbaijan was tarred with a very broad brush.

And third, the United States and its president were conflicted in their thinking. Wilson remained committed to self-determination but he did not want to see a world consisting of a large number of small states. His own utopianism led him to push for a Transcaucasian Confederation or even a “neutral zone” there under an American “governor general,” even though the U.S. was not prepared to send the number of troops needed to make that happen. And he was caught between those who wanted to develop good relations with Azerbaijan because of its oil and those who accepted Armenian attacks at face value.

These internal conflicts were directly reflected in Wilson’s dealings with the Azerbaijani delegation. On the one hand, he met that delegation before he met any other, a signal honor, and was impressed by what its members had to say. But on the other, he was not prepared to offend the French or anger the Armenian diaspora by moving quickly to extend to the ADR the diplomatic recognition it so urgently sought and so obviously needed.

Even if that recognition had been extended, however, it is very unlikely that it would have altered the course of events. Soviet Russia almost certainly would not have been put off by the presence of a few Western diplomats once it was in a position to take back that which it believed was its territory by right. But many Azerbaijanis thought otherwise, a view that reflected the notion that diplomatic ties could invariably trump other kinds of power.

During the first 18 months of its existence, the ADR took concrete steps to establish diplomatic ties of various degrees of closeness with Georgia, Persia, and Turkey. It set up consulates in Tabriz and five other cities in Persia, in Batumi in Georgia, in Crimea in Ukraine, and in Ashgabat in Turkmenistan. And on April 22, 1920, the ADR parliament adopted a law

on the creation of diplomatic missions in the major countries of Europe, the United States, and Soviet Russia, even though it had not yet reached accord with these states. Moreover, the parliament voted to replace the diplomatic mission to the Paris Peace Conference at Versailles with missions to the governments of the countries that had taken part in the talks.

But this action became moot less than a week later when the Red Army of Soviet Russia crossed Azerbaijan's northern border, extinguishing the ADR as a subject of international law. Although the ADR lasted only two years, its actions, especially in the diplomatic area, were so impressive that 71 years later they provided instruction to the leaders of the Republic of Azerbaijan on how best to proceed in what is still a dangerous and uncertain world. And consequently, those hard-won lessons have already put post-Soviet Azerbaijan on the road not only to survive but to prosper for a long time to come.

AZERBAIJAN'S BORDERS: THE SHADOW OF THE ADR'S EXPERIENCE TODAY

Jamil Hasanly, MP

As Azerbaijanis approach the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) on May 28th, they are taking pride in the fact that their forefathers were the first in the entire Muslim world to launch a secular newspaper, a modern theater and opera, and a democratic state in which women were given the right to vote. But they are also thinking about that republic's experience with defining its territory and establishing its borders, reflections that could have an impact on Baku's policies in the future.

From the first day of its existence, the ADR had to deal with territorial claims from neighboring states. Indeed, these contested territories, which amounted to 114 000 square kilometers, were larger than its core uncontested area, 98 000 square kilometers. But after the Bolshevik invasion in April 1920 and the suppression of the ADR, Soviet Azerbaijan was able to keep only 86 600 square kilometers, a smaller territory than the uncontested one it had prior to that time.

Not surprisingly, and particularly given continued Armenian claims to Azerbaijani territory, many Azerbaijanis are focusing again on what happened in the period between the collapse of the Russian Empire which resulted in the independence of the ADR and the inclusion of a newly

defined Azerbaijan SSR within the Soviet system. The history of this question is complicated and for various political reasons has frequently been distorted. But the basic facts are clear.

In May 1918, after the collapse of the *Zakavkaskiy Seym*, when the territories of the South Caucasus were moving toward full independent statehood, Azerbaijan agreed to yield Irevan (today known as Yerevan), a historically Azerbaijani city, to Armenia whose National Council argued that without Yerevan, Armenia would not have a real capital. In exchange, it agreed to drop all its claims on the mountainous section of *Yelizavetpol gubernia* (around Ganja).

When the Russian Empire conquered the Irevan khanate in the early 19th century, that area was populated primarily by "Turks," as the Azerbaijanis in that region were known at the time. According to one 1901 study, there were 49 875 Muslims (primarily Turks) and 20 073 Armenians at the time of the conquest. [1] Another Russian scholar concluded that the Armenian Province created by the tsar after the conquest had a population that was three-quarters Muslim and only one-quarter Armenian (Potto, p. 595).

That territory, the first created along ethnicity, left its titular nationality, the Armenians, in a minority. And in 1849, the tsarist government abolished it, putting in its place the non-ethnically-defined *Irevan gubernia*. Despite massive immigration of Armenians from the Ottoman Empire and Persia subsequently, the Muslims, that is, the Turks, that is, the Azerbaijanis, retained a majority throughout the imperial period, and it were ethnic Azerbaijanis who represented the *gubernia* in the State Duma beginning in 1906.

Nonetheless, on May 29, 1918, the ADR conceded that city to the Armenians, arguing that this was "a necessary evil" under the circumstances and pointing out that even with that grant, Armenia would remain a tiny country, with a territory of only 9 800 square kilometers, far smaller than Azerbaijan.

One region in the South Caucasus where dramatic changes in the ethnic composition of the population had begun even earlier was Karabakh. In none of the early 19th century treaties or decrees pertaining to this region is there a single reference to the presence of Armenians there. But after the Russian con-

quest, tsarist officials began to resettle Armenian immigrants from Persia and the Ottoman Empire in the Muslim provinces of the South Caucasus, including Karabakh. The first group of five thousand Armenian families arrived in Karabakh in March 1828, Potto reports, largely because the Armenian Province, their initial destination, was suffering from a drought (Potto, p. 591).

Later, even larger groups of Armenians arrived and chose to settle there. In 1854, Prince Mikhail Vorontsov, the Russian viceroy, pointedly observed that "Armenians will always be indebted to us for everything they have; they are loyal everywhere and are obliged to serve us." [2]

With the establishment of ADR, Azerbaijan reestablished its sovereignty over both the lowland and mountainous sections of Karabakh, something that the Armenian community acknowledged in a resolution of loyalty to Baku adopted at a congress which took place in that region during the summer of 1919. A.M. Topchubashov, the head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, pointed this out in a note distributed there. "Representatives of the Armenian population of Karabakh," the note read, "have adopted a decision subordinating their population to the Azerbaijani government." [3] But following the Soviet occupation of the South Caucasus, Moscow ignored this and made Karabakh an autonomous region within Azerbaijan, a step that was to prove so fateful later.

There is an equally important history concerning Nakhchivan. When the Russian Empire moved into that area, it was overwhelmingly Turkic (Azerbaijani). And even with the departure of many Muslims to Persia and the Ottoman Empire, there were still 17 138 followers of Islam as compared to only 2 690 Armenians. Following the collapse of the tsarist regime, Armenian forces drove more than 120 000 Muslims out of Zangezur, but these forces were not able to penetrate Nakhchivan or change the ethnic mix there to any significant degree.

An American plan to create a general governorship in Nakhchivan and Sharur in 1919 failed to materialize, and the ADR government did everything it could to defend the region. The Soviet authorities acknowledged this when

on March 1, 1921, on the eve of the Soviet-Turkish treaty, a document among those in Lenin's secretariat noted that Turks (that is, Azerbaijanis) and not Armenians were the dominant populations in Nakhchivan and Sharur, and that in most parts of these regions there was not a single Armenian living there at that time. [4] The Moscow and Kars treaties concluded in 1921 confirmed Nakhchivan's belonging to Azerbaijan. That said, from the days of ADR's establishment until Armenia's sovietization in 1920, the border between Azerbaijan and Armenian run through the mid-point of Lake Goycha.

That means, of course, that the Mehri corridor that now separates Nakhchivan from Azerbaijan proper did not exist, but after the Soviet authorities absorbed both Armenia and Azerbaijan, they created it, thus establishing yet another neuralgic problem that continues to agitate the entire region.

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Notes

- [1] *Гражданское управление Закавказьем от присоединения Грузии до наместничества Великого Князя Михаила Николаевича*, Тифлис, 1901, с. 229.
- [2] Акты Кавказской Археологической Комиссии [Acts of Caucasian Archaeological Commission], том 10, № 71.
- [3] National Archive of Azerbaijan Republic [in Azerbaijani], stock 970, list 1, file 142, p. 77.
- [4] Российский Государственный Архив Социально-Политической Истории [Russian National Archive of Social-Political History], фонд 5, список 1, дело 2796, с. 4.

NEW BOOK DOCUMENTS:
ARMENIAN ERADICATION OF AZERBAIJANI CULTURE
IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Paul Goble

The fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Karabakh and adjoining areas has frequently been accompanied by charges made by one side always denied by the other that its opponents are engaging in acts of genocide. But because the actions that support such charges typically have involved deaths and expulsions which took place during the course of combat operations, each side has generally if not always convincingly invoked military necessity to justify what it has done, claims that should never be allowed to minimize the human suffering involved but ones that sufficiently muddy the issue that many outsiders are inclined to dismiss both the charges of genocide and those who make them.

Now, however, a remarkable new book documents a consistent and continuing pattern of action by Armenian officials in the occupied territories since the cease fire went into effect more than a decade ago to deface or destroy Christian and Muslim monuments of Azerbaijani culture and thus make it impossible for the Azerbaijani community to survive there.

And that, in the view of most experts on international law, is an act of genocide, one of the most heinous crimes that any government anywhere can commit because, as commentaries on the 1948 United Nations

Convention on Genocide routinely note, “genocidal acts need not kill or cause the death of members of a group. Causing serious bodily or mental harm,” including the destruction of the cultural environment in which a group lives, “are acts of genocide when committed as part of a policy to destroy a group’s existence” either totally or on a particular territory. [1]

Prepared under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, the new book, “War Against Azerbaijan: Targeting Cultural Heritage,” [2] in remarkably restrained and thus doubly impressive language – the book itself never mentions the word “genocide” or the provisions of the 1948 convention – documents that the Armenian authorities have destroyed far more Azerbaijani cultural institutions – including churches, mosques, museums, monuments and houses – since the ceasefire began than they did during actual combat operations (p. 9).

The book opens with a review of the complex history of the Azerbaijani nation generally and in the regions now occupied by the Armenians in particular. In the course of it, Kamala Imranly of the Foreign Ministry’s Center for Strategic Studies and the book’s compiler points out that Azerbaijani culture has deep roots in Christianity as well as Islam and that the Armenian destruction of Christian churches linked to the Azerbaijani rather than the Armenian community across the occupied territories shows that this is a campaign against an ethnic group rather than a military effort or one, as some Armenians often seek to portray it, part of the clash of civilizations between the Christian West and Islam.

Moreover, this introduction reports and documents some truly disturbing actions, including the sale of irreplaceable Azerbaijani cultural artifacts through international art auction houses. The Azerbaijani government has been able to recover some of them by purchasing in these auctions items that the Armenians were selling but that never ceased to belong to Azerbaijan. How many other items of this kind may have been lost, however, remains unknown.

The remainder of the book is divided into chapters devoted to the various districts of Azerbaijan that are entirely or partially under Armenian occupation at the present time. The one about Kalbajar district (pp. 76-99) is

typical. It includes a detailed map of that region, detailed information about the ethnic composition of its pre-war population, the date the occupation began, and the cultural resources within it, ground photographs of some of these institutions, and time series satellite photographs that show both which ones were destroyed and when at little more than a glance.

Those features, especially the photographs and maps, will be most impressive to the casual reader, but far more important to the expert community and to officials in various governments is the detailed list of historical and architectural monuments. In the case of the Kalbajar district, the book lists 255 such institutions, giving the dates of origin, the address, and in many cases, the geographical coordinates for each. Of these 217 have been destroyed, including many of the cemeteries, and all of the museums and memorial complexes in any way linked to Azerbaijan and Azerbaijani culture.

Impressively, the book acknowledges where the “current state” of this or that monument is “unknown,” even though it is likely given that many of these in fact have been destroyed as well, especially since they tend to be smaller art objects, such as Medieval stone figures or Bronze Age rock drawings. The destruction of similar items by the Taliban in Afghanistan sparked international outrage; one can only hope that this book will do the same, either preventing the eradication of these cultural monuments or bringing to justice those responsible for defacing or destroying them.

In any military conflict, terrible things happen, including much loss of life and the obliteration of the natural and cultural environment which makes life possible. But when the shooting stops or even quiets down through an internationally arranged cease fire, then such actions represent not only a violation of one of the most important norms of contemporary international law but the kind of affront to the dignity not just of Azerbaijanis but of human beings everywhere.

The book reviewed here thus represents not only a bill of indictment of a terrible crime but a call to action for all people, governments and the international community.

Notes

[1] For the text of the convention and especially the definitions contained in its Article II, see <http://www.preventgenocide.org/genocide/officialtext.htm>.

[2] (in English; Baku, 2007), 280 pp., photographs, maps, and two CDs. The text of the book, originally issued in print run of 5 000 copies, is available online at <http://www.war-culture.az>.

SARA KHATUN:
AZERBAIJAN'S FIRST FEMALE DIPLOMAT

Sevinge Yusifzade

Azerbaijanis have always taken great pride in the fact that their country was the first nation in the East to extend the franchise to women, a step it took even before the United States did. But they have another reason to be proud about the role of women in public life: More than 500 years ago, an Azerbaijani woman played a key role in the politics and foreign relations of her country, centuries before women did so elsewhere.

Throughout the 15th century and later, women like the mother of Shah Ismail I, his wife, and the sisters and wives of others at court not only helped to define Azerbaijan's foreign policies but also to implement them. But in this group of outstanding women, a special place is occupied by Sara Khatun, the mother of the ruler of the Akkoyunlu state – Uzun Hasan.

His government played an enormous role in the history of Azerbaijan because he united in his own lands control over an enormous territory. It had relations with the Principality of Moscow, with Poland, the Venetian Republic, the Vatican, Ottoman Turkey, India, the Golden Horde, and many others.

During the years of Uzun Hasan's rule, it acquired particular authority in the international arena. And in defining its foreign policy conception, a major role was played by Sara Khatun. Thanks to her outstanding mind,

diplomatic skill and political position, Sara Khatun was well known both in Europe and in the countries of the East as a supporter of feudalisms who struggled against divisions within the state and the elite.

After the death of Turali bek Akkoyunlu, his sons engaged in a struggle for power. That struggle exhausted the resources of the state. But Sara Khatun by her wisdom and authority was able to stop this fratricide in the palace and put on the throne the politically far-sighted and militarily capable leader Uzun Hasan (ruler from 1453-1478).

Over the course of a short time, Uzun Hasan was able to pacify his military-political opponents and transform the Akkoyunlu state into a powerful feudal empire. In all actions of her son Uzun Hasan, Sara Khatun was the chief advisor and most devoted comrade in arms. Diplomatic dispatches from many countries of Europe and the East were addressed to her. And foreign diplomats arriving in Tebriz sought audiences with her and even conducted negotiations directly with her.

In the primary sources for this period, one can find many extremely interesting testimonials to this.

In February 1473, for example, Iosofat Barbaro, an ambassador from Venice arrived at the palace of Uzun Hasan. He had been given the following secret assignment, the documents say: "Meet with the mother of the ruler, show to her great respect and provide her with gifts ... [and thus] try to incline her to the idea of continuing the war with Turkey."

As a diplomat, Sara Khatun not only received ambassadors, she also conducted negotiations with the heads of neighboring states and successfully defended and advanced the foreign policy interests of Azerbaijan. And at the most difficult times for her country, she displayed courage, wisdom and the highest degree of diplomatic art.

Several petty feudal states nearby, one of which was the Greek state of Trapezund, were obstacles on the path to the expansion of Ottoman Turkey, a path that Sultan Mekhmed II had been pursuing on and off for several years. Then, in 1461, he decided to conquer Trapezund.

The feudal holding of Trapezund was the only exit to the Black Sea for the state of Akkoyunlu and was its ally in the struggle against Ottoman Turkey. And consequently, by seizing Trapezund, Mekhmed II not only broadened his possession but weakened his opponents by denying Akkoyunlu access to the sea and to Europe.

In addition, Uzun Hasan was married to the daughter of the emperor of Trapezund, Ioan IV Feodor. Wishing to protect his area, Mekhmed II before seizing Trapezund attacked Akkoyunlu. Uzun Hasan was not yet prepared for war with a powerful Turkey, lacking both weapons and aid from Europe. And consequently, the Akkoyunlu state was at risk of disappearing.

Uzun Hasan had to play for time. And it was decided to send Sara Khatun at the head of a delegation for negotiations with Mekhmed II.

Not far from Erzindzhan in the settlement of Yassychemen, where Mekhmed II had his military camp, the negotiations took place. Sara Khatun's goal was to dissuade the sultan from launching a war against Akkoyunlu.

Sara Khatun, who enjoyed great authority in the Near and Middle East, was received by Mekhmed with great respect and honor. In the course of the talks, it was decided that the state of Akkoyunlu would remain neutral during Mekhmed II's campaign against Trapezund, and Turkey would not go to war with Akkoyunlu. That accord had enormous importance for Akkoyunlu. Indeed, it was thanks to this agreement that the state of Akkoyunlu preserved its independence.

But Sara Khatun sought even more. Not being satisfied with that achievement, she accompanied the Turkish forces as they moved toward Trapezund and in the course of the entire trip attempted to convince Mekhmed II not to attack the cities. In such circumstances, Sara Khatun made her own demands for the treasury of the Trapezund state, pointing to the rights of her daughter in law Feodora. In the event, the city's treasury was divided between Akkoyunlu and Turkey.

Later she also served as the lead negotiator when the danger of invasion by Timurids' leader Abu Said hung over the state of Akkoyunlu. And later still, she again conducted talks with Sultan Mekhmed II.

Consequently, despite some gaps in the historical record, we can assert with confidence that Sara Khatun was the only woman diplomat of the East in the 15th century and the first female diplomat in the history of Azerbaijan.

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AZERBAIJANIS AND THE ALLIED VICTORY OVER FASCISM IN WORLD WAR II

Gurban Mammadov

Although most of the focus on Victory Day this year as in earlier times has been elsewhere, Azerbaijan played an important role during World War II not only as an object of interest by Germany's high command but also as a source of oil and personnel for the Red Army that ultimately drove German forces out of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and defeated the Third Reich, as well as an important participant in Moscow's occupation of Azerbaijani territories in northern Iran.

When Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, Hitler hoped to seize Azerbaijan and its immense oil resources, the possession of which would then allow him to occupy Central Asia and create a German client state to be known as Greater Turkestan of which Azerbaijan itself was to be a part. That German plan, code named Edelweiss, called for the occupation of Baku by September 25, 1941, after which Azerbaijan's oil reserves were to be controlled by Germany's Continental Oil Society.

During the course of the war, Azerbaijan provided both oil and personnel for the Soviet Union. In many respects, the outcome of the war was entirely dependent on fuel supplies for the army. Over four years, Azerbaijan produced 75 million tons of oil, 75 percent of all Soviet output, and refined 85 to 90 percent of all the gasoline the Red Army used.

At the same time, more than 700,000 Azerbaijanis joined the Soviet military during the war. Of these, more than 10,000 were women. Many Azerbaijani soldiers and officers were decorated for their contribution to the defense of the Soviet Union and then the liberation of Eastern Europe. But tragically, more than half of the total – 420,000 – perished in the fighting. In addition, hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis at home made various contributions to the war effort, manning defense factories, organizing hospitals, and the like.

But Azerbaijan's contribution to the war effort was not limited to oil and manpower. The republic produced 130 different weapons systems and their components, including the Katyusha rocket and the YAK-3 fighter aircraft. And it supplied the front with 15 kilograms of gold, 952 kilograms of silver, and 125 train loads of warm clothes.

During the course of the conflict, Moscow dispatched Azerbaijani officials to various parts of the USSR to fill in for those who had left for the front. Aziz Aliyev, for example, came from Azerbaijan and helped organize Daghestan and other regions of the North Caucasus. In large part because of his work, the nations of the eastern portion of that region were not deported to Central Asia as so many others in the western part of the North Caucasus were at the end of the war.

Azerbaijan also played a key role as a republic during the war. On the one hand, when German forces approached the North Caucasus, Moscow organized a defensive region centered on Baku. Azerbaijani units made a major contribution to the liberation of the North Caucasus. And on the other, Azerbaijan was the jumping off point for the Soviet Union's occupation of Northern Azerbaijan, a step intended to deny the Germans Iranian oil and one that led both to the creation of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan and in 1946 triggered the beginning of the Cold War. [1]

Azerbaijanis also took part in the partisan and anti-fascist resistance movements throughout Europe. In the spring of 1942, for example, Hadi Giyasbayov and Mirzakhlan Mammadov escaped from a Nazi camp and joined the underground. Vilayat Guseynov was among the partisans who arrested

Mussolini. And Akhmadiyya Dzhabrayilov participated in the French resistance and was subsequently given that country's highest military medal.

But far and away the most famous Azerbaijani partisan was Mekhdi Guseynzade, who used the nom de guerre Mikhailo. He joined the Yugoslav partisans in 1942 and in the course of the fighting killed more than 1,000 German officers. In an effort to capture him, the Nazis put an enormous price on his head. In 1957, he was posthumously named a Hero of the Soviet Union.

Like other peoples who defeated fascism in World War II, Azerbaijanis every year recall that conflict and the sacrifices they and others made for victory. And more than many, Azerbaijanis know that they made an incalculable contribution to that victory, something that all of them are now and always will be extremely proud of.

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Note

[1] On this complicated issue, see what is now the definitive work on the subject by Azerbaijani historian Gasanly (2006).

AZERBAIJANI COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND THE KARABAKH CONFLICT: FILLING IN THE BLANK SPOTS OF HISTORY

Rauf Garagozov

The end of the Soviet system has allowed Azerbaijanis ever more confidently to turn to their own history and collective memory, both of which were seriously distorted by the communist authorities, and thus to continue the process of the recovery of their own past that began during the period of glasnost and perestroika, a time of enormous growth in the interest of people to their own history, a rethinking of well-known events and new attention to almost unknown and largely forgotten events which one might call "the blank spots" of history.

A similar process has been going on in all former Soviet republics, but what makes the situation in Azerbaijan unique is that up to now almost all of these "blank spots" being filled in concern the complicated history of Armenian-Azerbaijani conflicts. And there are at least two, in many respects mutually reinforcing, reasons why there has continued to be no lessening in the interest of society in precisely these questions.

On the one hand, it was precisely during the Gorbachev period that Armenians demanded the transfer of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast of the Azerbaijan to the neighboring Armenian SSR even though Azerbaijanis have always viewed Karabakh as an inalienable part of their own cultural-historical

inheritance. Not surprisingly, Armenian claims to the contrary sparked an interest in the history of this district and the region as a whole among Azerbaijanis.

And on the other, many historical events, with the closest causal connection with the Karabakh conflict, had to a large degree been forgotten or distorted in favor of the ideological requirements of the communist regime. In particular, the treatment of such themes as the history of the Caucasus of the 19th century, of the establishment of Soviet power in Azerbaijan or of the Armenian-Azerbaijani clashes of the beginning of the 20th century was so reduced or distorted as to constitute "blank spots" in the historical memory of the Azerbaijani people.

Consequently, it should come as no surprise that a book, published in Baku in 1990 and devoted to the history of Armenian-Azerbaijani conflicts of the beginning and end of the 20th century, bore the highly symbolic title *Blank Spots of History and Perestroika*. Many historical events of the 19th and early 20th century had been subject to a taboo in Soviet times and thus were kept out of the collective memory of Azerbaijanis. The result was that the outburst of Armenian expansionism and territorial claims against Azerbaijan at the end of the 20th century was something completely unexpected for a large part of Azerbaijani society and shocked many people.

Initially, the Armenian side turned out to be ideologically better prepared for the conflict: Thanks to the efforts of Armenian propagandists and assorted experts allied with them, Armenian explanations predominated. The Azerbaijani position on all this for a long time was not even heard not only because the Armenians were so ready with answers but also because the Azerbaijanis were to a large extent not prepared to express their own views with precision.

The reasons for that difference lie in the very different historical consciousnesses of the two peoples and, even more, in the differences between the nature of the collective memories of Armenians and Azerbaijanis.

French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1992), a founder of the academic study of collective memory, noted that individual memories in order to survive for any length of time must correspond to certain "social frameworks," within whose space they can be placed. From this flow two impor-

tant consequences relevant to our story here. It can mean that these frameworks distort personal memories in a way that Lowenthal (2001, p. xiii) says leads to "the syndrome of false collective identity." Or it can, when these social frameworks are lacking, lead to a situation in which individual memories are condemned to disappear. The first variant is what has been the case for Armenian collective memory; the second, for the Azerbaijani.

The Armenian framework for a long time has been well-developed, and its narrative centers on the belief that Armenians are a people surrounded by enemies who will triumph if they remain true to their faith and their people. Initially, these narratives were written for powerful clans but increasingly they reflected the views of the Armenian Church. And then with the rise of modern nationalism, the people or nation replaced the faith at the center, but the basic storyline remained unchanged, as Marc Ferro (2003) has shown in his study of the informal histories Armenians have passed down within their families.

The situation with regard to Azerbaijani collective memories has been entirely different, reflecting heroic tales and epic storytelling. These stories talk mostly about individual heroism or unrequited love rather than about the people as such. And consequently they do not contain many of the features most typical of what Smith (1995) calls "ethno-histories." That absence in turn puts many historical events at risk of being discarded as historical memory is formed, something that puts Azerbaijanis at a disadvantage.

Thus, for example, Azerbaijanis have practically forgotten as a nation the loss of territories like Zangezur and the experiences of conflicts they had with the Armenians in the first half of the 19th century. Indeed, it is worth noting, that if there did not exist historical texts and documents compiled by such Russian historians and political figures as Shavrov (1911), Griboyedov (1971), and Glinka (1831), Azerbaijanis now would find it even more difficult to reconstitute their historical memory.

These characteristic features of Azerbaijani collective memory, which have given birth to remarkable lacunae in their collective images about their past, gave great opportunities for all kinds of historical "innovations" and "construc-

tions" which distorted the historical record in the last century. And thus it was no accident that in the Soviet period, Azerbaijani historiography was far more fabricated than were the historiographies of neighboring nationalities.

Since 1991, Azerbaijanis have made a valiant effort to overcome this past, and we can observe a qualitatively new level in the formation of an Azerbaijani collective memory, one that seeks to compensate for this past. And consequently, many things which were blank spaces only a few years ago are now at the center of discussions as the nation seeks to include them as an inalienable part of Azerbaijani collective memory and identity.

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EVOLUTION OF AZERBAIJANI NATIONALISM: ENLIGHTENMENT, ADR, AND AZERBAIJANISM

Etibar Najafov

Mainstream theories of international relations have long ignored ideological factors in their attempts to explain international outcomes. Reducing the history of international system to the history of class struggle (Marxism), or anarchy-induced global-level competition among major powers (Realism) resulted in missing the important role phenomenon such as nationalism played in the evolution of the international system.

The collapse of the Soviet empire has only reinforced the primacy of nationalism in shaping major international events. Nationalism has been a central factor in determining the content and direction of social development in post-Soviet states. An analysis of the modern history of non-Russian peoples of the former Soviet Union from the perspective of nationalism reveals a new conception of their history as a national liberation movement. This paper will analyze the history of the Azerbaijani people in the second half of the 19th century – early 20th century to demonstrate the importance of this methodological approach as the basis for a redefinition of the modern histories of non-Russian populations associated with the former Soviet empire.

Some scholars have historicized Eastern nationalist movements as passing through distinct cultural, political, and economic periods (Chavan 1973, p.448;

Gokalp 1959, p. 65). In line with this approach, Azerbaijani nationalism initially manifested itself as a cultural movement beginning in the second half of the 19th century. At this time, Azerbaijan was a province of Tsarist Russia, which executed a policy of open Russification, discrimination and oppression of national minorities. This experience shaped Azerbaijani nationalism as a struggle of the Azerbaijani people for national and cultural independence.

Such prominent Azerbaijani artists, writers and philosophers like Jalil Mammadgulu-zadeh, Hasanbey Zardabi, Mirza Alakbar Sabir, Abdulhasan Hagverdiyev, Najaf Vesirov constituted the foundation of this cultural movement. Drawing on Mirza Fath Ali Akhundov, they criticized the ignorance and religious fanaticism impeding greater progress and blamed Tsarist Russia for her national policy which they viewed as chauvinistic by nature.

The activity of these intellectuals assumed a variety of forms. They opened national schools espousing a new teaching methodology and secular education (*Usul-u Cedid*) (Saray 1987, p.12); they worked to reform the language and alphabet with the goal of forming the Azerbaijani literary language based on the living popular language (an idea first promoted by Akhundov in the first half of the 20th century); they opened national libraries and reading halls; they established charitable, cultural and public organizations, such as "Nijat", "Safa", "Edeb Yurdu", and "Jamiyyeti-Kheyriyye" (Baykara 1992, p.55), sustained by contributions from wealthy patrons and providing support to national newspapers, magazines, and Azerbaijani students who studied in Europe; and they published newspapers and magazines, such as "Hayat", "Yeni Hayat", "Fuyuzat", "Yeni Fuyuzat", "Irshad", "Tereggi", viewed as an effective means for disseminating the burgeoning national and cultural renaissance.

In addition, these activities promoted the awakening of an Azerbaijani national consciousness as Azerbaijanis increasingly perceived each other as united by cultural and ethnic bonds.

The transformation of Azerbaijani nationalism from a cultural movement to a political one was rooted in scholarly and political activities of such prominent Azerbaijani intellectuals as Alibey Huseynzadeh, Ahmed

Agaoglu, Ali Mardan bek Topchibashev, and Mammad Emin Rasolzadeh. For the first time, these individuals began to assert the social-political rights of the Azerbaijani people using all means available within the realm of law. Among their activities were writing petitions addressed to the Tsar and including demands for equal political, civil, religious, cultural, and property rights for Russian Muslims, as well as calls for the need to build a democratic society in Russia. Other activities included meetings with high governmental officials, convening a Pan-Russian Congress of Muslims and the active participation in the Russian Duma.

During this period, Pan-Islamism was viewed by representatives of the Azerbaijan intelligentsia as a major obstacle in the way of their national liberation movement. Rasolzadeh, one of the leaders of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, noted:

History has demonstrated that by promoting theocratic and clerical reactionary movements, on the one hand, and impeding the formation of the national ideology in the Muslim world, on the other hand, pan-Islamism does not allow for the Muslim peoples to be independent. We should strengthen the process of the development of the national consciousness in the entire Muslim world because the formation of national identity is the real cause of social progress and the basis for national independence (Rasolzadeh 1985, p.58).

Initially, representatives of Azerbaijani nationalism advocated the idea of pan-Turkism and called for unification with Turkey (Keykurun 1964, pp. 57-79). Yet the leaders of Azerbaijan's first democratic republic eventually rejected this idea in favor of a new political concept of Azerbaijanism, which would reflect the unique social, economic, political, and cultural development the Azerbaijani people had gone through. Also, it would unite Turkification, Islamization and modernization as three directions of social development. First suggested by Alibey Huseynzadeh in 1905 (Heyd 1950, p. 150), the concept of Azerbaijanism turned into the official doctrine of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic and found its symbolic expression in the three-colored flag of the Republic.

Until March 1918 proponents of Azerbaijanism adhered to federalism in their national liberation struggle and advocated national autonomy within the sovereign borders of Russia. But the events of March 1918, when the Bolsheviks allied with the Armenian paramilitary forces massacred over 10,000 Azerbaijanis in Baku and Shamakhy, forced the leadership of the Azerbaijani nationalist movement to reject federalism in favor of political independence. The result was the establishment of the first-ever Democratic Republic in the entire Muslim world on May 28, 1918.

The establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) was an important milestone in the evolution of Azerbaijani nationalism because it set the groundwork for the emergence of economic nationalism. However, this stage did not materialize as the Bolshevik invasion and occupation of Azerbaijan on April 28, 1920 put an end to the ADR and interrupted the historical evolution of Azerbaijani nationalism, which would only begin to re-emerge in the late 1980s.

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EVOLUTION OF PARLIAMENTARIANISM IN AZERBAIJAN

Bakhtiyar Aslanbayli

The parliamentary system in Azerbaijan has gone through three distinct periods: the period of the emergence of parliamentarianism as a result of the participation of Azerbaijanis in the pre-1917 Russian Dumas and the activities of the first Azerbaijani parliament, the period of activities of the Azerbaijan SSR Supreme Soviet, and the period of independent parliamentarianism since 1991. This article examines the impact of the first on the second and especially the third.

The participation of Azerbaijani intellectuals in the work of the pre-1917 State Dumas represents the starting point of parliamentarianism in Azerbaijan. Five Azerbaijanis were elected to both the first and the second State Dumas. One, Alimardan Topchubashov, even served as head of the broader Muslim group in the first Duma. After the dissolutions of the first and second Dumas, Turkic and Muslim populated Central Asia, Siberia and other regions were deprived of their rights to elect delegates, and Baku was not permitted to send representatives to them either. Consequently, in the third and fourth State Dumas, there was only one Azerbaijani deputy, who represented the entire Muslim population of the Caucasus.

Nonetheless, participation in the Dumas gave Azerbaijani intellectuals an opportunity to become acquainted with parliamentary culture and defined

their approach after the fall of the tsarist system. In 1918, Azerbaijanis who had been elected to the Constituent Assembly participated in the formation of the Transcaucasus Sejm, where the 44 Azerbaijani members represented the one million Turkic and Muslim residents of the Caucasus. They formed the Azerbaijani National Council on May 27, 1918, and can thus be said to be the first Azerbaijani parliament. That body, on May 28, adopted the Declaration of Independence of Azerbaijan, founded the parliamentary republic and formed the provisional government of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) under the leadership of Fatali khan Khoyski.

During the period of the ADR, parliamentary activity evolved through two periods. The first lasted from May 27, 1918 to November 19, 1918 and corresponds to the period of the National Council. That body – Azerbaijan's first parliament – was set up in May and its 44 members made numerous important, indeed historical, decisions, among them the Declaration of Independence, that helped to define the nature of the country. Then in June, the National Council suspended its session and delivered all executive and legislative power to the provisional government. However, in November, the National Council met again and, in reaction to the extraordinary situation the country faced, adopted the law providing for the assembly of a broader Azerbaijani Parliament and itself ceased to exist.

The second phase lasted seventeen months from December 7, 1918 to April 27, 1920. During this period, the new broader parliament, functioning uninterrupted, also passed numerous pieces of legislation aimed at preserving the independence and territorial integrity of the country and creating a system that respected and defended the rights and liberties of its citizens. Its decisions – including laws on citizenship, military service, a National Bank, the establishment of Baku State University, customs, post and telegraph services, and the extension of suffrage to women – defined the nature of the political system as such, and consequently, many modern Azerbaijani scholars see the day of its establishment, 7th of December, as the foundation of modern Azerbaijani parliamentarianism.

The parliaments of ADR over these two periods held a total of 155 sessions,

ten in the form of the National Council and 145 in the form of the Parliament. The parliament discussed more than 270 bills, about 230 of which were adopted. It had 11 commissions and 120 members from 11 different factions and party groups. And it operated under a special statute of the Azerbaijani parliament.

One of the parliament's main objectives was to win international recognition for Azerbaijan's independence. On December 28, 1918, it thus decided to send a delegation led by A. Topchubashov to the Paris Peace Conference where the delegates succeeded in winning *de facto* if not *de jure* recognition by the great powers. The parliament, which introduced many ideas of European parliamentarianism into Azerbaijan, thus achieved a great deal that subsequent Azerbaijani political figures could look back to after the collapse of Soviet power in 1991.

When Azerbaijan under pressure from the 11th Red Army had to hand over its powers and functions to the Bolsheviks, Baku set a number of conditions, including the maintenance of a genuine parliamentary system in and independence of Azerbaijan, to which Moscow agreed. But not surprisingly, the Bolsheviks failed to live up to their promises, and the parliament they created, the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan SSR, was a farce from a political point of view.

But if that body had no real powers, it nonetheless played a key role in maintaining the principle of parliamentarianism as the form of government in Azerbaijan. Moreover, that body introduced the practice of standing commissions rather than *ad hoc* ones, an innovation that continues to affect Azerbaijani practice. And it was the Azerbaijan SSR Supreme Soviet which adopted the Declaration on the Restoration of State Independence of Azerbaijan Republic on August 30, 1991, and the Constitutional Act on the Restoration of State Independence of Azerbaijan Republic on October 18, 1991, the two acts that formalized Azerbaijan's post-Soviet independence.

The new post-Soviet parliament, the Milli Majlis, helped to prepare the new constitution. And it has been that body which has defined the political system and many of its aspects by the laws it has passed. It has defined the nation in many ways, introduced modern forms of economic activity, and created a political system based on democratic and secular ideals. And it had

provided the legislative base not only for the rest of the government but also for local administration.

Milli Majlis also enjoys dynamic relations with the international community. The Azerbaijani parliament established bilateral and multilateral cooperation with parliaments of many other countries. It also participates in the activities of several international parliamentary institutions. These help both to enrich the parliament's international practices, and to promote Azerbaijan's foreign policy priorities.

Many of these measures reflect the updating of ideas of almost a century ago, and Azerbaijanis can be proud of the more than 90 years of parliamentarianism in their country as a guarantee of their rights and freedoms and of the independent existence of their country.

Diaspora and Foreign Policy

REACHING OUT TO AZERBAIJANI DIASPORA

Nazim Ibrahimov

Azerbaijanis have always paid attention to their co-ethnics living beyond the borders of the republic. However, until President Heydar Aliyev established the State Committee on Affairs with Azerbaijanis Living in Foreign Countries (SCAALFC) in July 2002, this longstanding attention to the Diaspora and the ways its members could help their motherland in general, lacked focus. There were a number of non-governmental organizations involved before then, of course, but few had the funding or clout to make a difference, shortcomings that were highlighted at the I Azerbaijani Diaspora Congress in November 2001.

That meeting and the reaction it generated in the Government of Azerbaijan and the society truly represented a turning point. It led to a general recognition of the notion that Azerbaijan had a diaspora, people linked by culture, language and identity with their homeland, and that these groups could help advance Azerbaijani interests, especially in contests with diasporas of other states.

Since then, the Committee has enjoyed the active support first of Heydar Aliyev and then his successor Ilham Aliyev, as well as the backing of the parliament and the people of Azerbaijan. Today, we are proud to note that the first stage in the formation of the diaspora has been successfully completed.

We have institutions to help Azerbaijanis abroad, and they are now helping Azerbaijan to tell its story to the world and especially to counter the work of others who want to distort it.

Since the time it was established, SCAALFC has been increasingly active. In 2002, The Committee organized a conference on "The Azerbaijani Diaspora: Current Situation and Future Prospects." In 2003, it worked with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to conduct the first Forum for Leaders of Azerbaijani Diaspora Organizations, in Mainz, Germany. More than 170 delegates from 29 countries came to discuss how to improve our work. In 2004, SCAALFC helped to organize in Berlin the Founding Congress of European Azerbaijanis, as well as the Founding Meeting of the Federation of Azerbaijani-Turkish Study Groups in Iskenderun, Turkey. The Committee also provided help to the Azerbaijani communities in the Benelux countries to set up their own organizations.

During that period, SCAALFC also worked with Azerbaijani communities in Canada, Japan and the United States to get organized and become more active. Indeed, when Tokyo registered the Azerbaijani-Japan Friendship Association in 2006, it was the first Azerbaijani organization registered in that country.

The Committee's activities during that period and since have not been limited to organizing groups. It has also reported to the Government of Azerbaijan on how Baku can help to protect the rights of Azerbaijanis living abroad. It has held Azerbaijani evenings and Azerbaijani culture events both together with diaspora groups and independently. It has supported the creation and operation of Sunday schools to ensure that younger Azerbaijanis will retain their language and culture regardless of where they live. It has supported Azerbaijani-profile schools abroad, such as Moscow Secondary School No.157. The Committee has also assisted in the promotion of teaching of Azerbaijani at Moscow State Institute of International Relations, the National University of Kyiv, and the French Institute for Eastern Cultures and Languages.

In March 2006, President Ilham Aliyev convened the II Congress of the World Azerbaijanis, to discuss the ways in which they could influence the policies of the governments of the countries they live in toward Azerbaijan

and how the Azerbaijanis living abroad could maintain and develop closer ties to their homeland. Representatives of more than 80 groups from 30 countries took part in its deliberations.

Now Azerbaijanis living abroad are not only working to promote the interests of Baku beyond Azerbaijan, but in many countries they are also developing close ties with other diasporas, including in the first instance Turkish ones, as well as the Jewish communities. In most countries, Turkish diasporas are both larger than the Azerbaijani one and have more experience in working with the governments of those countries. Consequently, they are frequently able to provide real support for Azerbaijanis, just as Azerbaijanis are able to do in return.

Our cooperation with Turkey and the Turkish diasporas was highlighted during the November 2007 meeting of the Congress of the World Turkic Nations. Held in Baku – the first time this body has met outside of Turkey itself – the Congress agreed to create a new permanent secretariat to ensure that all the countries of the Turkic world and all their diasporas can work together in support of the many things they have in common.

Azerbaijanis in the United States have also been closely working with the Jewish community, and that cooperation has paid off: Not only have Azerbaijanis learned a great deal about lobbying from the vastly more experienced Jewish groups, but they have secured the support of the latter in key legislative battles.

One of the reasons Azerbaijan devotes so much attention to expanding its contacts with its diaspora and with the diasporas of other Turkic nations is that all of us must deal with the activities of the Armenian diaspora, which for decades has put out its distorted version of Azerbaijanis and other Turkic peoples without the latter being able to respond effectively. Now that situation is changing, and a major explanation for that is to be found in SCAALFC's activities.

During the last year alone, the Committee helped to organize the II European Forum of Azerbaijani Students in Brussels, helped to set up the headquarters of the Azerbaijani Council of America in California, and supported the establishment of the German Consultation Council of Azerbaijanis in Germany. I am proud to say that we took part in the celebra-

tions of the 50th Anniversary of the Azerbaijani Society of America, even as we were creating new groups in Britain, Poland, and Denmark.

In addition, SCAALFC hosted a meeting of the Central Council of the Congress of Azerbaijanis in Russia, and helped to establish the Azerbaijan-Israel International Association in Tel Aviv (AZIS), and backed the creation of AZIS-Germany, an association dedicated to unite Azerbaijanis living there and promote closer ties between Azerbaijan and the countries where Azerbaijanis live, just as all our activities are designed to do.

Of particular importance last year was our work in the Russian Federation where more than two million Azerbaijanis now live. When the Russian Government issued a decree that put the continued presence of many of them at risk, SCAALFC worked with the Embassy of Azerbaijan to ensure that all of the members of that community were able to get the documents they needed to fully comply with Russian law. As a result, there has not been the mass outflow of Azerbaijanis that many had feared.

In the year ahead, we are planning to host the I Forum of Azerbaijani Scientists and the I Meeting of Azerbaijani Journalists living abroad, models of the kind of thing we hope to do for other professional groups in the future. Moreover, we are closely involved in the planning for meetings of the Benelux-Azerbaijani Congress, as well as meetings in Moscow, Paris and other cities, where we have Azerbaijani communities. In addition to helping to arrange visits by foreign officials and parliamentarians, we are also working to establish diaspora organizations in countries like Turkmenistan, where they have never existed before.

These are the achievements we have gained as of today. However, with more than some 300 different active diaspora communities and even more emerging almost every month, and with both Azerbaijan and its co-ethnics living abroad playing an ever larger role in the world, our biggest challenges at the Committee are very much ahead of us.

AZERBAIJANIS OUTSIDE OF AZERBAIJAN: EMIGRES, DIASPORAS AND NATIONAL MINORITIES

Paul Goble

Like every other country, Azerbaijan has members of its ethnic community living abroad. But except for a very few, it has a far larger number of such people compared to its own population, and they vary more widely in their relationships to the countries in which they live and to Azerbaijan itself. The enormous number of Azerbaijanis living beyond the borders of Azerbaijan makes them increasingly important players in international affairs; their diversity makes Baku's dealings with them complicated and their various roles often misunderstood by others.

The total number of Azerbaijanis living outside of Azerbaijan is a matter of dispute, with most estimates converging on 35 to 40 million, some four to five times the number living in the Republic itself. There are three major reasons for the inability even of experts to agree on the figure. First, many of the countries in which Azerbaijanis live have not conducted reliable censuses or asked questions about ethnic self-identification.

Second, in some countries, ethnic Azerbaijanis have in fact re-identified as members of the dominant community, because they feel closely related to the locally dominant community such as some in Turkey, have lived there so long that they have lost much of the Azerbaijani identity as is the case with some in

some Western countries, or have been forcibly re-identified by the governments under which they live such as in some Central Asian countries in the past.

And third – and this may be the most important reason of all – a few Azerbaijanis living abroad are political émigrés in the usual sense of that term; significantly more, especially in recent years, constitute a diaspora of people who have moved from Azerbaijan to another country to live and work but maintain close ties with their homeland; and finally the largest group of all include Azerbaijanis who form ethnic minorities in their countries in which they live because their ancestors have lived there for centuries. Moreover, in some places and for some individuals, the lines between these categories break down.

Because these groups are so different, their relationships to Baku and Azerbaijan are different, and the challenges the Azerbaijani government and people face in dealing with them are enormous, especially because some of the participants and many more outside actors do not understand this diversity or the ways in which expectations about such ties that are entirely justified in some circumstances are completely inappropriate in others, however much some for their own reasons may want them to be otherwise.

Given this daunting demographic and political complexity, no single article can hope to comprehend this subject. What follows is first, an overview of the number of ethnic Azerbaijanis living in different countries around the world, second, an assessment of their specific situation today, and third, a brief enumeration of the challenges this diversity poses for Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis at home and abroad.

An Enormous Category

More than half of the 35 to 40 million Azerbaijanis living outside Azerbaijan live in Iran where most of them are part of a community that has existed for almost a millennium. In Turkey, estimates of the number of Azerbaijanis range from 500,000 to a million, most of whom the descendents of one or

another wave of emigration from Azerbaijan over the last century. In Azerbaijan's immediate neighborhood, there are some 400,000 Azerbaijanis in Georgia, 100,000 in Daghestan, and, after the exodus of almost all of the Azerbaijanis who had been living in Armenia as a result of the Karabakh war, fewer than a hundred in that neighboring country. All three of these communities are the descendents of Azerbaijanis who have been living there for centuries.

In the Russian Federation, there are now at least 2.5 million and perhaps as many as three million Azerbaijanis, almost all of whom, except for the group in Daghestan, have arrived at the end of the Soviet period or after when they left their homeland to find work in Russian cities. In Western Europe, there are growing diasporas of the classical kind: 60 to 80,000 in Germany, 30-40,000 in France, and another 50-70,000 elsewhere in Europe. And in North America, there are now more than 275,000 ethnic Azerbaijanis in Canada and more than 300,000 in the United States, again of the classical diaspora type. There are small Azerbaijani communities in Asia and elsewhere, but they are only beginning to emerge.

Five Different Situations

Iran. No group of Azerbaijanis living abroad is larger and more important but at the same time more misunderstood. On the one hand, they still constitute a distinct ethnic community with its own past, problems and aspirations. But on the other, many of its members are integrated into Iranian society so completely that ethnic Azerbaijanis are found at the very top of the Iranian political and social system. Consequently, both observers and participants often shift between two polar positions – Azerbaijanis are oppressed and thus candidates for secession or Azerbaijanis are so integrated that any problems some have are irrelevant – when reality comprehends both of these and everything in between.

Prior to the Iranian revolution in 1979, the shah and those around him viewed the Azerbaijanis as outsiders and a potential threat to the Iranian nation-

alism Tehran then espoused. Not surprisingly, many ethnic Azerbaijanis resented this and were radicalized, and it was precisely in Tabriz, the most important city of Iranian Azerbaijan, that the revolution against the shah began. Under Khomeini, the basis of political loyalty shifted from ethno-nationalism to Islam, something that made the integration of the Azerbaijanis in principle easier.

But if that was true for many of them – and one example of this integration is the fact that today the head of the Guardians Council is himself an Azerbaijani – it was not for others. Many Iranian officials continued to treat the community in much the same way that they had under the shah, and some in the community felt a new sense of pride with the emergence of an independent Azerbaijan in 1991. That was and is all the more so because of the activities of some Azerbaijanis in Baku who would like to see “southern Azerbaijan” as Iran’s Azerbaijani area is called to be more autonomous, independent or even linked to the Republic.

Turkey. The situation of Azerbaijanis in Turkey today is unique. Unlike the political émigrés who arrived after the Soviet occupation of Baku, the ethnic Azerbaijanis in Turkey fit into Turkish life so well – they speak a closely related and fully mutually intelligible language and share a common commitment to Turkishness – that they sometimes find it difficult if not impossible to maintain their community as a separate and distinct entity. At the same time, however, and given the influx of new arrivals from Azerbaijan and the Caucasus in the 1990s, most of them retain close ties to and interest in Azerbaijan, an attachment and a focus that makes them in some ways more a political community than an ethnic one.

The Caucasus. Like the Azerbaijanis in Iran, the Azerbaijanis of the Caucasus are part of the same Turkic community that settled in this region a millennium ago. The situation they find themselves in, today, however, varies widely. In Armenia, from which all but a handful have been expelled, Azerbaijanis are forced to hide their identity, often changing their names and never flaunting their ethnicity in public. In Georgia, the community has had a very complicated relationship with Tbilisi. In the early 1990s, when the

Gamsakhurdia government pursued a policy of “Georgia for the Georgians,” Azerbaijanis felt isolated and some left. Later, under Shevardnadze, they were treated as full-fledged citizens of Georgia and had fewer problems.

Most recently, their rapidly growing size combined with the economic and political problems of Georgia has put them in a more difficult position once again, especially with regard to access to Azerbaijani-language higher education and jobs. As a result, even though the community continues to increase – it is the largest ethnic minority in Georgia – many of its members are choosing to leave either temporarily for schooling and work or even permanently.

The slightly more than 100,000 Azerbaijanis in Daghestan, a republic within the Russian Federation, have their own schools, cultural institutions, and media. Most of them live in Derbent, just north of the border of the Republic of Azerbaijan, although some have moved to other cities. Despite being the seventh largest ethnic community in that republic, the Azerbaijanis there appear generally satisfied with their situation at present.

The Russian Federation. Most of the members of this community are recent arrivals to Russia’s major cities. Indeed, according to some estimates, the Azerbaijanis number more than a million in Moscow alone and thus constitute the largest ethnic minority there. They have that status in many other Russian cities as well.

Because many Russians were offended by the arrival of what tradesmen and workers came to call “persons of Caucasus nationality” – a category in which the Azerbaijanis are the largest component – in the 1990s, some Azerbaijanis have been mistreated, beaten or even killed. And most recently, some Azerbaijanis in Moscow have been involved in clashes with ethnic Armenians there, a development that Russian media outlets suggested meant that there is now “a Moscow Karabakh.”

Despite that, the Azerbaijani community is extremely active, has created a variety of independent social and political groups, secured the creation of some Azerbaijani-language, and, more than any other group, worked to make the system of non-territorial national-cultural autonomies Moscow has

allowed work to their advantage. Indeed, at a recent meeting of the Azerbaijani federation of such autonomies, the leaders of other groups said they are copying what the Azerbaijanis have been doing.

The West. The Azerbaijani communities in Western Europe, the United States and Canada are relatively new, rapidly growing, and consist of students and business people. In most cases, they view themselves and are viewed by others as having a foot in both worlds, their homeland and their place of residence. And given the openness of the societies in which they live, they are the most active in seeking to promote the interests of their own country which in almost every case they view as their own. In some of these countries, they are subject to relatively strong pressures to assimilate but in none are they victims of active government discrimination.

Three Distinct Challenges

In working with Azerbaijanis living outside of Azerbaijan, Baku faces three distinct challenges. First, it must deal with the daunting diversity of this community, a diversity that many do not understand or for their own reasons are not prepared to recognize. What works or even is appropriate in one place will not work or be appropriate in another. And any effort to pursue a single policy toward all of the groups that make up this community will backfire, alienating the very people with whom Azerbaijan wants to maintain and develop relations.

Second, because Azerbaijan is entering the “diaspora” game relatively late compared to some other countries, it faces the obvious temptation to use the state alone as the means for organizing such communities abroad. Not only does that ignore the important reality that these groups are distinctive and independent, but it opens the door to charges by other diasporas and states that Azerbaijanis abroad are nothing more than agents of Baku, charges that however untrue limit the value of what Azerbaijanis abroad can do for Azerbaijan.

And third, by its involvement with Azerbaijanis abroad, Baku risks finding itself “captured” by the diaspora. That is, the issues that agitate Azerbaijanis outside of Azerbaijan are not always the same as those which concern Azerbaijanis at home. As a result, the actions and statements of the former can sometimes undercut the goals of Azerbaijani citizens and the policies of the Azerbaijani government, leading to misunderstandings and anger on both sides.

So far, Baku has successfully navigated through this minefield, but as ethnic communities abroad in general and Azerbaijanis living outside of Azerbaijan in particular become more important, both the people and government of Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijanis abroad will have to work hard so that all involved will benefit and none will suffer.

BAKU AND THE AZERBAIJANI DIASPORA: HOW MUCH INTERACTION AND INFLUENCE?

Murad Ismayilov

The Azerbaijani government is becoming ever more involved with Azerbaijanis living abroad, hoping to use them to influence other states. Baku's efforts in this direction are making the various members of this community more self-conscious of their identity if not yet a single united group. And this new self-consciousness among Azerbaijanis abroad appears likely over time to have an influence on Azerbaijan itself, regardless of how much influence they may have on the countries in which they live.

Given the importance of diasporas in general, it is not surprising that many scholars have considered their role in the formation of national identity. Shain and Barth (2003, p. 459), for example, note that diasporas, because they are "outside the state but inside the people ... often attach more importance to national identity than those inside the state." Consequently, at a minimum, they serve as a source of ideas for those living inside the state as well. That is clearly true for Azerbaijan.

Obviously, as various scholars have shown, tracing this influence is far from easy. There are simply too many causal chains involved in any particular shift of views either among diaspora communities or among officials and citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan. But it is clear that this influence exists

to a greater or lesser extent, and this essay focuses on four areas where there are some indications that it already is having an impact.

First, an obvious example of this concerns attitudes toward the war with Armenia. Although few in the diaspora actually participated in that conflict, it became for them both a defining feature of their identities as Azerbaijanis and a primary focus for their activities in the countries where they are living. And as Baku is increasing its interaction with them, some of the attitudes of the diaspora may reinforce or even modify the views of some officials and groups at home.

Indeed, these developments may be witnessed already today in, among other things, both the increasingly determined statements of President İlham Aliyev about his willingness to use military means to recover the occupied territories and his recent remarks about the decision of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic to give up Yerevan and public debates those remarks have prompted.

The second way in which the diaspora may be having an impact on the homeland Azerbaijan concerns the content of Azerbaijani national identity. While for most of the last decade, the Azerbaijani government has stressed an inclusive, civic definition of Azerbaijanis' national identity – the one they have labeled as Azerbaijanism – it now gets increasingly inclined to use the language of ethnic kinship to get Azerbaijani and Turkic diasporas to work together. While deeper cooperation with Turkic diasporas may only be welcomed, there is a risk that this stress of a pan-Turkic unity may lead to an increasing gap between the definition of Azerbaijani identity for those inside the state (which combines the notion of nationality and citizenship) and that for those outside (based on ethnic kinship and thus excluding representatives of other ethnic groups who might otherwise identify as Azerbaijani).

On the one hand, that division, especially if it grows, could cost Baku an important tool for promoting the country's interests abroad, for it may deprive the state of the support of a considerable number of people in diaspora who might otherwise be willing to serve the interests of what they would consider their motherland. On the other hand, the diaspora's view is already having an impact on the thinking of many Azerbaijanis within Azerbaijan, poten-

tially leading to a change in their national identity that could create a self-perception of marginalization among many of the ethnic minorities living there and call into question the country's well-deserved reputation for tolerance. Moreover, it is not improbable that this may eventually cause the "political conflict over the determination of national identity" (Shain and Barth 2003, p. 459; for pertinent theoretical discussions, see also Bloom 1990, pp. 79-81).

To avoid either of these developments, none of which is in Azerbaijan's national interests, those institutions in Azerbaijani government and society which shape the discourse about national identity need to develop a uniform conceptualized approach to nation-building and work together towards the creation of a single national identity shared by Azerbaijanis both inside and outside the political borders of the state. Besides, state bodies concerned should work more actively to reach out to diasporas of states with whom Azerbaijan has strategic and/or friendly relations based on its national interests rather than ethnic kinship.

The effect of this interest-based diasporic cooperation will be the formation of changed perception among the Azerbaijani diaspora that the unity of action with Turkic and other diasporas is generated by the convergence of national interests of their respective states, rather than sheer kinship considerations; with the important side-effect being the increase of their allegiance to the state, rather than to a single ethnic group. Working towards further solidifying the links and relations with the Jewish diaspora may be a good starting point and an exemplary model for establishing similar relations with other 'friendly' diasporas in future. Also important in this regard would be organization of regular multi-lateral forums with the participation of Azerbaijani, Turkic and other states' diasporas, which will contribute to the formation of the sense of unity among diasporas based on common interests rather than ethnicity or religion.

Third, the increasing activities of Azerbaijani communities in countries like Iran, the Russian Federation and the United States and their multicultural influence on Azerbaijan almost certainly will contribute to a further strengthening of Azerbaijanism as a state-promoted national identity and thus to what Baku calls its balanced foreign policy. But for that to be sus-

tained in the future, the Azerbaijani government will need to find new and strengthen existing mechanisms to increase its own contacts with various parts of the Azerbaijani diasporas around the world, and their contacts with each other. Not only will such mechanisms provide for intercultural exchange among Azerbaijanis coming from different cultural contexts and thereby keep up the multicultural content of their national identity, but they will also serve as a constant reminder of a single idea that binds them all together, that of allegiance to and affection for the state of Azerbaijan.

Toward that end, Azerbaijan might find it useful to introduce the concept of "dual nationality" (as opposed to "dual citizenship"), thus promoting the notion that Azerbaijanis are part of Azerbaijan regardless of where they live and what citizenship they have. That will increase the linkages between the diaspora and the homeland and slow any assimilation of the diasporas into their host societies. This institution may be especially attractive, for it will promote travel and contacts without allowing the diaspora to play a direct political role in the homeland through voting (see King and Melvin 1999-2000, p. 114).

Fourth, the Azerbaijani diaspora may have an important influence on Azerbaijan's domestic polity by turning into a valuable force behind democratization of their homeland. Because of their natural concerns about their own image in the hostland, which is derivative from the way in which Azerbaijan is viewed by the peoples and governments of the countries in which they live, members of the diaspora are likely to push the democratic governments and relevant international organizations (e.g., Council of Europe, OSCE, EU) in the countries of residence to adopt a more critical approach to the issue of Azerbaijan's democratization. Also, not only are they likely to insist that Azerbaijan act in ways that will attract positive notice but also regularly to report to Azerbaijanis through various channels of the way in which other countries view what the Azerbaijani government is doing at home. Besides, those members of the diaspora who hope to return to the country in the future have the greatest interest in the homeland's welfare and democratic development and thus in pushing it in a positive direction.

Obviously, the impact of Azerbaijanis living abroad is far broader than on identity issues alone. Indeed, while Azerbaijani community in Iran does not fall under the classic definition of diaspora and is not treated as such by the Azerbaijani government, it may in the longer term become a factor to be considered by both Azerbaijani and Iranian governments in their efforts to strengthen the bilateral relations.

If the relationship of Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis living abroad continues to expand, if the latter not only links itself increasingly to the homeland but also becomes more united, then it will be easier to trace these lines of influence. But as was noted above, there are already indications of just how important this influence could be if the Azerbaijanis living outside Azerbaijan find a common voice and raise it in their dealings with Baku.

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GEORGIA'S AZERBAIJANIS: PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES

Paul Goble

Ethnic Azerbaijanis in the Republic of Georgia are playing an ever more active role in the social and political life of that country, a development that is creating both problems and opportunities for the bilateral relations between Tbilisi and Baku, according to Azerbaijan's ambassador to Georgia Namig Aliyev.

In an interview with *Day.Az* published in Baku on May 1, Ambassador Aliyev pointed to a number of problems the ethnic Azerbaijanis now face in Georgia as they become increasingly active and organized but said that he was confident that the Georgian authorities "recognize that Georgia's Azerbaijanis are a valuable resource" for Tbilisi's domestic development and its relations with Azerbaijan.

Among the developments affecting the Azerbaijani community in Georgia this year are the following. First and most important, many ethnic Azerbaijanis have lost control of the land they have worked for years because they do not know Georgian and thus have lost out to Georgian entrepreneurs, something that has prompted the community to organize.

Second, they have been angered by Tbilisi's policy of appointing Georgians without knowledge of Azerbaijani to head schools in Azerbaijani-majority areas, a policy that Ambassador Aliyev says has now been reversed.

And many Azerbaijanis who do know Georgian remain unemployed, leading some to assume that Tbilisi wants to create a Georgia for the Georgians.

Third, Georgian officials in Azerbaijani regions have harassed Azerbaijani candidates running for office, arresting at least one and sparking worries, as mentioned, that Tbilisi wants to create a Georgia for the Georgians rather than a multi-national community in which all ethnic groups feel a common loyalty to the country.

Fourth, while Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili has provided some resources for ethnic Azerbaijanis seeking higher education, Baku's Heydar Aliyev Foundation has provided much aid, including textbooks to help Azerbaijanis learn Georgian and English and computers for Azerbaijani schools.

And fifth, Tbilisi has dragged its feet in responding to Baku's repeated requests to open a consulate in Marneuli, the center of ethnic Azerbaijani life in the Republic of Georgia, perhaps fearful that such an institution would lead more ethnic Azerbaijanis to identify not with the republic in which they live but in the one with which they share a common titular nationality.

All these problems should be solved and solved quickly, Ambassador Aliyev said, because "any multi-national state should want to have a second nation like the Azerbaijanis which always has and always will support [its] statehood," not only by opposing Armenian pretensions to portions of southern Georgia but also Russian support for Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

But however that may be, the Azerbaijanis of Georgia are not waiting either for the Georgian government to come to their aid or for Baku to intervene to solve all their problems. Since the start of this year, 12 ethnic Azerbaijani non-governmental organizations created the Congress of Azerbaijanis of Georgia (February). Activists set up a new Azerbaijani newspaper (March). They very publicly celebrated the Day of the Genocide against Azerbaijanis (April). And they created a public movement "Georgia is My Motherland" to promote the integration of that community into Georgian life (April).

These developments and the likelihood that this community will play a larger role in the life of Georgia and Azerbaijan in the future call out for closer at-

tention to a community than it has received in the past. Azerbaijanis have been living in the Kvemo, Kartveli, Kakhetia, and Shida Kartli regions of what is now the Republic of Georgia for centuries, but now because of the collapse of the Soviet Union, their own demographic growth, and the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline that passes through their territory, they have acquired new importance. [2]

The formation of nation states in the South Caucasus after 1991 has raised questions about the present and future status of ethnic minorities, especially in Georgia where some leaders have openly called for a Georgian-first approach. That has generated suspicions among both the titular nationality and the minority and has led many members of minorities to look abroad to places where their nationality has its own statehood. Azerbaijanis in Georgia have been less inclined to do so than the Ossetins, but they have not been immune to this process.

Second, Azerbaijanis have increased their share of the Georgian population despite the fact that their number has actually declined since 1989. In the last Soviet census, there were 307,000 ethnic Azerbaijanis in Georgia, whereas in the first Georgian census in 2002, there were 284,761. But their percentage in the population increased from 5.7 percent in the first year to 6.5 percent in the latter because even more ethnic Georgians left Georgia than did ethnic Azerbaijanis.

At least equally important in the socio-political situation of the Azerbaijanis of Georgia and particularly their relationship with the Georgian majority is the difference in birthrates among the two nationalities. At the end of the Soviet period, Azerbaijanis there had 28.6 children per thousand population, compared to the Georgians who had only 16. Not surprisingly, that difference sparked concerns among some Georgians that they would be "swamped" by the Azerbaijanis at some point in the future.

And third, the areas of Georgia in which Azerbaijanis predominate – the eastern and southeastern sections of the republic – are now vastly more important than they were not only to Tbilisi but to Azerbaijan. That is because the pipelines carrying Caspian Basin oil and gas to the West pass

through them and because the rail lines that Azerbaijan hopes will link it directly to Europe via Turkey pass through them.

Not surprisingly, that last factor is something both Tbilisi and Baku are very much aware of, with the former fearful that the traditionally supportive Azerbaijanis on its territory might eventually shift their loyalties and with the latter aware that such a shift could prompt the kind of reprisals that would threaten the strategic partnership President Ilham Aliyev has pursued with the Georgian government.

Consequently, the Azerbaijanis of Georgia are going to play an increasing role in the lives of both countries whether they or either of the states involved really want to see that happen. And that in turn sets the stage for possibly dramatic and unexpected developments, making a community few have attended to in the past a candidate for greater attention in the future.

Reference

[1] Комахия, Мамука (2008) "Формирование этнической карты Грузии и современные миграционные процессы", *Центральная Азия и Кавказ*, №1 (55), с. 179-186.

Notes

- [1] See <http://www.day.az/news/politics/116533.html>.
- [2] For an introduction to this community, see Komakhiya (2008).

A SELECTION OF INTERVIEWS

AZERBAIJAN AND TURKEY:
TURKEY'S AMBASSADOR GIVES FAREWELL INTERVIEW

Prior to his recall to Ankara to serve as chief of the president's secretariat in Ankara, Ambassador Huseyn Avni Karslioglu gave an interview to Azerbaijan in the World on February 20th.

Azerbaijan in the World: How do You evaluate the current level of the bilateral relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan?

Ambassador Karslioglu: Our bilateral relations are at the excellent level – they have been good, they are good, and they will be good. On the economic side, of course, there is always room for growth. Our political relations, which cannot be improved upon, were defined by Ataturk who said in the 1920s that Azerbaijan's happiness is our happiness, and Azerbaijan's sorrow is our sorrow. Whenever Azerbaijanis are happy, we are happy; whenever they cry – we cry. And the late Azerbaijani president Heydar Aliyev echoed that idea when he said that we are “One nation – two states.” That is the founding principle of our relations. And we mean it. This is not a mere rhetoric. Our governments and our peoples do believe this. Consequently, despite several hundred years of separation, the commonality in culture, religion, language that has survived the destructive efforts of the Russian and especially the Soviet is beyond description.

AIW: How do you evaluate the evolution of the Azerbaijani-Turkish relations during your tenure as ambassador in Baku?

Amb. Karşlıoğlu: My initial goal was to expand economic ties and to increase our relations in healthcare, education, and culture. I shook some things up to make this happen, and I am proud that we are now moving in many areas. But it was not foreseen that I would be here only one year. Normally, Turkey's ambassadors serve for four years. So, my leaving Baku now came as a very big surprise to all of us, especially to me. But even during that brief time, our prime minister visited Baku twice, and our new president made Azerbaijan his first bilateral visit. We have made progress in the field of energy, BTK (Baku-Tbilisi-Kars), and we have expanded our embassy's outreach to Azerbaijanis in Baku and the regions.

AIW: Is there any specific reason for your staying in Azerbaijan for only one year?

Amb. Karşlıoğlu: Well, the specific reason is that the President has called me to be a chief of his secretariat. Although I told him that I would not be apt for that job, that there were some other younger and more capable diplomats who could do that job better, and that I should rather stay here for a longer time, he said he needed me there.

AIW: What are the core of the relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey?

Amb. Karşlıoğlu: As President Aliyev said, we are "One nation – two states". That is like a nice flower, which one has to tend carefully, watering it with love, protecting it from insects, and visiting it regularly. Our regular bilateral and multilateral meetings – like the Turkic world summit in Baku last November – are part of that process.

AIW: How do you evaluate the future of this rapprochement of the Turkic world?

Amb. Karşlıoğlu: It is a long process of education, of course, not something that can be done all at once. We have been separated in various ways for several hundred years. Now, we must increase our awareness of what ties us together. That means getting together from time to time at all levels, exchanging views on various issues and learning about each other and about our common roots.

AIW: What are the current and potential immediate issues that you would like Azerbaijan to give its support for?

Amb. Karşlıoğlu: We have very good relations and exchange our views on all subjects. Each of us faces difficulties, and we can only do so much. In general, we are happy with the level of bilateral support in the political realm. In the economic sphere, of course, we can do more. And we are moving in the right direction. Turkish and Azerbaijani officials are regularly meeting each other. Recently, our agriculture and cultural ministers have been here, and next month, Azerbaijani officials will take part in a joint economic commission meeting in Istanbul.

AIW: Azerbaijan has always counted on Turkey's support in its conflict with Armenia. Is there any issue in which Turkey would expect Azerbaijani support?

Amb. Karşlıoğlu: Well, we could mention the Cyprus issue in this regard. But we are realistic that we can only ask as much on certain issues. The Karabakh issue is of course a thorn in our hearts as well as it is in Azerbaijan's. The Minsk Group process continues without much progress and efficiency. Personally, I have my doubts about whether the three co-chairs have the will to resolve the conflict. And that bothers me and Turkey: We are very upset that Armenia continues its occupation in violation of international law. Armenia should be aware that it can't continue to be enemies with all its neighbors. We want peace, prosperity and stability for everyone in the region, including Armenia, of course, if Armenia abides by the norms of international law. We have no objections to Armenian people – they are not our enemies; we have no animosity towards anyone living in our neighborhood. And consequently, everyone should be aware that if this occupation is over, it's going to be a very prosperous and stable region, one in which all the countries in the South Caucasus will benefit.

AIW: How would your government like to assist Azerbaijan to overcome its major problems and regional challenges?

Amb. Karşlıoğlu: Naturally, we work together in international organizations. We always defend Azerbaijani rights in all international forums, including those where Azerbaijan is not represented. We keep Azerbaijani

officials informed. I remember when I was serving in New York in 1992, the Azerbaijani delegation was within the Turkish delegation; and I worked closely in this way with Elmar Mammadyarov, someone I have maintained close ties with since and who is your foreign minister. For us, wherever Turkey has an embassy, we see it also as the Azerbaijani embassy especially if Baku does not have a mission there. We provide what support we can and cooperate closely with the two diasporas. That latter effort is not yet at the level we would like to see because it involves in the first instance NGOs rather than officials.

AIW: How do you envisage the cooperation of the Azerbaijani and Turkish diasporas in the future?

Amb. Karslioglu: Diaspora organizations have to be made stronger. The sense of national identity and national will has to be increased among the people living abroad. For that to happen, there has to be both an intellectual and economic basis. So, this is a long process. Unfortunately, we Turks have not been especially good in this area up to now, but I am confident that in the next decade or two, the Turkish Diaspora will be in a much better position than it is now. The number of Azerbaijanis living abroad is still small. That community needs encouragement and additional financial support. And we must all work to increase the awareness of young Azerbaijanis there about their own language, culture, and beliefs. Otherwise they will be assimilated rather than integrated.

AIW: What are the next steps you see in the relationship between Turkey and Azerbaijan?

Amb. Karslioglu: Official visits back and forth need to be continued, and more people-to-people contacts need to be established. Unfortunately, up to now, not very many tourists come from Turkey to Azerbaijan and most Azerbaijani tourists go only to Istanbul or Antalya, missing many other places they might visit. In this field, much more needs to be done, but with Azerbaijan's increasing economic potential, this is just a matter of time.

AIW: Based on your diplomatic experience, what would you recom-

mend to young Azerbaijani diplomats as they prepare to promote Azerbaijan's interests abroad?

Amb. Karslioglu: They have to know their own culture and their own history – Turkic history and Islam as well as other religions, like Judaism and Christianity – so that they can defend their rights and beliefs. They must know their immediate history as well, Soviet and Russian, and the history of their neighbors, Ottoman and Iranian. And of course they should also be familiar with world history, not only from political aspect, but also from economic aspect – why this country has invaded the other one, why it withdrew; why the map of the Middle East or Africa, for instance, has been drawn in a way it is – to divide those countries and remain influential afterwards. In short, they must be knowledgeable, open-minded but critical, not accepting anything on the basis of authority alone. They should view problems from different angles, not only from the perspective of western sources which are biased in many respects.

Moreover, diplomats must know the place or organization to which they are assigned, the rules that govern diplomatic life, and the best way to make friends with diplomats and other people. My first recommendation would be that Azerbaijani diplomats should visit the Turkish embassy on their arrival to get their assistance and support. They will always find young people there who, I am certain, will be willing to help their Azerbaijani colleagues in any way they can. I wish all of them good luck in their careers.

AZERBAIJAN AND NATO

An Interview with **Mr. Robert Simmons**

NATO Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia

March 8, 2008.

Baku, Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan in the World: How would You rate the current level of relations between NATO and Azerbaijan?

Simmons: Our relations are quite good now. We are quite satisfied with the IPAP [Individual Partnership Action Plan], the second round of which has developed quite positively, and we have had a good political dialogue on issues of common interest.

AIW: What are the core of the relations between Azerbaijan and NATO? What are the main directions of cooperation?

Simmons: I would say, there are three. The first is the IPAP and mutual cooperation in the common goals it sets out. The second is the political dialogue, because IPAP provides an opportunity for that, both via your permanent mission in Brussels and during frequent visits by ministers and

senior officials from Azerbaijan to NATO. And the third is Azerbaijan's contributions to NATO missions, as for instance in Afghanistan.

AIW: What role do You see NATO playing in the conflict resolution between Azerbaijan and Armenia at any stage of the negotiation process, today or tomorrow?

Simmons: At present, we believe that the Minsk Group Co-Chairs should take the lead, and it would be not correct for any other groups to involve themselves in. That is the negotiating process, and we support that. As that process goes forward, if there is potentially a role for NATO, that is something we could look at. But there must be first an agreement among the parties, and the decision by the UN Security Council that something that NATO can contribute with could be made. Those are, of course, hypothetical questions, for at the moment they are not really on the table.

AIW: How do You assess the commitment of Azerbaijani government to the Euro-Atlantic integration?

Simmons: Azerbaijani government has clearly a broad commitment to the Euro-Atlantic integration. Baku is working very extensively with both NATO within IPAP, and the European Union within its Neighborhood Program. Whether the Azerbaijanis want to take it to the next step and become a formal candidate for membership is a decision for them to take. For the moment, I don't have the sense that that is the decision they want to make, but obviously, we will be prepared to discuss that with them when they want to move in that direction.

AIW: How do You rate the evolution of Azerbaijan-NATO cooperation within the first stage of IPAP and what do you envisage at the second stage?

Simmons: First, in the first stage of IPAP, we had some very tentative goals in defense reform. What has impressed me both during that first stage and, importantly, in key details in the second stage is how the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry has expanded their goals into much more concrete and detailed work. Second, we have expanded our cooperation with other ministries as well on the basis of some specific goals. Border security is particu-

larly important, and I have always been impressed by the work officials here have done in dealing with issues like terrorism, energy protection, and other things like that. All of this has been very good. The third dimension, which didn't even exist in the first round, involves Azerbaijan's new civil emergency planning ministry. NATO has long had an expertise in that area, and now we have a partner with the new civil emergency planning ministry. And obviously, that opens a whole new chapter in the IPAP which didn't exist – not because we disagreed, but because you didn't have a ministry.

AIW: How do You see the relationship between NATO and Azerbaijan developing after the second stage of IPAP? What are the next steps?

Simmons: Well, IPAP is a progressive and continuing document. I don't think we should always see steps ahead. I think what we should see is that we are moving forward on the goals, meeting successes and setting new goals into the future. I think we have done that very effectively, and we have to continue to do that. As I said, if at some stage your government wants to move towards intensified dialogue, that is something to discuss; but I don't think that should in any way call into question the good cooperation we have now.

AIW: What impact do You see the independence of Kosovo having on security dynamics in the South Caucasus region?

Simmons: I believe that Kosovo is a unique case. You must look back at the long and very complicated history of the break-up of Yugoslavia, at Serbia's dealings with Kosovo and all the rest of it. One should not draw any lessons from Kosovo and its independence for conflicts in the South Caucasus or anywhere else. Kosovo is a unique case, tied to a very unique situation of the former Yugoslavia, and that is the way it should remain.

AIW: How do You assess the expected withdrawal of Azerbaijan's 34-soldier contribution to the peacekeeping mission in Kosovo?

Simmons: Well, we welcome the contribution they made in the past. We accept the fact that given the changed circumstances, for its own reasons, Azerbaijan had a look at the issue again. And we understand that, and we appreciate that. But what should be emphasized is that it is critical that no

one view this as calling into question [UN Security Council] Resolution 1244, which we all agree is the basis for the KFOR mission.

AIW: Azerbaijan has always presented itself as a model for the post-Soviet Muslim countries in Central Asia. What lessons do You think these countries may draw from Azerbaijan's experience?

Simmons: Well, I personally don't believe that the Islamic element is that big a factor. Obviously, you have an Islamic background, but I think what is more critical of the difference is how you have emerged from the former Soviet Union – both your good relations with Russia and your independence, and the fact that you can balance those. And that is a very important lesson for the countries in Central Asia, who also emerged from the Soviet Union and need to understand that you can have good relations with NATO while maintaining good relations with Russia. I think, frankly, that is more important than the Islamic element because, while I respect the Islamic faith of your citizens and citizens in Central Asia, that is not a big issue in policy.

AIW: What are the ways in which NATO-Azerbaijan cooperation may contribute to the European energy security?

Simmons: There are several aspects to that. One is a great deal of expertise you have in energy, and that is very important; you have off-shore platforms, you have pipelines, you have sea transportation across the Caspian, and you have significant infrastructure that needs to be protected. Second, you have built up some good capabilities for protecting them, and I think those are lessons that you can share with NATO countries and with other partners. And finally, we see this as an important part of political dialogue. When President Aliyev was in Brussels two years ago, he devoted a key part of his speech to that issue, and I believe the Allies found his remarks extremely eloquent and instructive.

AIW: What issues of direct or indirect relevance to Azerbaijan are expected to be discussed at the forthcoming Bucharest summit?

Simmons: First is your participation in Afghanistan. You contribute

troops to Afghanistan and also want to expand your contribution to other areas of cooperation. We are very interested in this comprehensive approach, and I think you have some very good lessons connected with that. Second is participation in the political dialogue about the conflict there so that a consensus can be maintained. That is always difficult when people are being killed. It is essential to understand that peace in Afghanistan is important not only for the security of Afghanistan itself, but for the whole Euro-Atlantic area. And I think Azerbaijan recognizes that, and it is important that you share that experience. Third is energy security and the new challenges of the 21st century, including non-proliferation. Iran will be discussed, and I know that your government and particularly your president have important views to share on that, and we hope that he does so. And fourth, as I already said, Azerbaijan has a key lesson of a country that balances good relations with Russia and good relations with the West. And I think that sharing that experience with other partners and showing that these are not inconsistent goals is an important thing you can do.

AIW: NATO has normally sought to offer incentives to Russia as the Alliance has expanded eastward. Are You thinking of any additional ones as NATO, for the first time, explores inclusion of post-USSR states like Georgia and Ukraine?

Simmons: Well, I have to say that I don't entirely understand some of the current Russian rhetoric on this. First, we said when the whole process began that we didn't see Russia as a threat, and we didn't threaten Russia. That policy hasn't changed. But suddenly Russia is trying to create a sense of a threat, which frankly doesn't exist. Second, we made commitments that would apply to any new Ally – that we will not station large numbers of conventional forces permanently on the territories of new Allies. Those would apply to the existing new Allies, and to any new Allies. That is an important commitment from us to Russia. I also think the notion of whether the country was or wasn't in the Soviet Union is irrelevant. What is relevant is the OSCE principle that every country has the choice and the right to make the

choice of whether to belong or not to belong to an alliance. Russia should not see these steps as directed against it, and again, I find it difficult to understand why this rhetoric is suddenly coming back in the Russian lexicon.

AIW: What effect would the inclusion of Georgia and Ukraine have on Azerbaijan?

Simmons: You have very good relations with both of them; you belong to GUAM. Every indication that I have heard is that in the GUAM context, you support their territorial integrity and their activities. So, I presume you would support their membership. If it gives you an incentive to move forward on membership, that is for you to decide, as I said before. But I presume that you would support their moving forward, that your own balanced policy we discussed before will continue, and I would not see that their membership should either complicate or improve it.

AIW: Looking back at the evolution of the partnership institution and the role it has played, do you believe it has been a success?

Simmons: Absolutely! I've even written an article about it because I was involved in all three critical stages. I served in NATO HQ in the US delegation in the early 1990s when we set up the partnership. I was in Washington when we expanded this. And now I play a role in directing it. And I can say in all honesty that this is one of the things I am most proud of. When with the end of the Cold War, we reached out to countries that had been part of the Warsaw Pact, part of the former Soviet Union and said that we want you to be our partners and even some of you to even join the Alliance, we made an important commitment, not only demonstrating to everyone that NATO was not a threat but also that NATO wanted all of Europe to be whole and free and have the promise of belonging to these security institutions. I think we have been remarkably successful at that, and I am certainly proud of the role I have played in this.

AZERBAIJAN ADDRESSING SECURITY CHALLENGES

A Conversation with **Vafa Guluzade**

Former National Security Advisor to President Heydar Aliyev and
Longtime Political Commentator

March 19, 2008.

Baku, Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan in the World: How do you evaluate the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of Resolution 10693 reaffirming Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and demanding the immediate withdrawal of all Armenian forces from all occupied territories?

Guluzade: That Azerbaijani diplomacy was able to push through the UN General Assembly a decision reaffirming the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the right of refugees to return, I consider a great success, although in all probability, achieving it was not in reality as difficult as some in Baku have suggested for the simple reason that all the provisions in this resolution are found in the four resolutions of the UN Security Council on Azerbaijan. But despite that, this achievement is significant. Why? Because

it highlights and underscores the position of the new leadership of Azerbaijan – President Ilham Aliyev.

Prior to his coming to office, his predecessor, Heydar Aliyev, made several remarkable proposals including a suggestion in 1994 that he was prepared to offer the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh the highest degree of autonomy in the world. And as an example, he suggested to Levon Ter-Petrosyan that it could have a status like that of Tatarstan. The Armenian president was surprised and asked whether he had heard correctly.

Heydar Aliyev responded firmly that he was ready to do so. Thinking about his action later, I concluded that he took this step from despair about the terrible national catastrophe of occupation, ethnic cleansing and refugee flows that his nation faced. President Heydar Aliyev clearly believed that his firm priority was to arrange for the refugees to return to their homes.

But there were three reasons why nothing could come of this. First, there is no precedent in Azerbaijan for such a step and other ethnic groups might exploit this to demand autonomy for themselves, something that would destroy the state. Second, Armenia was even then talking about something more, complete independence for Nagorno-Karabakh or its incorporation into Armenia itself, something that the status similar to that of Tatarstan would pave the way for. And third, Moscow was not willing to allow peace to break out, something that would compromise its ability to maintain its position in the South Caucasus and slow the entrance of Western influence.

In his search for a way out from the national disaster his country faced, Heydar Aliyev was prepared to do something else, something often hinted at but never officially acknowledged – exchanging territory. Again, the Armenians might have agreed but Russia was and is opposed, and for exactly the same reasons. Moscow does not want peace.

That was most obvious when Heydar Aliyev and Kocharyan reached an agreement on the issue. Once they did, the shooting incident occurred in the Armenian parliament and ended that chance for peace. By the way, at that time, I predicted just such a turn of events, one that could prevent any agree-

ment from being realized. Before I retired, I told President Heydar Aliyev that Russia will not allow you to conclude a peace with Armenia in the current political environment. But he believed that he could get one at the Istanbul Summit, not least because the framework document reflecting the agreed-upon principles had already been prepared by the time. Then the violence in the Armenian parliament happened and that was that.

Kocharyan was summoned to Moscow where the Russians explained the facts of life to him. He then told Heydar Aliyev that all the agreements they had reached were vacated. But the Minsk Group co-chairs left the framework document in place. I think that was a mistake. It was never signed and was yet to be discussed at the Istanbul Summit, and no one knew what those discussions would result in. And when it was discussed by the two presidents later at Key West, that document did not advance the discussions. Indeed, there, Heydar Aliyev backed away from all of the concessions he had been prepared to make earlier.

But despite that, the Minsk Group co-chairs continued to stick to this framework document and put pressure on him and then on his successor Ilham Aliyev. But in every case, Ilham Aliyev has rejected their pressure, insisting that he will maintain the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. I consider his position absolutely correct. Nonetheless, because the West does not have any other mechanism for dealing with the conflict, it continues to talk about and stick to the framework document.

That makes the new UNGA resolution extremely significant because it offers an alternative way forward. It is based on the four UNSC resolutions and insists on Azerbaijan's territorial integrity as a first principle, something President Ilham Aliyev believes and that has the support of every citizen and every political party of Azerbaijan. Indeed, on the basis of my numerous conversations I am convinced that the Azerbaijani people are prepared to wait or to fight as long as they are sure that Azerbaijan will again be whole and free. And the resolution may also help to convince the West that no stable peace will ever be achieved here by means of territorial concessions by Azerbaijan.

There really is only one way out of this problem – the United States, because of its preeminent power, must accept the principle of territorial integrity for Azerbaijan and work to realize it. In Kosovo, Washington did the impossible – it violated the territorial integrity of Serbia and at the same time proclaimed that this is not a precedent. Of course, we are pleased by the American position on that, just as we are pleased by Russian and French declarations of the same kind. But I would like to point out to everybody that this is a diplomatic game. That is, these countries support the principle, but none of them is against the possibility that Azerbaijan could voluntarily yield part of its territory in the name of peace. In their view, that would eliminate a major headache for them. But perhaps the resolution will help them understand that giving the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh autonomy is already a colossal concession, and we cannot and will not do more. In my personal opinion, the country that has carried out ethnic cleansing of the Azerbaijani ethnic minority population on its territory has no moral or legal right to demand any kind of autonomy for its own ethnic minority on our territory. That being said, giving them that autonomy is a great concession on our part.

AIW: Some have suggested that Azerbaijan should reject the mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group and seek some other means of conflict resolution. What do you think of such proposals?

Guluzade: I start from the view that Azerbaijan does not have any choice and must continue to work with the Minsk Group while insisting upon the positions I outlined above concerning its territorial integrity. At present, the United States has enormous influence in all international organizations beginning with the UN and ending with the OSCE and other European Organizations. What would we gain by having the Americans come up with another group, say the Warsaw Group, in place of the Minsk Group? That will not change much. I would also like to stress that the governments of the USA, France and Russia are not much interested in the activities of their representatives in the Minsk Group, for they understand that peace in the current geopolitical environment is unachievable. Thus, all

the activities of the three co-chairs are the products of their own design. This means that we must continue to defend our positions within the existing formats and to explain why we will not make any concessions on our core commitment to the territorial integrity of our country.

AIW: You mentioned Kosovo. How do you think Kosovo's independence might affect the outcome of other regional conflicts, including the one in Nagorno-Karabakh?

Guluzade: Any question in international affairs must be considered from the point of view of one's own national interests. From the point of view of the national interests of Baku, the weakening of Russia is very important. Consequently, the dismemberment of the Yugoslav empire, and the eventual membership of both of its parts, Kosovo and Serbia, in NATO may be considered as a positive course of events for Azerbaijan. Russia needs a strong Serbia because quite possibly that is Moscow's only reliable ally in Europe. Consequently, the division of Serbia works against Moscow. I personally am against doing anything that advances the national interests of Russia or alternatively am for anything, like NATO's eastward expansion and further evolution of GUAM, that undercuts them because Russia was the colonizer of Azerbaijan.

Russia enslaved Azerbaijan and all the Muslim peoples, including those which are now within Russia. Moscow is doing everything to deprive them of their national identity. It has changed the names of their lands to purely Russian ones. It is seeking to russify all the peoples living in Russia and has introduced the term "rossiyanin" to designate the product.

This effort, an echo of the one the Soviet Union employed against the Turkic republics, is far from over. And I hope that sometime in the not distant future, the star of freedom will shine for such entities as Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Buryatia and other peoples, and they will be able to speak their own languages again.

AIW: You touched upon NATO and its eastward expansion. How do you rate the pace of Azerbaijan's Euro-Atlantic integration?

Guluzade: Azerbaijan in my mind is integrating into Euro-Atlantic structures without any unnecessary noise. Azerbaijan's approach is working and it is welcome. Baku's policy in this direction is both principled and balanced, and it allows it to move forward without provoking the kind of Russian reaction that Georgia's more outspoken approach has guaranteed.

AIW: You mentioned GUAM. What do you think its prospects are given Russian alleged efforts to force Moldova out of that group?

Guluzade: In my view, the future of GUAM depends primarily on the United States. If the US wants GUAM to transform itself into a military-political-economic union, then that will happen. The Americans also could make Turkey, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic or someone else a member of this group. But I want to stress that the U.S. has now problems with Russia and it must resolve them first. Consequently, having helped get GUAM started, the U.S. is not pushing that group forward in the ways many of its members expected. And in that environment, GUAM will remain a relatively loose consultative body, though a number of important projects are already being realized within its framework.

AIW: What is in this case GUAM's identity? Can GUAM be seen as an alternative to NATO for the GUAM member-states?

Guluzade: There is no alternative to NATO. The point is that the United States currently has a lot of problems with Russia to solve, which is why the US doesn't yet want to give GUAM a concrete shape and identity. GUAM is actually not in the interests of China either. Remember that Uzbekistan has just recently been a member of GUAM, and it can always return back. It is just a matter of leadership in power. So, this is not that easy as it seems. But I see a great future for GUAM.

AIW: What do you make of recent efforts to unite the Turkic speaking world?

Guluzade: Pan-Turkism died once before without even being fully born. International politics do not rest on ethnic kinship; it is about national interests. I am entirely in favor of a common Turkic television channel and other similar initiatives that promote awareness of cultural commonalities, but I think our national approaches should be guided by our national inter-

ests rather than something else. Sometimes we Turkic language speakers will agree and sometimes we won't. Our relations with Turkmenistan concerning the future of the Kapaz/Sardar island is a clear example. I also doubt that Anatolian Turkish will become the lingua franca of Turkic countries in this region. Russian used to play that role, now English is assuming that role – and in Turkey itself, English is pushing out Turkish in some sectors.

AZERBAIJAN AND ISRAEL

An Interview with **Arthur Lenk**

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
of the State of Israel to Azerbaijan

April 29, 2008

Baku, Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan in the World: What do you see as the central core of relations between Israel and Azerbaijan? How would you rate their current level?

Ambassador Lenk: At the very core of the relationship between our countries is a human bridge, one between the Jews of Azerbaijan, my brothers and sisters who are living here as full and patriotic members of Azerbaijani society but are still linked to Israel, and the 50 thousand, or so, Azerbaijanis who now live as full and patriotic members of the State of Israel but still remain very connected to Azerbaijan, the land of their birth. These two groups of people constitute two sides of the human bridge interested in our relationship growing. This human aspect that I don't think Azerbaijan has with that many countries makes our relationship very special. There are of course many other inter-

ests we share, and all of them are very important, but I think none is more important than person-to-person ties that bring Azerbaijan and Israel together.

AIW: How have Azerbaijani-Israeli relations evolved during your tenure as Ambassador in Baku?

Lenk: I am not sure that it has anything to do with who the ambassador is, but the relationship between Israel and Azerbaijan has been developing in a positive manner because both of our countries and our common interests are developing together. As an example, I can mention trade: Until 2005, there was almost no trade between our countries. But in 2006, Israeli exports to Azerbaijan amounted to 28 million US dollars and in 2007, they exceeded 80 million. And that doesn't include Israel's purchases of Azerbaijani oil. If we include them, then we have more than one billion US dollars in bilateral trade.

AIW: What led to this remarkable growth in bilateral trade?

Lenk: I think it was the product of the rapid development of Azerbaijan. If you walk down the streets of Baku or Quba or Ganja, you see just how rapid that development continues. Over the last two years, you have been a world leader in terms of economic growth. And I have heard from your president and other leaders of Azerbaijan that your country needs to learn from leaders, from those who are the best in each sector. We in Israel are not the best in the energy sector because Israel does not have any natural resources. But what Israel has been very successful at is in using its human capital and very limited natural resources to achieve a great success. The high technology sector and agro-business are two examples of this success.

AIW: What is the state of energy cooperation between Azerbaijan and Israel?

Lenk: Israel is one of Azerbaijan's largest oil customers, and Azerbaijan is Israel's second largest supplier. We have been buying Azerbaijani oil for a number of years, although it has very much increased since the opening of BTC. And that increase makes perfect sense; that is why BTC was built – not for Israel, but to insure that Azerbaijani oil, instead of remaining in the Caspian, reaches the Mediterranean. And what is the closest economy to Ceyhan? Israel's. That is not because anybody planned it this way, but this is simple

geography. And because it is so close, it serves the interests of Azerbaijan and the other countries involved for Israel to be an important customer. So, we are buying more and more oil from Azerbaijan, and that is an important aspect of our relationship. Moreover, Israel has a pipeline between Eilat and Ashkelon that may help Azerbaijan send more of its oil to Asia. This is something that Azerbaijani and Turkish leaders have discussed before. This issue will also feature in the discussions with Israel's national infrastructure minister (who is in charge of energy issues in Israel), Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, who visited Baku in 2006 and is going to come back this June for the Oil and Gas conference. The fact that the minister is coming to Azerbaijan for the second time in two years is an indicator of the growth in energy cooperation between Israel and Azerbaijan, and its potential to extend in a number of different directions.

AIW: There has been some discussion about possibly extending the BTC pipeline so that it would be directly linked to the Eilat-Ashkelon pipeline. How realistic is that idea?

Le nk: I am not sure I'd call it an extension of the BTC, but Israel and Turkey have been considering the feasibility of building a pipeline between Ceyhan and Ashkelon that would make it easier for Israel to purchase Azerbaijani oil. And if such a pipeline existed, Baku could easily export its oil all the way to India and Thailand, countries which have already expressed an interest in buying Azerbaijani oil. Consequently, the talks are pretty serious, and the issue now is about economic feasibility. I'm not an expert on that but I do know that the two countries are conducting such studies. And, as I already mentioned, this will be one of the issues Israeli national infrastructure minister will be discussing with his Azerbaijani colleagues in the coming June.

AIW: Many commentators have suggested that if a water pipeline between Turkey and the Middle East were constructed, it contribute to the achievement of peace in that region. Might the BTC pipeline contribute in the same way?

Le nk: It's interesting you mention it. Azerbaijan's relations with Jordan who is very important strategic partner for us are growing. The king of Jordan will be in Azerbaijan next week. Wouldn't it be great if oil from

Azerbaijan could go to Jordan via the Eilat-Ashkelon pipeline, which would be a natural choice as Eilat is next to Aqaba where the Jordanians will get oil. Jordan would have more energy and be more connected to Azerbaijan, and that would certainly help build more trust and peace between us. This is something that has been discussed between Azerbaijani and Jordanian officials. I can also imagine a time in which there will be peace between Israel and the Palestinians, and the Palestinians too will be interested in buying oil from Azerbaijan. So I completely agree with your idea that developing our bilateral ties could help promote peace in your region and in mine, and we should definitely seek for ways to ensure this happens.

AIW: What are the main components of trade between Azerbaijan and Israel, apart from energy?

Lenk: Many other areas are very important, too. First of all, there is agriculture. Israeli technologies in this sphere can help build the non-oil sector in Azerbaijan. In fact, Israeli minister of agriculture will be visiting Baku this May. Another important area is high technology. Israel is a high-tech country. Indeed, although we are a tiny country in some ways, we are a giant in that sphere. Another area where we can cooperate is construction, given the building boom here in Azerbaijan, and we are going to bring a delegation to have a forum together with AzPromo in the summer. Also, I have just got back from Ganja and Goranboy, and one of the things I learned about Goranboy was that there is a real water-use problem there: the region used to receive its water from Nagorno-Karabakh which is now impossible because of the conflict with Armenia. Hence, Goranboy's farmers and its leaders are interested in learning about Israel's water management technologies. So, this is yet another area for cooperation between our countries.

AIW: As you know, Azerbaijan's involvement in GUAM is an important dimension of our country's foreign policy. That organization has been developing relations with countries beyond the region like Japan and the United States in what is called the GUAM Plus. Is there any interest in Israel in getting involved in the GUAM framework.

L e n k: We are certainly looking for ways to expand our ties and connect our region to yours, but we have a couple of countries between us that make such arrangements more complicated. I think the BTC is an example of the way to connect Israel and Azerbaijan. The Internet and hi-tech are also possible pathways to have our countries connected. I would love to see a time when someone could drive directly from Israel to Azerbaijan. Wouldn't that be great? That would require more stability and peace in your region and ours, but I don't think that is so far-fetched. Israel even now has very friendly relations with all four GUAM countries, we are interested in developing ties with each of them, and we would like to explore a framework for us to support GUAM.

A I W: Israel has always expressed its full support for Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. Why then did it abstain in the vote on UN General Assembly Resolution 10693, which was passed in March?

L e n k: Around a hundred countries abstained in New York. Israel was one of them. At the same time, Israel very much supports the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. In fact, there is an interesting parallel between Israel and Azerbaijan: Azerbaijan very much hopes that the peace process in the Middle East will succeed, and Israel thinks the same way about your region. That is not always the case with all our neighbors, is it? But it is true about Israel and Azerbaijan. At the same time, given concerns and hope for the peace negotiations with the Minsk process, Israel decided to abstain along with many other countries. On a separate but not entirely disconnected issue, it is important to know that Azerbaijan takes part in UN votes about 20 to 25 times a year on issues of relevance to Israel and our peace process, and on every single occasion, Azerbaijan votes against Israel. That is not why we did what we did, but the fact remains that despite a somewhat troubling voting record on Azerbaijan's part, we still view Azerbaijan as a strategic partner and emphasize the things we agree on. I should emphasize here that Israel does not disagree with Azerbaijan on the issues of its territorial integrity. Again, we didn't vote against Azerbaijan; we abstained.

A I W: Azerbaijan is actively working to strengthen its ties with its diaspora. Along with the Turkish, the Israeli diaspora is one of the friendliest

toward Azerbaijanis living abroad. How do you see cooperation between these two diasporas developing in the future?

Le nk: One thing that Jews and Azerbaijanis have in common is that each of us has more of our community living outside our country than inside. I don't know many countries of which this is true. You have a large and active diaspora in Israel, where it serves as Azerbaijan's lobby, the fact that I don't think many are aware of. Moreover, there is the traditional relationship between Azerbaijan and Jewish organizations and communities in many countries in Europe and the United States who have supported Azerbaijan and its relations with Israel since Azerbaijan regained its independence in the early 1990s. Representatives of the American Jewish community were very vocal in supporting the construction of the BTC in the 1990s. A number of major Jewish organizations from the United States, among them representatives of AIPAC (The American Israel Public Affairs Committee), have visited Azerbaijan in recent years. Though those organizations are not Israeli, but American, they, along with most Azerbaijanis and Israelis, want to see the relations between our countries develop, and, because for both of us the United States is a very important partner, we welcome their growing relations with Azerbaijan. Turkey is another very important strategic partner for Israel and because of Turkey's relationship with Azerbaijan, I think this is a classic example of how we can have a relationship among countries and their diasporas to help one another building on each other's strengths. Not only is this cooperation among our three countries important in economic terms, but, at a time when people tend to talk about differences and clashes of civilizations, it sends a very important message that Islam, Christianity and Judaism do not need to separate people but in fact can promote cooperation.

AIW: Some view the strategic partnership among Israel, Azerbaijan, and Turkey as directed against other countries. How do you see the nature of this trilateral cooperation?

Le nk: I don't see it as an alliance against anyone. I believe the opposite is true. I see it as an alliance of shared interest for collaboration for peace, for

business, for friendship. Israel has a very positive, important and growing relationship with Russia – if we have a large Azerbaijani diaspora, we have even larger Russian one, which is almost a million. Russia is an important partner in dealing with Azerbaijan's southern neighbor – Iran, which is a concern of all of the international community, not just Azerbaijan and Israel. Moreover, Israel has very good diplomatic relations with Greece and with Cyprus, and we have diplomatic relations with Armenia as well.

AIW: For a long time people have been talking about the opening of an Azerbaijani embassy in Israel. That hasn't happened. Why do you think there has been this delay?

Lenk: From the Israeli perspective, we can only say: "Xoş gəlmişsiniz!" – "You are welcome!" We would love to be able to offer the kind of hospitality to Azerbaijan that Azerbaijan has offered to us over these years. That is what friendly countries do. Moreover, as more Azerbaijanis visit Israel each year and more Israelis come here, there is a need for consular services. And there are lots of other people in Israel, among them businessmen, who would love to learn more about your country. So, I hope that an Azerbaijani embassy will open in my country soon. It is an issue that Azerbaijan has to take for itself. It seems to me that in these days, as cooperation between our countries grows and as Azerbaijan is seeking for more ways to promote its public diplomacy, Azerbaijan has its own interest in being in Israel and having people in Israel hear Azerbaijan's position, its goals and agenda. But this is a decision for Azerbaijan to make.

AIW: Do you see any hurdles that Israel and Azerbaijan will have to overcome in order to improve their relationship?

Lenk: I don't think there are hurdles! Senior decision makers in both countries have made it clear that we are both benefiting from the development of this relationship. One measure of that is the increasing number of official visits in both directions, especially since 2004-05. Up until 2004-05 there have only been two visits by ministers from Israel to Azerbaijan: Israeli health minister visited Azerbaijan in mid-1990s and prime-minister of Israel came over night in 1997. The frequency of visits has greatly increased since

after 2005. As I have mentioned, Israel's minister of national infrastructure came in 2006, and is returning again this June; Israel's deputy prime-minister came in 2007; Israel's minister of agriculture is coming this May. In the opposite direction, in 2007 and 2008 Azerbaijani minister of economic development visited Israel and signed the agreement on investment protection; your minister of emergency situations came to Israel to take part in the emergency preparation exercise; the minister of ecology visited Israel last year and took part in a big exhibition; the minister of transportation also visited Israel last year; your minister of communications, information, and technology visited Israel in 2005 and he is coming back in 2008. This is a lot. And it is now up to the ministries of foreign affairs, both ours and yours, to work on a framework for our relations to grow even more.

AIW: How does Iran fit into all of this?

Lenk: I look forward to a future when Iran's citizens can visit Israel and Israelis can visit Iran. I look forward to a time when Azerbaijanis and all the other citizens of Iran are free and able to live their lives peacefully and when Iran is a good neighbor. Iran is a very important country, but right now, those who rule Iran have adopted policies that the entire international community views as dangerous. The entire international community, through a number of UN Security Council resolutions, has been quite clear. Iran must change its policy regarding weapons of mass destruction.

AIW: Given your own experience, what advice would you give young Azerbaijanis beginning their careers in diplomacy?

Lenk: First, learn languages – and this comes from a person whose spoken Azerbaijani is awful. I wish I had better Azerbaijani. Languages are important: the more you can interact with people, the better. I very much admire Elin Suleymanov, your consul general in Los Angeles. He is always out visiting people of all kinds. He is a model of how to represent your country abroad. Your ambassador in Geneva is yet another example of how a diplomat should behave: he is not sitting in his office and always seems to be somewhere. I very much hope that young Azerbaijani diplomats will soon be serving in Israel.

AIW: Thank you, Ambassador Lenk for this most interesting interview.

Lenk: Thank you. And let me reiterate that our relationship benefits both of us. Both of our countries have neighbors who don't want our countries to succeed. But each of our countries wants to see the other succeed. That doesn't happen in every case around the world. And as an Israeli, I value that and value the fact that Azerbaijan as an open, tolerant and friendly Muslim country is becoming a model for many others.

AZERBAIJANIS ASSUME LEAD IN STUDYING THEIR OWN IDENTITY

A Conversation with **Mr. Chingiz Mammadov**

May 26, 2008

Baku / Washington, DC

Until very recently, foreign scholars have dominated the discussion of the national identity of Azerbaijanis. Now, Azerbaijani scholars are taking the lead. One of them, Chingiz Mammadov, currently a research fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, shared his views on the process of nation-building in Azerbaijan with Azerbaijan in the World.

AIW: What is the main focus of your ongoing research?

Chingiz Mammadov: My research is on the process of nation-building in Azerbaijan. While conducting it I examined major events and tendencies both in North Azerbaijan, which is now the Republic of Azerbaijan, and in South Azerbaijan, which is part of Iran. I was not trying to write a detailed history of Azerbaijan; this was not my intention and it would be well beyond of the scope of this research. My goal was rather to understand

the major factors that defined Azerbaijani identity. I have looked to the dynamic of interplay between traditions and modernity, what lessons we can learn from it, what current processes are and what impact nation-building in Azerbaijan may have on the region.

AIW: What is the current state of the study of Azerbaijani national identity?

Mammadov: Until very recently, foreign scholars have been far more active in the discussion of the national identity of Azerbaijanis, a reflection of the Soviet period when opportunities for genuine socio-political research were limited. Among the works I have used for my research are those by Swietochowski, Altstadt, Shaffer, Gumilyov, and others. Many of these studies are extremely valuable, insofar as they serve as useful sources of information and provide an opportunity to reflect on them. However, our own perspective on our national identity, an "insider's view" if you like, can illuminate certain aspects of the issue that outsiders sometimes miss.

Let me give an example. After the defeat of the 1905-1907 revolution in Russia, Mohammed Emin Rasulzade moved to Tehran, where in 1909 he established, and for three years edited, the newspaper "Irane-Now," which is frequently referred to as the first modern newspaper in the history of Iran. In discussing this period in the Azerbaijani leader's life, Swietochowski (1985, p. 69) suggests that Rasulzade, "who one day was to become the standard-bearer of Azerbaijani nationalism, at this stage of his political life identified himself with the national cause of Persia," a move that he suggests underlines "how nebulous the distinction could be at the time between the two national loyalties."

As an Azerbaijani, I have read this fact differently. By that time, North Azerbaijan had already been more modernized and secularized than its South neighbor. However, the Russian revolution, which Azerbaijanis had had high expectation for, was defeated, while the constitutional movement in Iran was still intact. Now imagine a young and dynamic man – Rasulzade at that time was only 25 – full of aspirations, who finds himself in a country in which the Azeris were one of the two major ethnicities. In that situation, it would have been far from clear to him (or to anyone else!) which country – the

Russian Empire or the Gajar state – would offer the greater opportunities for Azeris to develop their identity, culture and language. Consequently, Rasulzade's behavior reflects not any vagueness in self-definition but rather his search for a basis for action.

In general, outside authors have made a very important contribution to the development of pertinent scholarship on Azerbaijan. Now it is time for us to take the lead. A new nation begins when all major events, local and global, are conceived from its unique perspective; this is what I think makes a new nation. This unique position is a "historical-political" code of the nation. Though there are some valuable works by Azerbaijani scholars among which Jamil Hasanly's (2006) *At the Dawn of the Cold War* stands out, [1] Azerbaijan is still weak in that, and there is still much to be done in this direction.

A I W: Many who have written and talked about Azerbaijani identity have shifted among terms like Turk, Azeri Turk, Azeri and Azerbaijani in defining this identity. How do you see these discussions and where do you come out on them?

M a m m a d o v: To address this question we need to understand, first, what constitutes a nation, and second, what would be the best way to define it in our case. Let me start with the former.

"Nation," unlike ethnicity, is a political category. And for it, the main criterion is whether people consider themselves a nation or not. All other factors are still relevant, but of less importance.

In the Republic of Azerbaijan, the prevailing discourse is that the Azerbaijanis in the North and in the South form one nation, similar to what the dominant public opinion in the two Germanys was about during the Cold War, or the one in the two Koreas is in our days. Among Azerbaijanis in Iran, there is a broader spectrum of views. Many define themselves as Azerbaijanis only in an ethnic sense. Others, on the contrary, view their future together with the brethren in the North. At the same time, in the North more and more residents of the republic think that all citizens of Azerbaijan, regardless of their ethnicity, are Azerbaijanis, a conviction that has helped integrate Talyshes, Lezgins, ethnic Russians and others into Azerbaijani society.

As for the definition of our identity, it is worth mentioning that some people are afraid that by calling ourselves “Azeris,” we might give aid and comfort to Iranian chauvinists, who under Iran’s Pahlavi regime dreamed up the notion that Azeris in Iran were Turkified Aryans that had spoken Persian before Turkification occurred. I personally don’t have any concerns in this regard, as the theory of the Turkification of the Azeris in Iran is so absurd that there is no reason to worry about it. Let us also not forget that we ourselves were taught in similar ways in Soviet times when our history books were dominated by our Albanian and Midiyan past, while nothing was there about more recent history. But as your question suggests, it is clearly important that we come to some agreement on definitions so that we all know what we are referring to.

Another issue, one too large to discuss here, involves interaction between self-conscious elites who have tried to work these definitions out and the broader population whose members intuitively feel these identities.

Again, for myself, both “Azerbaijani” or “Azeri” are fine, as are the derivative terms for our national language. I simply do not see any significant difference between the two. “Azeri” is slightly shorter and convenient. However, let me emphasize that this is something that should be discussed and decided by society as a whole and not by one author or group.

A I W: Are the Azerbaijanis of Iran and the Azerbaijanis of the Republic of Azerbaijan then “one nation or not”?

M a m m a d o v: As I’ve mentioned earlier, a nation is a political category. As a consequence, it is far less important that a Russian-speaking Azerbaijani, or even ethnic Russian, in Baku knows more about Alexander Nevski and less about Sattar-Khan than does an Azeri-speaker in Tabriz. If both love Azerbaijan, if they share common beliefs and passions, then we are or at least can be one nation.

There have been significant differences in nation building between the North and the South. In the North, secular intellectuals have driven the process, while in the South enlightened clerics like Roshdiye, Sheikh Khiyabani, and to a lesser degree Grand Ayatollah Kazim Shariatmadari were actively

involved. But with the religious revival in the North and the alleged crisis of religion as the state ideology in Iran, that divide may be bridged. But if that is to happen any time soon, such propitious historical developments should also be backed by purposive actions by the political elite of the two countries.

Obviously, nation building continues in this region, and the outcome of it depends on a large number of factors, involving both elite action and mass participation. Neither suffices to define the outcome of this process. If the elites try to go it alone, the mass public will feel excluded, but if there is no elite effort, then there will be no focus. To move forward, we need both.

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Note

[1] Jamil Hasanly's (2006) *At the dawn of the Cold war* not only stands out as a valuable source of information, but, far more importantly, presents a unique Azerbaijani perspective about the period, on which the scholarship has so far been dominated by American, Russian, and European studies.

AZERBAIJAN AND RUSSIA

An Interview with H.E. **Mr. Vasily Istratov**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
of the Russian Federation to Azerbaijan

September 18, 2008
Baku, Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan in the World: What in your view is the central core of relations between the Russian Federation and Azerbaijan?

Ambassador Istratov: One can answer that question quite simply: our countries are neighbors and even more than that have had a common history for much of the last several hundred years. Those experiences to a remarkable degree define the character of our relations. Our leaders have frequently pointed to our relations as those between the very good neighbors, and only a few days ago, Azerbaijan's president Ilham Aliyev said that the relations between our two countries are a model of relations between neighbors.

AIW: How have relations between Azerbaijan and Russia evolved during the post-Soviet period? How do you rate the level of these relations at

present? What directions in bilateral ties have been most successful and where is additional attention needed?

Amb. Istratov: First of all, I am pleased to say that our relations have evolved in a positive direction. In fact, now it is possible to say that our ties are considerably better than ten years ago or even eight years ago. At an earlier stage, there were problems, in large measure because mistakes were made by both sides, but thanks to the efforts of diplomats, politicians, representatives of public opinion, and what is most important, the leaders of our countries, over the last eight years a great deal has been done for the establishment of stable and normal relations between our countries. And even over the course of the slightly more than two years I have been professionally involved in dealing with the Russian-Azerbaijani relations, a relatively short period, I have seen real progress.

It is of course impossible to say that politically relations between Russia and Azerbaijan have risen as far as they possibly can, but that they are developing successfully and that our countries are satisfied with their current level is a fact. One may argue that our political relations are ahead of our relations in other spheres. However paradoxical it might seem, relations between our law enforcement agencies are very good. Moreover, the ties between the defense ministries are developing quite successfully.

Cultural ties represent a direction which also continues to develop, something entirely natural because our peoples were in a single cultural space for so long and because culture does not depend on the efforts of politicians.

The same thing can be said about economic ties. In the course of the last two years, while I was here, we stopped trading gas which had constituted one-third of our trading relationship. But despite that, the trade turnover between our two countries grew the following year, and this year, it grew again. Of course, it is possible to say that politicians played a role in this, but only in part. In fact, the main cause is quite simple: our countries are neighbors who are interrelated, and to the extent that in both Russia and Azerbaijan, there has been significant economic growth, this leads to a growth in trade as well. That Russia is the basic trading partner of Azerbaijan with respect to imports is natural. And although

there have been no breakthroughs in the last two years in terms of for example infrastructural development, bilateral trade continues to grow.

As to shortcomings, I would mention at least one. Though our presidents have recently pledged to reach a USD 2 billion level in bilateral trade, which is definitely good, the level of mutual investments is still very low. In fact, Russian investments in Azerbaijan are taking place and even growing quite rapidly, but they are coming not as Russian, but as for example Cyprian, British, or even Austrian. And again the reason is very simple: at present, we lack an agreement on the mutual protection of capital investments. This is connected with one very specific question which up to now has not been resolved and which prevents the Russian business from directly investing in Azerbaijan. That question has to do with the so far unresolved issue about the property of the current embassy of Azerbaijan in Russia. This issue is rather of technical nature, for there is a political will, but due to some legal problems the question is still unresolved.

AIW: Russia is one of the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group. Why then did Russia vote against UN General Assembly resolution 10693, which was adopted in March of this year?

Amb. Istratov: The answer to this question is quite simple: Russia voted the way it did precisely because Russia is a co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group. All the co-chairs voted against because in the unanimous judgment of the co-chairs, the resolution needed additional work. But because Azerbaijan presented it as a final version, the co-chairs voted against. By the way, all the co-chairs clearly stated that on the issue that is most important for Azerbaijan – that of its territorial integrity – they had not changed their position at all. Thus, I would say that the reasons for the vote were again more technical than political.

AIW: How do you think the recent events in Georgia will affect the evolution of regional and international security? Might these events trigger a fatal erosion of the fundamental principle of the supremacy of law in international relations?

Amb. Istratov: Unfortunately, one has to acknowledge that now after these events no one is better off than they were before. As to the ques-

tion of the supremacy of law, the question immediately arises as to which law. The erosion of the supremacy of international law as laid down after World War II began somewhat earlier, not on August 8. One should remember the Kosovo precedent and not only that. Unfortunately, the situation after August 8 did not become better because the leadership of Georgia did not live up to its obligations on the status of peacekeepers and the use of force in the region.

As a result, the situation changed, and our president Dmitry Medvedev has repeatedly stressed that the world became different place after August 8. However, the way in which it became different is not yet clear. We are still in the process of comprehending the scope of changes brought in by the recent events in the Caucasus. What is clear though is that things became different not only in Georgia, around Georgia, and within the region but far more broadly as well. It became clear that the unipolar world that existed after the end of the Cold War turned out to be unworkable: it was incapable of dealing with crises in various parts of the world, including the South Caucasus. That is one of the conclusions that were made as a result of the Georgian crisis.

But I repeat yet again, the process of recognizing the direction in which we are moving after the Georgian events is not over. It will be quite complex, difficult and take longer than a week, a month, or perhaps even a year. And like with any development, there will be both positive and negative consequences. Let's see which of them predominates as we take a step forward and perhaps a step back. One can only hope that the international community and the countries of the region will be able to use the current situation in order to make the maximum number of steps forward.

AIW: How do you think the recent events in Georgia will affect the further development of relations between Russia and the countries of the South Caucasus in general and with Azerbaijan in particular?

Amb. Istratov: The events in Georgia have made Russia's interest in ties with our partner Azerbaijan even greater. And because Azerbaijan is the largest country in what was earlier called the Trans-Caucasus, it has played a

major role in the region earlier as well and that too increases the mutual interest of Russia and Azerbaijan in developing relations.

AIW: What is your assessment of Turkey's recent call for a Platform of Caucasus Stability and Cooperation? What do you see as its chances for success? Might it in the future replace the OSCE Minsk Group as the venue for peace talks between Azerbaijan and Armenia?

Amb. Istratov: Let's begin at the end. No one is seriously thinking about doing away with the Minsk Group, even if someone proposes a supplement. The Turkish initiative is interesting but it is not entirely new; a similar idea circulated in the 1990s. The question arises, of course, as to who would be the participants, as one should not ignore one of the regional countries' discontent about its being left aside the proposed framework. One way or the other, this proposal should be understood as one of the first attempts at comprehending the way the post-August 8 situation changed in the region. The attempt is indeed interesting, as sheer details of it allow arguing that the world has indeed changed. That same idea in 1990s looked slightly differently, and was less viable at that time. So I assume there will be discussions to explore how this platform might develop. At least, there has so far been no one saying that it is impossible.

AIW: Why has this proposal attracted more attention as a possibility than its earlier versions?

Amb. Istratov: The events of the beginning of August are responsible. A decade ago, this idea would not have been offered except after consultations with Washington. Now it has been proposed independent of the United States. I am not saying this is the single new element, but it is undoubtedly an important component.

AIW: What is the state of energy cooperation between Azerbaijan and Russia? What influence have the Georgian events had on this sector?

Amb. Istratov: Energy cooperation between our countries is important because both of us are exporters of oil and gas. And consequently, as exporters, we are on the same side relative to importers. As recently as two years ago, Azerbaijan was both an exporter and an importer, but now it is an exporter

alone. As a result, relations between our countries are changing. Indeed, the fact that at present Russia, instead of suggesting buying gas from Azerbaijan or rejecting gas to it, offers to buy the Azerbaijani gas indicates that our countries now are partners in an entirely different sense than they were some three or four years ago. As to the impact of the Georgian events on this, it is still difficult to tell. They will definitely affect it but just how is still unclear.

Frequently, we hear talk about diversification. But that term has two meanings: diversification from the point of view of the consumer and diversification from the point of view of the producer. The consumer needs a maximum number of incoming channels while the producer needs a maximum number of outgoing ones. But to identify the vector which will predominate here is still impossible. I have my own views but it is still too early to share them.

AIW: What is your assessment of the current level of cooperation concerning the North-South corridor and how do you see this project developing in the future?

Amb. Istratov: The North-South corridor is an extraordinarily attractive idea especially given the countries at each end, Europe on the one hand and the countries of the Persian Gulf, India and Pakistan and even further afield, on the other. The potential volume of this route is also enormous and certain to grow. Consequently, the main question is whether the countries involved will work in unison together or compete. There, the chief difficulties are not connected with Russia or Azerbaijan. One should also stress that the North-South corridor is not an alternative but an overland supplement to the sea trading route.

AIW: How do you see the CIS evolving after the Georgian events and Georgia's decision to withdraw from this organization?

Amb. Istratov: The CIS suffered from Georgia's withdrawal, but it will not cease its existence as a result. How one evaluates the implications for the organization depends on the way one views it. If one considers the CIS only as a mechanism for a civilized divorce, then the departure of Georgia may be viewed as something that is likely to be a trend. But if we talk about the CIS as a place for cooperation on the territory of the former USSR, then the space

of the USSR exists and will continue to exist regardless of whether politicians want it or not, just as there are countries in which one could still feel the imperial borders that ceased to exist in 1918 or countries where it is still clear where the 1939 borders extended regardless of decisions politicians make at different forums. Viewed from this perspective, the CIS will continue to exist.

Just as in the European Union, people speak about different rates of integration, so we in the CIS speak about different levels of cooperation. Some are closer, others less so. Within the CIS, there are some arrangements for only two or three countries, and there are others for all the members. Such variety will always exist. And consequently, the departure of one of the countries will not strongly affect the picture for all the others. I recall, for example, that Azerbaijan entered the CIS relatively late, and nevertheless, the CIS existed without Azerbaijan. I am not saying that all were happy about that, but nonetheless the organization existed. Thus, just as the CIS existed without Azerbaijan, it will exist without Georgia if Georgia will leave it.

AIW: You have compared the CIS with the European Union. Do you see the future of the CIS resembling that of the European Union?

Amb. Istratov: The CIS if indeed it ever develops in the way the EU has will not do so quickly. But just how it or indeed the EU will develop is far from clear and predictions are thus quite difficult to make.

AIW: What in your view ought to be the next steps in relations between Azerbaijan and Russia?

Amb. Istratov: Nothing dramatic is required; we simply need to continue to move forward along the course which we have been following in recent years. And then we will step by step – and quite quickly – come out on a new level of cooperation and find new directions of cooperation as well. Our countries need one another and actively cooperate, as anyone can see with an unaided eye. In the first two months of his presidency, Dmitry Medvedev found time to come to Azerbaijan, and now, despite the beginning of an election campaign Ilham Aliyev found it possible to fly to Moscow. Thus, our cooperation continues regardless of objective complications such as these. This shows the level of mutual interest which exists.

As far as specific steps are concerned, I would mention the need to agree on the three parts of our borders which have not yet been delimited. That question is the single knot in our relations which must be untied. But at the same time, this step is a largely symbolic one and will not affect our relations very much. To resolve this and any other problems, the chief thing is the political will of both presidents. That exists, and this is no small thing.

AIW: Based on your extensive diplomatic experience, what advice would you give to Azerbaijani diplomats on how to improve their chances to defend and advance the interests of Azerbaijan abroad?

Amb. Istratov: First of all, one needs to approach the country one is working in or on with sympathy. Over the course of my 17 years in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I was first involved with the Supreme Soviet and with the Duma and I related to them with sympathy. Then I was involved with the United States, and I related to the US with sympathy, then to Ireland, then again to the United States and now toward Azerbaijan. Without this, one will not achieve anything. If one approaches another country professionally but without sympathy, nothing good will come of it.

One also needs to attempt to understand people. I always tried to understand and sympathetically relate to Americans. And now I try to understand and with sympathy relate to Azerbaijanis. One needs to try to understand people's mentality, which may be both so different from and so similar to one's own, and one can do this best by considering those aspects which unite people.

A diplomat also has to study languages, and that is a shortcoming I suffer from because in fact I have not mastered Azerbaijani. For more than two years, I've made several attempts but beyond a very minimum level, I have not been able to advance, and as a result, I blame it on my age. But one must study languages.

One also must study the culture and history of the country one is working in. But the chief thing, I would say, is to approach one's task with an open heart and the desire to make things better because a diplomat by definition should try to improve things.

AZERBAIJAN AND MOLDOVA

An Interview with H.E. **Mr. Ion Robu**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
of the Republic of Moldova to Azerbaijan

September 10, 2008
Baku, Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan in the World: In your view, what is the most important feature of relations between Moldova and Azerbaijan? How do you rate the level of these relations at present? And which aspects of bilateral relations have been the most successful and which require additional attention?

Ambassador Robu: Relations between Moldova and Azerbaijan Republic today are marked by friendship and mutual cooperation. We are connected by strong ties of friendship, mutual support, cooperation, and partnership. Political and economic cooperation, as well as cultural and educational exchange are bringing us ever closer together as peoples and states.

There are more than 50 inter-governmental and inter-ministerial agreements linking our two countries. A new impulse for the development of rela-

tions was given by the official visit of Moldova's President Vladimir Voronin to Baku, during which he and Azerbaijani leaders discussed expanding political dialogue, bilateral and regional cooperation, energy cooperation, investment projects, and a variety of other issues of mutual concern.

Cooperation between our two parliaments is also rapidly developing. Moldova's parliamentary chairman, Mariann Lupu visited Baku in May of this year to take part in the celebration of the 90th anniversary of the Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan.

We are watching ever growing ties between scholars and scientists in our two countries and among various sectors of our populations, in particular young people. George Duka, President of Moldova's Academy of Sciences has recently paid a visit to Azerbaijan.

This year, for the first time in a long period, a festival of Moldovan culture took place in Azerbaijan, a celebration that enjoyed great success, as did an analogous measure for Azerbaijani culture in Moldova a year ago.

But despite these successes, it is obvious that we have not yet realized the full potential for cooperation between our two countries, especially in the economic sphere. Business people in our countries do not appear to know very well the possibilities of each other's markets, and it is our responsibility to provide them with the information they need.

AIW: What role do you see Azerbaijan playing in the future development of your country?

Amb. Robu: In recent years, Moldova, just like Azerbaijan, has become attractive for businessmen and investors. Our country is ready to create the necessary conditions for all Azerbaijani companies interested in operating in Moldova. We are especially interested in doing that in the energy sector where Azerbaijani specialists have particular expertise, some of which they have already generously shared with their Moldovan colleagues.

At present, we are very interested in the technical assistance which Azerbaijan can provide Moldova in prospecting for oil and gas. In March 2008, Azerbaijani experts from SOCAR came to Moldova for the second

time. They examined what we had done to that point and provided valuable recommendations on how we should proceed further. SOCAR President Rovnag Abdullayev is also expected to pay a visit to Moldova soon.

We also believe that Moldova can play a role in the creation of new oil and gas transport corridors from the Caspian basin to Europe through the exploitation of the Giurgiulesti oil terminal located in the southern part of our country as a possible extension of the Baku-Supsa system. If the project gets materialized, Caspian oil and gas could be transported to some countries in Europe through the Danube River.

AIW: What do you see as the next steps in the development of relations between Azerbaijan and Moldova?

Amb. Robu: Our countries are building a new home in which we and future generations will live. The more attention we devote to this task and the more seriously we work at it, the better it will be for our children and grandchildren. Personally I am deeply convinced that our countries – Moldova and Azerbaijan, by combining our efforts will build a future based on the triumph of all-human values. In these conditions, our bilateral ties take on a special significance. We are very glad that in recent times, there has been a continuing dialogue between our two countries and our two peoples at the highest levels and at other levels as well.

The interest of each of the sides for mutually profitable partnership has grown dramatically and is taking on ever new aspects. The most prospective direction of the development of the economies of our countries lies with mutual investment projects. The presidents of our countries have directed their governments to develop and achieve such concrete forms of cooperation. I have already pointed out that we have not yet realized our full potential in this area, and I am confident that working together we can broaden trade between our two countries, just as we are working to expand cultural ties, tourism, and educational exchanges.

AIW: What impact do you think the recent events in Georgia will have on the security of this region and the resolution of the so-called “frozen” conflicts in other countries of the region, including Azerbaijan and Moldova?

Amb. Robu: In speaking of the Transdniestria conflict, I would like to say that the answer to this question is contained in the declaration of the Government of the Republic of Moldova in connection with the situation in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

That document stresses that “unfortunately, the year-long interethnic conflict in Georgia has not found an adequate solution based on the standards of the international law and human values this time either. It transformed into a bloody drama with casualties among the civil population. Rejecting categorically all methods of forcible settlement, including those of ensuring territorial integrity, the Moldovan government does not consider however that the international recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia will stabilize the situation.”

At the same time, the document stresses the absence of any connections and parallels between the situation which exists in Georgia and that which exists in the Transdniestria region of Moldova. The latter has its own distinctive features, and there are no objective reasons for conflict. Consequently, we hope that all partners will do everything possible to ensure a constructive approach to the resolution of the problem.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict also has its own specific features. The common feature of these conflicts is aggressive separatism supported by external forces which block our states from achieving any resolution. We must work together ever more closely in order to achieve greater positive results and by peaceful means reestablish the territorial integrity of our countries.

AIW: Azerbaijan and Moldova cooperate not only bilaterally but also in the multilateral framework of GUAM. What importance does this organization have for your country? And how would you like to see it develop, especially in the wake of the recent events in Georgia?

Amb. Robu: Our countries cooperate in the framework of the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development – GUAM, where we actively discuss questions of how we can work together. In 2007, GUAM marked its 10th anniversary, and on that occasion and under the presidency

of Azerbaijan, the organization took a number of steps to raise its authority in the world. Earlier this year, the members of GUAM took additional steps in this direction at a Baku conference on GUAM's development strategy.

GUAM has already successfully realized such projects as a free trade zone, cooperation in transportation routes and trade, and the creation of the national virtual center SECI-GUAM. The chief task of this center with its center in Bucharest is to support the exchange of information between national entities of the GUAM countries in such areas as the struggle against transnational crime and others.

In my view, one of the basic directions of GUAM's activity in the future should be the development and implementation of energy projects including the creation of an effective corridor between east and west and the achievement of the GUAM countries' aspirations to integrate with European institutions. As to the impact of Georgian events on GUAM, that must become the subject of discussions among the GUAM member states.

AZERBAIJAN AND IRAN

An Interview with **Nasir Hamidi Zare**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Azerbaijan

November 13, 2008
Baku, Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan in the World: What do you see as the central core of relations between Iran and Azerbaijan?

Ambassador Nasir Hamidi Zare: Bismillahi rehmani rehim. Relations between Iran and Azerbaijan rest on a variety of political, cultural and economic factors, all of which give a broad range of opportunities for cooperation.

AIW: How have Azerbaijan-Iran relations evolved in the post-Soviet time? How would you rate their current level? What directions in bilateral ties have been most successful and where is additional attention needed?

Amb. Zare: The Soviet system could not meet the needs of the Azerbaijani people, and consequently they moved to re-establish their own independent state. Now that Azerbaijan is an independent state, Iran and Azer-

baijan are developing relations based on their location and historical commonalities. Fifteen years is not a long time, but both Baku and Tehran have been working to promote the expansion of our relations.

AIW: How do you view the recent events in Georgia? Can it trigger the fatal erosion of the fundamental principle of the rule of law in international relations?

Amb. Zare: The recent conflict in Georgia reflects a continuation of the artificial clash between two poles of power in the world, with each side trying to improve its position at the expense of the other. I do not subscribe to the notion of bipolarity of the world divided between liberal and illiberal states. As Iranians, we are members of a flourishing part of the world which is not locked into that worldview.

AIW: How do you think the recent events in Georgia will affect the further development of relations between Iran and the countries of the South Caucasus in general and with Azerbaijan in particular?

Amb. Zare: As a diplomat from Iran, I am confident that these countries will move away from an ideological – bipolar - conception of the world and will develop their relations independently with all surrounding countries. That reflects, and is enabled by, the will of the people as expressed in elections through which they extend the legitimacy to those they elect.

AIW: What is your assessment of Turkey's recent initiative for the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform? Do you think it has better potential as a framework for peaceful negotiations between Azerbaijan and Armenia as compared with the Minsk Group?

Amb. Zare: Relations among countries should not reflect the desire of other powers to divide the world but should rest on the views of the people who want cooperation. The more choices people have in seeking solutions to their problems, the greater the chance that they will find one that works. Azerbaijan acting as an independent country has the right to make its own choice in this regard. Consequently, Azerbaijan, like Turkey and Iran, must respond on the basis of its own national interests.

AIW: What is the state of energy cooperation between Azerbaijan and Iran? What effect did the Georgian events have on this cooperation?

Amb. Zare: The conflict in Georgia may lead to a change in the flow of oil out of the Caspian basin. If anyone tries to monopolize those routes, all may suffer in the future. Azerbaijan and Iran now have the chance to create a new atmosphere of cooperation in this area, one that promotes security generally and energy flows as well. At the same time, both our countries need to develop industry and not just provide the West with energy resources.

AIW: What are the recent developments within the North-South corridor project, and what is the level of Azerbaijan-Iran cooperation within that framework?

Amb. Zare: By the gift of Allah, Iran is in a geographically advantageous position between north and south and east and west. It cannot be ignored because you cannot change geography. Azerbaijan should recognize that a north-south corridor between Russia and Iran is not only about transportation in a narrow sense but involves broader communication as well, including through fiber optic channels and internet. So, geography dictates its own rules, and recognition of these possibilities will help us expand our relations.

AIW: Do you see any hurdles that Iran and Azerbaijan will have to overcome in order to improve their relationship?

Amb. Zare: In general, I do not see any serious problem in our relations. Those that do exist are survivals from the Soviet past. The potential exists on both sides to tackle all problems, and we have so far been able to do that. Because the commitment on both sides is strong, when our presidents meet, they can speak in an open and friendly manner, something that helps solve all problems. Of course, other countries are not just observers of this process: they try to play tricks. But we are Muslim brothers, good neighbors, and historic relatives, so we will not go against our mutual interests.

AIW: What in your view ought to be the next steps in relations between Azerbaijan and Iran?

Amb. Zare: Our joint economic commission will have its next meet-

ing in Baku. I hope that this session will lead to an increase in the volume of trade and to new cooperation agreements both between the two governments and among private sectors.

AIW: Given your own experience, what advice would you give young Azerbaijanis beginning their careers in diplomacy?

Amb. Zare: I would recommend that young diplomats adopt an independent and critical view, one that is shaped by their own observations rather than by what others attempt to pour into their minds. Young diplomats must study the world carefully, learn to distinguish between what is truth and what is not. Believe in your own people and government, and work as a representative of your government for the benefit of your people and humanity as well.

CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S
FOREIGN POLICY IN 2008

Key Government Statements On Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

DECEMBER

Speaking at the opening of the International Mugham Center in Baku, President Ilham Aliyev says that “the economy of Azerbaijan is part of the world economy and processes taking place abroad one way or another can be reflected in Azerbaijan” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/142098.html>).

Khazar Ibrahim, the spokesman for the Azerbaijan foreign ministry, reiterates that Baku is “categorically against any foreign illegal presence or activities in the occupied territories” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/140502.html>).

Speaking to the Baku conference of ministers of culture of the Council of Europe, President Ilham Aliyev denounces Armenia’s destruction of cultural monuments in the occupied territories and calls on all the countries to join in what he described as the Baku Process to strengthen the defense of all such monuments not only there but throughout Europe and the world (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138917.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov in Helsinki for the anniversary of the founding of the OSCE calls for the organization to devote at least as much attention to the resolution of conflicts as it does to issues of human rights. That is necessary to guarantee in Karabakh “a normal life for both Azerbaijanis and Armenians” living there. He adds that Baku hopes that Armenians “understand” that this is “our position” and will “also support it” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139359.html>).

NOVEMBER

President Ilham Aliyev tells Italy's RAI International television that the Moscow declaration by the presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia does not contain any provision that blocks Baku from using force if necessary to recover its occupied territories (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=96878>).

President Ilham Aliyev tells a roundtable on "Azerbaijan in the 21st Century – A Strategy of Success" that Baku's relations with Moscow are dynamically developing as a strategic partnership. He also says that the liberation of Azerbaijani territory currently occupied by Armenia is a precondition to stability in the Caucasus (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=96265>).

President Ilham Aliyev says that recent reports about Azerbaijan by Freedom House and Transparency International are not objective but instead promote specific political interests often at odds with those of Azerbaijani government (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138371.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that opportunities for cooperation between Azerbaijan and the United States in the military sphere are increasing (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/137139.html>).

The Azerbaijan foreign ministry says that the French foreign ministry has distorted the meaning of the Moscow Declaration by talking about "the people of Nagorno-Karabakh." Such "a people" does not exist, Baku says. Instead, there are Armenian and Azerbaijani communities there (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/137218.html>).

The Azerbaijan foreign ministry says that Baku recognizes the right of nations to self-determination but believes that its implementation must not violate the

territorial integrity and sovereignty of states (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/137192.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev says after meeting with Turkish President Abdulla Gul in Ankara that the agreement he signed with the Russian and Armenian presidents in Moscow “opened a new path for the step by step resolution of the [Karabakh] conflict... within the framework of international norms.” He adds that in the Caucasus region “a new geopolitical situation has emerged. The serious involvement of Turkey, the increasingly active stance of Russia, the positive efforts of the US and Europe are creating conditions for the resolution of conflicts in the region, including the Armenian-Azerbaijan one” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135620.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev sends a congratulatory message to Barak Obama following his election as president. Aliyev says that Azerbaijanis “attach particular importance to relations between the United States and Azerbaijan” and look forward to “close cooperation in many areas” including energy security and the resolution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135722.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev tells the Turkish parliament that it is entirely natural that he should make his first foreign visit after re-election to Turkey, a fraternal country and one with which Azerbaijan enjoys model relations in all spheres of economic, political and international life (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135891.html>).

Azerbaijan Foreign Ministry spokesman Khazar Ibrahim says that Azerbaijan recognizes the right of national self-determination, but it must be realized, as the Helsinki Final Act specifies, “only in the framework of the observation of the principle of the territorial integrity” of states (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135389.html>).

OCTOBER

In his second inaugural address, President Ilham Aliyev stresses that “today Azerbaijan has strengthened its positions in the international community” by conducting “a policy based on national interests, national dignity, national consciousness and tolerance.” He added that Baku is “interested in the construction of mutually profitable relations with all countries” and said that “the countries which are cooperating with us in the region are satisfied with this cooperation.” And in the course of his second term, he added, Baku will seek to prolong and extend “friendly relations with all countries” and expand its activities in international organizations.

With regard to Karabakh, President Aliyev reaffirmed his position that “Karabakh will never be independent. Azerbaijan will never recognize it. Not in five, ten or twenty years, not ever.” Azerbaijan “will never give agreement to the separation of his immemorial lands, and we by strengthening our territorial integrity will achieve the return of the occupied territories.” “International law and historic justice are on the side of Azerbaijan,” he continued. “And as long as our lands remain occupied, there cannot be any talk about cooperation of any kind with Armenia.” The president added that he retains hope that the dispute can be resolved by negotiations.

And the re-elected president concluded his inaugural address by asserting that “today Azerbaijan is an independent country in the full sense of the word” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/134411.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev says that as long as Armenia is in occupation of any Azerbaijani territory, Baku will continue its policy of promoting the “total” iso-

lation of Yerevan in diplomatic, political, economic, transportation, military, propaganda and other spheres. "Until the resolution of [the Nagorno-Karabakh] question, no cooperation with Armenia is possible nor is its participation in any regional project. And we will do everything possible in order that the current situation will continue." The Azerbaijan leader adds that the Karabakh dispute can only be solved on the basis of the recognition by all parties of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133129.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev says that "the financial crisis which is observed in the world has not had an impact on Azerbaijan" as a result of the country's policies of diversifying the economy (<http://www.day.az/news/economy/133136.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that "the step-by-step resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will create the conditions for effective cooperation." He stresses that the conflict can be resolved by peaceful means, on the basis of international principles including the recognition of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132492.html>).

SEPTEMBER

In his speech to the UN General Assembly session, Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that “issues which cause disagreements in the region must be regulated by peaceful means on the basis of dialogue, the norms and principles of international law, and mutual respect” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/131843.html>).

In a press release following his meeting with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, President Ilham Aliyev is quoted as saying that “we live in this region and will live in this region; we are neighbors, and no one is departing this region” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/130625.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev tells visiting deputy speaker of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation Svetlana Orlova that “bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Russia are successfully developing in various sectors” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/131637.html>).

Ramiz Mekhtiyev, the head of the Presidential Administration, says that Azerbaijan is the most stable country in the South Caucasus (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/130821.html>).

First Vice Speaker of the Milli Majlis Ziyafat Askerov says that there is no need to change the format of the OSCE Minsk group (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/130713.html>).

After his meeting with visiting U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney, President Ilham Aliyev says that “relations between Azerbaijan and the United States will play a very important role in the realization of energy projects” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/129453.html>).

Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that Baku assesses favorably Turkey's proposal for establishing a Platform of Stability and Cooperation in the Caucasus (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/129483.html>).

Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that all issues about the legal status of the Caspian and its seabed "must be decided by dialogue among the Caspian littoral states" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/129496.html>).

AUGUST

President Ilham Aliyev says that Georgia and Russia are friends of Azerbaijan and that Azerbaijan would like to see the two of them be friends with each other (http://www.day.az/view_day.php?date=2008-8-20), but he also reiterates Azerbaijan's support for the territorial integrity of Georgia (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=85008>).

Azerbaijan, together with its GUAM partners, announces plans to issue a statement on Georgia reaffirming the organization's commitment to the territorial integrity of that country and all others (http://www.analitika.az/articles.php?item_id=20080830013437472&sec_id=69).

Azerbaijan's foreign ministry announces that Baku has no immediate plans to leave the Commonwealth of Independent States (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/127867.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev says that Armenia is not in a position to compete with Azerbaijan in any area (http://www.1news.az/articles.php?item_id=20080802072636155&sec_id=2).

Hafiz Pashayev, deputy foreign minister and rector of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy and Azerbaijan's former ambassador to Washington, calls for an expansion in ties between Azerbaijan and the United States (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/127434.html>).

Elin Suleymanov, Azerbaijan's consul general in Los Angeles, says that he hopes the events in Georgia will not lead to a new cold war between the Russian Federation and the United States (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/127587.html>).

JULY

Azerbaijan's consul general in Los Angeles Elin Suleymanov tells the Union of Women Journalists of Azerbaijan that "the world should realize that we, Azerbaijanis, and our society do not intend to live without Karabakh. It is a matter of choice – either we return Karabakh or Azerbaijan will not exist without Karabakh. We should persuade the world society of that" (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=82583>).

Azerbaijani foreign ministry spokesman Khazar Ibrahim says that Armenia overstepped the limits imposed by the treaty on conventional armed forces in Europe by more than 70 pieces of equipment, adding that there is evidence that more than 300 armored cars have been stationed on the occupied territories of Azerbaijan (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=80971>).

Khazar Ibrahim, Azerbaijani foreign ministry spokesman, says Azerbaijan sees no threat for itself from Iran (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=80684>).

In his congratulation message to the French President Nicolas Sarkozy, President Ilham Aliyev describes Azerbaijan-France relations as "successfully developing" (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=80679>).

Speaking at the third congress of heads of diplomatic missions and consulates of Azerbaijan on July 7, President Ilham Aliyev states that Azerbaijan's foreign policy on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict must be of offensive nature (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=79823>).

JUNE

Ministry of Foreign Affairs announces that Azerbaijan will continue efforts for restoration of peace in Iraq (<http://www.today.az/news/politics/46053.html>).

Addressing a special meeting of Milli Majlis on June 19, President Ilham Aliyev stresses that Baku's concession in the resolution of the Karabakh conflict consists in granting highest administration right to Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://www.today.az/news/politics/45802.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev says on June 3 that Azerbaijan is prepared to liberate the occupied territories at any moment (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=75618>).

Hafiz Pashayev, deputy foreign minister and former Azerbaijani ambassador in Washington, says that he would not take very seriously "the pro-Armenian comments" of American presidential candidates (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/121026.html>).

MAY

President Ilham Aliyev speaking on the 90th anniversary of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan says that outside pressure on Baku, including statements about supposed shortcomings in its democracy, will not affect Azerbaijan's policies (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/119471.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev says during a visit to Baku's Carpet Museum that "Armenia's policy of ethnic cleansing against the Azerbaijani people has brought great harm to our historical monuments" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/118236.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev talks about the role of his father, Heydar Aliyev, in developing Azerbaijan and promoting ties with other countries around the world during the commemoration of the latter's 85th birthday (http://www.president.az/articles.php?item_id=20080513102803886&sec_id=11s).

President Ilham Aliyev sends a message to the participants at the International Conference "In the Name of Democracy and Stability" in which he says that Azerbaijan is achieving "a unique model of social life, national unity, and highly dynamic development" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/117184.html>).

Araz Azimov details the provisions of Azerbaijan's position on the modalities regulating the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict in an interview given to Day.az (<http://www.day.az/print/news/politics/118039.html>).

Vilayat Guliyev, Azerbaijan's ambassador in Warsaw, publishes a book entitled "The Azerbaijan Republic at the Paris Peace Conference (May 1919 – April 1920). It appears in Azerbaijani, English and French (<http://www.day.az/news/society/116745.html>).

APRIL

President Ilham Aliyev speaking in Fizuli says that the next few months must bring "clarity" to the Karabakh conflict, adding that Baku will not tolerate any double standards on this issue. In other comments, he criticizes those countries that try to impose democracy by force and says that Azerbaijan is the most democratic country in its region (<http://www.newsazerbaijan.ru/politic/20080418/42253390.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev tells Interfax-Azerbaijan that he expects Baku to spend almost two billion U.S. dollars on defense this year.

Speaking at the NATO summit in Bucharest, President Ilham Aliyev reaffirms that Baku will not accept any resolution of the Karabakh dispute that does not maintain the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan (http://www.1news.az/articles.php?item_id=20080403083750598&sec_id=2).

Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says the status Tatarstan and Bashkortostan enjoy in Russia could be a model for resolving the Karabakh dispute (http://www.analitika.az/articles.php?item_id=20080415091116869&sec_id=8).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov says Azerbaijan, Russia and Kazakhstan have reached agreement on the legal status of the Caspian seabed (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/114572.html>).

Azerbaijani officials denounce Russian, Armenian and Iranian involvement with ethnic minorities inside Azerbaijan (<http://www.ethnoglobus.com/?page=full&id=178>).

MARCH

In an interview to Interfax, President Ilham Aliyev reaffirms that Azerbaijan will never accept the secession of Nagorno-Karabakh but will try to resolve the conflict peacefully (http://www.interfax.az/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=18570&Itemid=9).

Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that the UNGA vote shows the international strength of Azerbaijan's diplomatic position relative to that of Armenia (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/112299.html>).

Speaking in Khanlar, President Ilham Aliyev says that Azerbaijan is growing ever stronger, something he suggests Armenia should keep in mind (<http://www.br.az/site/main.htm>). He subsequently amplifies that statement by pointing out that Baku is ready for a military solution of the Karabakh problem if Yerevan is not forthcoming (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/110184.html>).

At the opening of a new Catholic church in Baku, President Ilham Aliyev says that Azerbaijan has a long tradition of inter-ethnic and inter-religious tolerance and that there are no major ethnic or religious problems in the republic at the present time (<http://www.day.az/news/society/110837.html>).

The Azerbaijan foreign ministry says that it sees relations between Baku and Moscow developing more rapidly in the future under incoming Russian president Dmitry Medvedev (<http://www.anspress.com/nid62492.html>).

FEBRUARY

President Ilham Aliyev delivers a major address during his visit to Budapest. He also spoke at a variety of venues there and during his subsequent visit to Poland (<http://www.525.az/rus/2008/02/20/get=13907>).

Nazim Ibrahimov, the head of Azerbaijan's State Committee on Azerbaijanis Living Abroad, discussed his agency's activities over the past year and described its plans for the year ahead, including greater cooperation with Turkey, Germany, and Israel and greater efforts to oppose the Armenian diaspora (<http://www.echo-az.com/obshestvo19.shtml>).

The Azerbaijan Foreign Ministry and the Heydar Aliyev Foundation have released an English-language book, entitled "War Against Azerbaijan: Targeting Cultural Heritage" describing the way in which Armenian occupation forces have sought to eradicate Azerbaijani monuments. The book, which features satellite photography as well as detailed maps, is also available online at <http://www.war-culture.az>.

Azerbaijan has prepared a resolution for the 62nd session of the United Nations General Assembly "On the situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan." Its text is available at http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_02/1758/politica04.shtml.

Vafa Guluzade, the former Azerbaijan national security advisor, argues Kosovo in no way represents a precedent for the future resolution of the Karabakh conflict (http://www.1news.az/articles.php?item_id=20080219125251199&sec_id=7).

Speaking on the occasion of his selection as Azerbaijan's "Man of the Year," President Ilham Aliyev stressed that he is responsible for both the good

and the bad in Azerbaijan, that he regrets negotiations with Armenia have not yielded a solution to the Karabkh issue, and reminded that Baku's patience on this was not unlimited (<http://www.br.az/site/main.htm>, February 6).

In remarks to a veterans congress, President Ilham Aliyev said that Baku has always been a multi-national city where people of different ethnic backgrounds and faiths have lived in harmony (http://www.news.bakililar.az/news_baku_vseqda_byl_12446.html).

In an interview carried in Moscow's *Rossiiskaya gazeta* on February 5, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mamadyarov said that Baku and Moscow were now cooperating on a wide range of issues and that there was no need for anyone to try to play the CIS and GUAM off against one another.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Heydar Aliyev Foundation issue a new book entitled *War Against Azerbaijan: Targeting Cultural Heritage* (280 pp. with illustrations, maps and two DVDs) detailing the destruction of cultural monuments in areas of Azerbaijan occupied by Armenia. The book was presented in London on February 12th and in Paris on February 13th.

JANUARY

In his New Year's message to the nation, President Ilham Aliyev says that the country has a bright future and that any ethnic Armenians in Karabakh who want to establish their country should go elsewhere to do so (<http://www.day.az/news/society/103029.html>).

In other speeches in January, President Ilham Aliyev says that the goal of talks with Armenia is to secure the withdrawal of Armenian forces from Azerbaijan and to reassert the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan (www.day.az/articles/rm.html), that Armenia discriminates at home (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/103874.html>), and that the struggle for Karabakh is not over (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/104407.html>).

At the World Economic Forum in Davos, President Ilham Aliyev delivers an address on Azerbaijan's contribution to meeting the energy needs of Europe (http://www.1news.az/articles.php?item_id=20080124065429260&zsec_id=2).

In an op-ed article entitled "The Caspian Moment" published in New York's Wall Street Journal on January 21, Foreign Minister Elmar Mamadyarov outlines Azerbaijan's views on the path forward to a resolution of the Karabakh conflict (http://online.wsj.com/article/SB120087666065304071.html?mod=opinion_main_europe_asia).

In an interview conducted by Baku's Zerkalo newspaper, Deputy Foreign Minister Hafiz Pashayev discusses the current and future role of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy where he serves as rector (<http://www.zerkalo.az/rubric.php?id=29350>).

Key Statements By
Others About Azerbaijan

DECEMBER

Claudio Bisognero, the deputy Secretary General of NATO, says that it is “the principled position” of the Western alliance that the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia must be settled by peaceful means and that NATO does not see any role for itself in the resolution of the conflict (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/140611.html>). In other comments, he says that NATO welcomes the contribution of Azerbaijan in the stabilization of conditions in Afghanistan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/140602.html>).

Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan tells the Turkish parliament that Ankara will “continue to broaden [its] relations with fraternal Azerbaijan based on the multi-faced and common interests” of the two countries (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/141743.html>).

Afghani Foreign Minister Dadfar Spanta says in Baku that Kabul “completely supports the position of Azerbaijan in the Karabakh conflict.” He tells his Azerbaijani counterpart Elmar Mammadyarov that Afghanistan is interested in studying Baku’s experience in diplomacy, science and education, medicine, and agriculture (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/140614.html>).

Terry Davis, the secretary general of the Council of Europe, says in Baku that he very much regrets that “the visit of the PACE mission on culture and

cultural heritage to Azerbaijan and Armenia has been put off. This is connected with the fact that the two sides have disagreements” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138923.html>).

William Burns, US under secretary of state for political affairs, says in Baku that Washington would like to see a redoubling of efforts to resolve conflicts like the one over Karabakh and believes that the Minsk Group is an important venue for that, although he adds that bilateral talks are also important (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139363.html>).

The leadership of the Council of Europe decide not to discuss the issue of the presidential elections in Azerbaijan, according to Samed Seidov, the head of the Azerbaijani delegation there (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138925.html>).

Goran Lenmarker, the special rapporteur on South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, says that 2008 has been “a very good year” in talks about the latter issue and expresses the hope that the border between Armenia and Turkey will soon be open (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139344.html>).

NOVEMBER

French President Nicolas Sarkozy sends a letter to President Ilham Aliyev saying that France will do all it can to secure “a peaceful and just resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138518.html>).

Turkish President Abdullah Gul in announcing plans for a Baku summit of the Turkic Language Countries next year says that “those who at one time said that the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline would not be built... today see that oil coming from Baku to Ceyhan is being sold to the entire world” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/137753.html>).

Vasily Istratov, the Russian ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that “the Moscow declaration is the road map for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict,” the basis for further negotiations between the two sides. But he stresses that Nagorno-Karabakh itself cannot take an equal part in any future talks (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/137488.html>).

According to the Turkish news portal haberaktuel.com, Ankara will open a consulate general in Ganja in 2009 as part of its plan to set up 13 embassies and 12 consulates general (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138466.html>).

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev says following the signing of the declaration by himself and the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan that

“the Caucasus crisis again showed that the application of force by one of the sides of a conflict cannot guarantee a lasting solution.” And consequently, he continues, Moscow will seek to promote the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within the framework of the norms of international law (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135714.html>).

Chian Hanchou, China’s ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that Beijing supports the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute only on the basis of the principle of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135271.html>).

Matthew Bryza, US deputy assistant secretary of state and co-chair of the Minsk Group, says that the chances for a resolution of the Karabakh dispute improved following the Georgian crisis because Moscow fulfilled nearly all of its commitments under the terms of the Sarkozy-Medvedev agreement and because many nations are working to prevent any other outbreak of violence. He says he “even hopes” that the conflict can be resolved in the course of the next year (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136800.html>).

Sergey Markov, a prominent Moscow analyst who works as an advisor to the Kremlin, says that the polar opposite views of Baku and Yerevan mean that “there will never be a final resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. All forms of a resolution [of that dispute] will be provisional only” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135724.html>).

Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus says that “the number of letters in the word GUAM should be increased” in order to promote the goals of that organization over a broader region (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136642.html>).

Aleksandr Dugin, the influential leader of the Eurasianist movement in Moscow, says that “it is now important for Russia to improve relations with Azerbaijan, all the more so because [President Ilham] Aliyev conducted himself very correctly during the conflict in South Ossetia” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135165.html>).

OCTOBER

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin sends a message to President Ilham Aliyev on the occasion of the latter's re-election in which he says that "your convincing victory in the elections confirms the broad support and trust of the Azerbaijani people to the course you have followed toward the accelerated political and social-economic development of the country and the strengthening of the authority of Azerbaijan in the international arena." Putin adds that he "is certain that friendly and good-neighbourly Russian-Azerbaijani relations will in the future actively develop in all directions in the interests of the peoples of both countries and the strengthening of regional and international stability" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133492.html>).

The International Crisis Group releases a report saying that Azerbaijan and Armenia continue to have military parity (<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=5751&l=1>).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says that he is not familiar with declarations by the Azerbaijani foreign ministry that Baku supports the territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia. He adds that Baku is a very important strategic partner for Russia (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132184.html>).

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte says that “we recognize the territorial integrity and independence of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. For that reason, the United States more than ever wants a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by peaceful means ... on the basis of territorial integrity and considering other international principles.” He also expresses Washington’s gratitude for Azerbaijan’s contribution to the peacekeeping forces in Afghanistan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132128.html>).

Russian Vice Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov says at a summit of the Caspian basin states in Astrakhan that reaching agreement on “a new legal status for the Caspian” will create conditions for the large-scale exploration of hydrocarbon resources (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132237.html>).

Matthew Bryza, U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state and co-chair of the Minsk Group, says in a BBC interview that “the United States considers that the resolution of the Karabakh question must be based on the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.” He adds that “it is necessary to begin with [this] principle” even though “we know that Yerevan has a different position, and we must use creative and constructive approach so that Azerbaijan and Armenia will find a common language” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132778.html>).

SEPTEMBER

Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan says in a September 23 op-ed in the International Herald Tribune that “as the process of normalizing Turkish-Armenian relations moves ahead, we must not spare our efforts to find a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem” (<http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/09/23/opinion/edbabacan.php>).

Israeli Ambassador to Baku Arthur Lenk says that the close ties between his country and Azerbaijan are based on five basic sets of interests, including the existence of communities in both countries with ties to the other and shared views about strategic cooperation (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=88676>).

Goran Lennmarker, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly’s Special Envoy for Georgia and OSCE PA’s Special Representative for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, says that “the independent countries of [the South Caucasus], Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, as concerned parties should hold talks on the settlement of conflicts in the Caucasus” (<http://www.today.az/news/politics/47699.html>).

US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Bryza says in Baku that the United States will resume its cooperation with Russia in the Minsk

Group after Moscow fulfills its obligations in Georgia, that the resolution of the Karabakh dispute will be based on the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, and that “after the events in Georgia, the United States will always stand alongside Azerbaijan” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/130891.html>).

After his meeting with President Ilham Aliyev, U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney says that he is pleased and encouraged by the level of cooperation between Azerbaijan and the United States on all major questions (www.day.az/news/politics/129353.html). Russian Security Council director Nikolai Patrushev criticizes Cheney for what he said was his effort to put pressure on Baku (www.day.az/news/politics/129398.html).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov tells visiting Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov on September 7 that “Russia recognizes the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/129788.html>).

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried says in a widely quoted “Financial Times” interview that “the main question standing before the United States is support of Georgia. The second question in importance is not to allow Russia to create a new zone of influence” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/129150.html>).

AUGUST

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov says that the resolution of the Karabakh dispute will not be achieved the same way as were those of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (http://www.analitika.az/articles.php?item_id=20080828012201732&sec_id=69).

Senator Richard Lugar, ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, says in Baku that the United States “provided all kinds of support to Georgia for conflict settlement and is ready to do it for Azerbaijan if needed” (<http://www.ans.az/index.php?nid=85521>).

Vasily Istratov, Russia's ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that “Russia's recognition of independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia will not effect on its respect to Azerbaijan's territorial integrity” (<http://www.ans.az/index.php?nid=85794>).

Stephan Goris, the honorary president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Union, says that Azerbaijan will retain its leadership in the Caucasus, despite the events in Georgia (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=85726>).

Andres Herkel, the Council of Europe's special representative, says Azerbaijan must improve the ways in which it conducts elections (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/127999.html>).

Vasily Istratov, the ambassador of the Russian Federation to Azerbaijan,

says that he hopes the countries of the South Caucasus will draw “the correct lesson” from what is happening in Georgia now (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/127438.html>).

Turkey’s foreign minister, Ali Babacan, says that he hopes the Karabakh dispute can be resolved as quickly as possible (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/127675.html>).

Peter Semnebi, special representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus, says that the European Union hopes that the assessments of elections in Azerbaijan to be positive (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/126257.html>).

Andreas Herkel, co-rapporteur of the PACE monitoring commission in Azerbaijan, says that Azerbaijani opposition parties would achieve more by participating in the upcoming presidential elections than by violating them (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/126421.html>).

Geydar Dzhemal, the head of the Islamic Committee of Russia, says that the Kremlin has no plans to promote the restoration of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/126521.html>).

JULY

Peter Semneby, EU special representative for the South Caucasus, said on July 31 that the European Commission, now discussing the “eastern partnership,” will issue a report on the initiative, including a discussion on whether the project should be part of the European Neighborhood Policy (<http://en.apa.az/news.php?id=86044>).

Heikki Talvitie, special envoy of the OSCE chairman-in-office, said that “[Nagorno Karabakh] conflict must be settled within [the] framework of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity,” arguing that principles of territorial integrity and self-determination do not contradict each other (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=82626>).

David J. Kramer, assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor, told the US Helsinki Commission on July 29 that “Azerbaijan is situated in a tough and strategically important neighborhood. If it enacts meaningful political reform, its location and abundant resources give it tremendous potential to serve as a model for aspiring democracies.” He said the US wants to raise “cooperation with Azerbaijan in the democracy issues to the level of cooperation in the sphere of energy and security” (<http://today.az/news/politics/46742.html>).

Turkish President Abdulla Gul said during a meeting with President Ilham Aliyev that the Kars-Tbilisi-Baku railway will revive the historical silk way and will enable to transport cargo from China to Europe (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=81915>).

Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin said that his country considers the formation of a GUAM peacekeeping force as inappropriate but added that Chisinau has no plans to withdraw from the organization (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=81827>).

Vasiliy Istratov, Russian ambassador to Baku, says Medvedev's visit to Azerbaijan boosted reliable and constructive cooperation Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=79914>).

JUNE

Anne Derse, US ambassador to Azerbaijan, announces that the United States believes in further development of democracy in Azerbaijan (<http://www.today.az/news/politics/45965.html>).

Turkish ambassador in Baku Khulusi Kilich says that Azerbaijan is a gate to Middle Asia for the whole world, and notes that Turkey is ready to assist Azerbaijan in NATO accession (<http://www.today.az/news/politics/45912.html>).

US ambassador Anne Derse highly evaluates the process of Azerbaijan's WTO accession and voices the US readiness to support Azerbaijan in this issue (<http://www.today.az/news/business/45902.html>).

In his letter to Safar Abiyev, Azerbaijani defense minister, US General Dan McNeil, commander of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), expressed satisfaction with the service displayed by Azerbaijani peacekeepers in Afghanistan (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=77403>).

Vafa Guluzade, former national security advisor to President Heydar Aliyev, says that Russia will continue to punish Azerbaijan over Karabakh because of Baku's pro-Western orientation (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/120514.html>).

Aleksei Vlasov, the head of the Moscow Information-Analytic Center for the Study of the Post-Soviet Space, says that the OSCE Minsk Group has

failed and that the sides should first deal with the withdrawal of Armenian forces from Azerbaijani territories beyond the borders of Karabakh (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=75633>).

Matthew Bryza, U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state, says the danger of war will diminish if Armenia withdraws from the seven districts of Azerbaijan beyond the borders of Karabakh (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=75990>).

The European Union is concerned that an entire generation of Azerbaijanis and Armenians have grown up without contact with the other, Peter Semneby, the EU special representative for the South Caucasus, says (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/120106.html>).

Peter Semneby, the EU special representative for the South Caucasus, says that Azerbaijanis are a unique nation who combine European values and Asiatic traditions (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/120379.html>).

Alirezah Sheikh Ettar, Iran's deputy foreign minister, says in Baku that Tehran is prepared to work as an intermediary to help resolve the Karabakh dispute (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/120371.html>).

Matthew Bryza, U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state, says that the status quo between Azerbaijan and Armenia is "dangerous" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/120120.html>).

MAY

Ukrainian Ambassador to Baku Boris Klimchuk describes the role of Azerbaijan in GUAM (<http://www.zerkalo.az/rubric.php?id=33124&dd=30&mo=5&yr=2008>).

Nikolai Bordyuzha, the general secretary of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), says that if Azerbaijan were to become a member, that would strengthen collective security (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/118441.html>).

Aleksei Vlasov, general director of the Moscow Center for the Study of Social-Political Processes in the Post-Soviet Space, says in Baku that he is a "cautious pessimist" about the resolution of the Karabakh dispute (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/119100.html>).

Johannes Rau, a leading German expert on security issues, says that the European Union is especially concerned about the danger of renewed fighting over Karabakh because of the possible impact of such a development on the delivery of oil and gas to its member states (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/119187.html>).

King Hussein of Jordan says in an interview in advance of his visit to Baku that he and President Ilham Aliyev share common views on the most important issues of the day (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/116879.html>).

US President George W. Bush says that Azerbaijan is one of the five worst countries in the world in terms of the number of journalists the governments has arrested for engaging in journalism (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/116778.html>).

Former US President George H.W. Bush says that Heydar Aliyev laid the foundations for Azerbaijan's economic success (<http://www.day.az/news/society/117500.html>).

US Ambassador Ann Derse says that on issues like democracy and human rights, there is no room for double standards, disagrees with Baku that there are no problems with media freedom in Azerbaijan, and announces that the US is committing \$3 million to promote honest elections in Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/116587.html>).

APRIL

GUAM's executive secretary says the grouping is a stepping stone toward NATO and the European Union (<http://www.newsazerbaijan.ru/exclusive/20080416/42249492.html>).

The Organization of the Islamic Conference condemns Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/111816.html>).

U.S. President George Bush says Washington is and will remain an honest broker in the negotiations between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Karabakh (http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_04/1796/politica04.shtml).

Moldovan officials say they have no idea why anyone is spreading the idea that Chisinau is planning to leave GUAM (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/114807.html>).

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili says that what affects Azerbaijan affects Georgia and vice versa (<http://www.day.az/news/georgia/113353.html>).

Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, deputy speaker of the Russian Duma, says he expects Azerbaijan to join NATO after Ukraine and Georgia do (http://www.1news.az/articles.php?sec_id=2&item_od=20080401101737773).

U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan Anne Derse says US views Azerbaijan as a strategic partner and will not recognize the independence of Karabakh

(<http://news/tremd/az/index.shtml?show=news&newsid=1166799&lang=RU>).

The GUAM countries issue a joint statement to the OSCE about the resolution of conflicts and peacekeeping issues (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/114342.html>).

Moldova's Deputy Foreign Minister Ion Stevila says that he does not know where the "rumors" that his country plans to leave GUAM got started, adding that Chisinau has no plans to do so (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/114807.html>).

Turkey's ambassador in Baku calls Azerbaijan "the Switzerland of the South Caucasus" (http://www.1news.az/articles.php?item_id=3&item_id=2008040304233677).

Moscow's Carnegie Center hosts a conference on Azerbaijan's security situation (<http://www.ioa-centr.ru/expert/797/>).

MARCH

In an interview to ANS TV broadcast on March 22, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried says the United States continues to support a peaceful resolution of the Karabakh issue (<http://www.anspress.com/nid65229.html>).

Chingiz Aitmatov, Kyrgyz author and sometime ambassador, says that Azerbaijan occupies “one of the leading positions” among countries of the Turkic world (<http://news.trend.az/index.shtml?show=news&newsid=1162011&lang=RU>).

Following their vote against the UNGA resolution on the occupied territories, the Minsk Group co-chairs issue a joint statement reaffirming their commitment to a negotiated settlement.

Baku’s Western University issues a new book by Randell Baker entitled *Kavkaziana* and devoted to Azerbaijani traditions of hospitality.

During a visit to Baku, Robert Simmons, NATO’s special representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, says that Kosovo is not a precedent for the resolution of the Karabakh dispute (<http://www.regionplus.az/news/index.php>).

Sheikh ul Islam Allahshakhur Pashazade, chairman of the Muslim Spiritual Directorate of the Caucasus, condemns Armenia’s destruction of religious sites in the occupied territories (<http://www.newsazerbaijan.ru/international/20080308/42199231.html>).

The Azerbaijan-American Council issues a statement decrying recent fighting on the Azerbaijan-Armenian ceasefire line and assigning responsibility for it to Yerevan (http://www.1news.az/articles.php?sec_id=4&item_id=20080305101609295).

A Turkish translation of an Azerbaijani scholar on the events of Black January 1990 is released in Istanbul (<http://www.zerkalo.az/rubric.php?id=30929>).

FEBRUARY

The U.S. Embassy in Baku issues a statement saying that American recognition of Kosovo does not affect Washington's stance on the future status of Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://www.525.az/rus/2008/02/20/get=13906>).

Vasily Istratov, Russia's ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that incoming Russian President Dmitry Medvedev will continue to promote good relations between Moscow and Baku (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/108621.html>).

Kestutis Kudzamanas, Lithuania's ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that Vilnius stands ready to be an advocate for Baku in Europe (<http://www.azerizv.az/article.php?id=12705>).

Svante Cornell of the Swedish Institute of Security and Political Development says Baku should ask for more international assistance to support internally displaced persons (http://mosaz.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2330&Itemid=26).

Gordon Bardos, assistant director at Columbia's Harriman Institute, says in Moscow that the "Dayton accords" on the former Yugoslavia could serve as a model for the resolution of the Karabakh conflict (http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_02/1755/politica01.shtml).

On the 20th anniversary of the Sumgait events, Azerbaijan releases a

book entitled "The Sumgait Events – an Armenian Provocation." The book, published in English, German, French and Russian, is to be distributed free to international media outlets (http://www.1news.az/articles.php?item_id=20080227020634562&sec_id=1).

Thomas De Waal, "Separation Anxiety [on the Karabakh war]," *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, 20 February 2008 (<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB120345823890778045.html>).

Leyla Shamchiyeva (Humboldt University, Berlin), "The Development of Relations Between the U.S. and Azerbaijan Since the 1990s" (<http://atc.az/index.php?newsid=170>).

Gabriel Lerner, "Azeri Jews: Centuries of coexistence in Azerbaijan, *Jewish Journal* (Los Angeles) (<http://www.jewishjournal.com/home/preview.php?id=18754>).

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) adopts a resolution calling on Armenia to withdraw from all Azerbaijani territories (<http://www.anspress.com/nid57738.html>).

NATO officials welcome the pace and extent of Azerbaijan's military reforms (http://www.1news.az/articles.php?sec_id=2&item_id=20080204012239460).

Amnesty International calls on all the governments of the world to send letters to the Iranian government protesting its continued mistreatment of ethnic Azerbaijanis and other minorities (<http://www.echo-az.com/politica02.shtml>).

Vafa Guluzade, former Azerbaijani national security advisor, said that as Azerbaijan's role in the world becomes more important, Russian and other intelligence services are trying to find out what is going on there and influence it (www.interfax.az/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=16018&Itemid=9).

A United Nations report describes and praises Baku's efforts to integrate Azerbaijanis displaced by the Karabakh conflict (<http://www.azerizv.az/article.php?id=12534>).

Kim Murphy describes the threat from Iran and the joint efforts of Azerbaijan and the U.S. to meet it in the *Los Angeles Times*, February 10, 2008 (<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-azerbaijan10feb10,0,7338041.story>).

JANUARY

In an interview carried on Azerbaijan television, Zbigniew Brzezinski, former U.S. National Security Advisor, praises Azerbaijan's economic and political progress (www.islamnews.ru/news-8959.html).

During his visit to Baku, U.S. Senator Richard Lugar welcomes Azerbaijan's recent economic and political achievements (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/104112.html>).

An American Jewish activist writes in an American newspaper that Azerbaijanis are among the most tolerant people in the world (<http://www.day.az/news/society/103781.html>).

UN World Food Program says that the Azerbaijani government now provides more assistance to its internally displaced persons and refugees than does any other state or organization (<http://www.day.az/news/society/104088.html>).

Moscow State University scholar assesses Russian government's approach to the Karabakh problem and the prospects for the resolution of that dispute (<http://www.ia-centr.ru/expert/225/>).

Ukrainian website features detailed study on the evolution of relations between Baku and Kyiv (http://www.islam.in.ua/4/rus/full_articles/1272/visibilitytype/1/index.html).

London's *Financial Times* publishes articles on Azerbaijan's accomplishments and the challenges it faces (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/105547.html>).

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DECEMBER

30 December

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Denisov says that bilateral relations between Moscow and Baku have developed extremely well in the course of 2008, thus setting the stage for even closer cooperation in the future. In other comments at a Moscow press conference, he adds that the Russian government's proposal for joint Russian and American operation of the Gabala radar station remains on the table (<http://www.1news.az/politics/20081230101349904.html>).

Azerbaijan's National Radio and Television Council announces that as of January 1, 2009, Baku will not extend the licenses of the BBC, Voice of America and Radio Liberty to broadcast from stations based in Azerbaijan. The council explains that this is simply an extension of the earlier ban on Russian and Turkish television channels and has nothing to do with politics (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/142317.html>).

28 December

President Ilham Aliyev receives Sergey Naryshkin, the head of the Administration of the President of the Russian Federation, who assures the Azerbaijani

leader of Moscow's interest in promoting the further expansion of relations between the two countries (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/142119.html>).

Debnath Shaw, India's new ambassador to Azerbaijan, arrives in Baku to take up his duties (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/142159.html>).

27 December

President Ilham Aliyev receives Russian Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov. Earlier, the Russian official and his Azerbaijani counterpart Safar Abiyev agreed to a plan for cooperation between their institutions (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/142093.html>).

25 December

Turkish Ambassador in Baku Khulusi Kılıç says that his government expects the signing of a Platform of security and cooperation in the Caucasus sometime in 2009 (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/141855.html>).

Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov says that his government may open a representation office in Baku and other world capitals (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/141872.html>).

24 December

Turkish President Abdulla Gul telephones President Ilham Aliyev to congratulate him on his 47th birthday (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/141748.html>).

Following the latest round of consultations by the Caspian littoral states, Kazakh officials who acted as hosts of this session say that a convention on the division of the sea and its seabed is 60 percent ready (http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_12/1959/politica05.shtml).

Saida Godzhamanly, director of the Baku Human Rights Bureau, says that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) will discuss Azerbaijan's plans to hold a referendum on lifting the constitutional provision limiting the president to two terms (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/141699.html>).

23 December

President Ilham Aliyev receives Peter Semnebi, the special representative of the Council of Europe for the South Caucasus (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/141451.html>). Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov also receives the European official to discuss EU's Eastern Partnership project, regional security and a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/141515.html>).

US President George W. Bush announces that Washington is extending the system of trade preferences to Azerbaijan that the US offers to developing countries (http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_12/1957/politica07.shtml).

22 December

President Ilham Aliyev receives Georgian Foreign Minister Grigola Vashadze (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/141364.html>). Earlier, the newly appointed Georgian official – his visit to Baku is his first foreign trip in that capacity – is received by Prime Minister Arthur Rasizade (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/141413.html>) and by Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/141301.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives General Hasan Ihsyz, the deputy chief of the general staff of the Turkish Armed Forces (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/141367.html>). Ihsyz is also received by Defense Minister Safar Abiyev (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/141372.html>).

Azerbaijan Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov meets Russian officials in Moscow to discuss the delimitation of the borders between the two countries (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/141425.html>).

19 December

President Ilham Aliyev receives and accepts the letters of credence of the new Hungarian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Jeno Boros and the new Belgian Ambassador Philippe Getardi (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/141115.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Jose-Luis Herrero Ansola, the outgoing

head of the Baku office of the OSCE, on the completion of his service in Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/141051.html>).

Azerbaijan and Jordan sign a protocol on the ratification of their bilateral agreement on extradition (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/141074.html>).

18 December

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Jose-Luis Herrero Ansola, the outgoing head of the Baku office of the OSCE, on the completion of his service in Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/140947.html>).

The Coordinating Council of Azerbaijanis of the World adopts a solidarity charter of world Azerbaijanis on its future work of organizing Azerbaijani communities throughout the world, including efforts to oppose adoption by other governments of resolutions describing the events of 1915 as a genocide and promoting the peaceful resolution of the Karabakh dispute on the basis of the principle of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan (http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_12/1955/politica05.shtml).

Lithuanian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Kestutis Kudzamanas says that economic and tourist ties between Baku and Vilnius are expanding rapidly (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/140810.html>).

17 December

Azerbaijan announces its plans to send a new peacekeeping contingent to Afghanistan in the near future (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/140710.html>).

Cuba's Ambassador to Azerbaijan Marcelo Caballero Torres says that the opening of the Cuban embassy in Baku both highlights the growth of relations between the two countries and provides the basis for their further expansion, including greater activity by the Azerbaijan-Cuba intergovernmental commission, the second meeting of which will take place in January 2009 (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/140669.html>).

Belarusian Ambassador to Baku Nikolay Patskevich says that bilateral relations are developing in positive ways and that Minsk would like to play a large

er role in promoting a settlement of the Karabakh dispute (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/140645.html>).

16 December

The Council of Europe says that it is not satisfied with Azerbaijan's draft legislation on money laundering (<http://www.zerkalo.az/rubric.php?id=38288&dd=16&mo=12&yr=2008>).

Azerbaijan's Milli Majlis creates a parliamentary friendship group to promote relations with Afghanistan and SAR (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/140577.html>).

15 December

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives the new Hungarian ambassador to Baku, Jeno Boros, as well as his departing predecessor Istvan Szabo (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/140460.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives the new Belgian ambassador to Baku, Philippe Getardi (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/140429.html>).

13 December

Deputy Foreign Minister Vagif Sadykhov says that Baku does not plan to have embassies in all 192 member states of the United Nations but will continue to use Azerbaijani representatives in international organizations to maintain contacts with those states it recognizes but does not have a mission in (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/140188.html>).

Movsum Samedov, the head of the Islamic Party of Azerbaijan, calls for the closing of the Israeli embassy in Baku to protest Israeli actions in the occupied territories (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/140269.html>).

12 December

Novruz Mammadov, head of international relations department of the administration of the President of Azerbaijan, says that Ilham Aliyev will

meet his Armenian counterpart for the next round of talks about the occupied territories sometime at the beginning of 2009 (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/140099.html>).

11 December

Shain Abdullayev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Kuwait, says that President Ilham Aliyev will visit that country during the first quarter of 2009 (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139930.html>).

Prague announces that it will open an embassy in Baku in the second half of 2009. The announcement follows a visit to the Czech capital by Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139928.html>).

10 December

President Ilham Aliyev receives Sheikh Mubarak bin Fahda Jasum al-Sani, the arriving Qatar ambassador to Baku (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139838.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov attends the ninth session of the EU-Azerbaijan Cooperation Council in Belgium and also meets with NATO officials, including that organization's secretary general Jaap de Hoop Scheffer (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139802.html>).

The Azerbaijan foreign ministry says the OSCE statement concerning foreign broadcasts in Baku "contradicts" that organization's mandate (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139811.html>).

Oktay Asadov, the speaker of the Azerbaijan parliament, postpones his scheduled visit to Tehran (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139752.html>).

7 December

Azerbaijan's military contingent of 150 officers and men returns from Iraq after completing its mission there (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139633.html>).

Azerbaijanis mark the 90th anniversary of the parliamentary tradition in their country, one that was suspended but not ended during Azerbaijan's incorporation into the Soviet Union (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139626.html>).

6 December

Terry Davis, the secretary general of the Council of Europe, says that the winter session of PACE will discuss the presidential elections in Azerbaijan and take note of the positive steps forward in the electoral process in Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139576.html>).

5 December

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that certain changes in the Madrid Proposals were discussed at his meetings with the OSCE Minsk Group but he indicates that the participants did not discuss the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border prior to the resolution of the question of the occupied territories, as some media outlets had suggested (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139482.html>).

The Azerbaijan foreign ministry notes that the final communiqué of the NATO foreign ministers "completely supports the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139468.html>).

At the Helsinki OSCE meeting, the Azerbaijani delegation distributes a paper on Baku's position concerning the resolution of the Karabakh issue (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139428.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Vagif Sadykhov announces that Azerbaijan will open embassies in Thailand, Croatia and Argentina in 2009 (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139473.html>).

4 December

Kurshad Tuzmen, Turkish minister of state for foreign trade, says in Baku that Ankara is ready to establish trade ties with Armenia but only after the Karabakh problem is resolved (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139297.html>).

Hulusi Kılıç, the Turkish ambassador to Baku, says that “on the question of the resolution of the Karabakh conflict, Turkey has always been on the side of Azerbaijan” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139261.html>).

3 December

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets his Armenian counterpart Eduard Nalbandyan and the Minsk Group co-chairs in Helsinki (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139183.html>).

Nushiravan Maharramli, the head of Azerbaijan’s National Television Council, says that international agreements as well as Azerbaijani laws will govern the question of future international rebroadcasting in Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139210.html>).

Azerbaijan opens a new administrative building for its general consulate in Kars, Turkey. The Azerbaijani consul general there is Hasan Zeynalov (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139164.html>).

2 December

President Ilham Aliyev receives Terry Davis, the secretary general of the Council of Europe (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138978.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Farid Mukhametshin, the president of the State Council of Tatarstan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138960.html>).

A two-day conference of the ministers of culture of the member states of the Council of Europe opens in Baku to discuss the expansion of inter-cultural dialogue and the protection of cultural monuments (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138917.html>).

Azerbaijan Defense Minister Safar Abiyev receives Sheikh Halif bin Ahmed al-Halif, the commander of Bahrain’s defense forces (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138960.html>).

Azerbaijan accedes to the international convention on the struggle with nuclear terrorism with the proviso that its provisions do not apply to the occupied territories (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/139041.html>).

1 December

President Ilham Aliyev receives Magomed Yunis Ghanuni, the head of the National Assembly of Afghanistan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138822.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Ali Babacan, the foreign minister of Turkey. The Turkish visitor is also received by Azerbaijan's prime minister and foreign minister (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138790.html>).

NOVEMBER

30 November

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives his Turkish counterpart Ali Babajan to discuss Ankara's proposal for a Platform of Stability and Cooperation in the Caucasus (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138345.html>).

Mohammad Younis Ganouni, the speaker of the National Assembly of Afghanistan, arrives in Baku for a three-day visit (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138574.html>).

29 November

President Ilham Aliyev meets with his Turkish and Turkmenistan counterparts Abdullah Gul and Gurbangulu Berdymukhammedov in Turkmenistan to discuss pipelines and other economic and political issues (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138682.html>).

28 November

President Ilham Aliyev arrives in Turkmenistan and has a one-on-one meeting with Turkmenistan President Gurbangulu Berdymukhammedov; he also visits the mausoleum of Turkmenbashi (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138529.html>).

Vasily Istratov, the Russian ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that Moscow's proposal for the joint Russian-American operation of the Gabala radar station "remains in force" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138561.html>).

Alan Waddams, the European Commission's representative in Azerbaijan, says that Baku has been moving toward Europe for 200 years and, with the EU's Eastern Partnership program coming into force, will get to Europe ever closer (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138535.html>).

26 November

President Ilham Aliyev meets in Rome with Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi to discuss bilateral cooperation and the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute. On the same day, the president meets with Italian businessmen interested in investing in Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138184.html>).

Azerbaijan and Libya sign a protocol regulating bilateral cooperation in energy, trade, agriculture, education, health, tourism, and youth and sports (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138299.html>).

25 November

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin and US Ambassador to Moscow John Beyrle meet to discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute and other conflicts in the South Caucasus (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138186.html>).

The presidential strategic studies centers of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan have a conference in Almaty on prospects for cooperation between the two countries (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/137617.html>).

The co-chairmen of the US Helsinki Commission, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings and Senator Benjamin L. Cardin, send an open letter to President Ilham Aliyev calling on him to reverse Baku's plans to end the broadcasting of the Voice of America and RFE/RL in Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/138047.html>).

24 November

President Ilham Aliyev receives the Henrietta Fore, the director of US foreign assistance and administrator of the US Agency for International Development (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/137925.html>).

23 November

Azerbaijani parliamentarians take part in the 31st plenary session in St. Petersburg of the CIS Inter-parliamentary Assembly to discuss expanded cooperation and exchange of experience in a wide range of fields (http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_11/1939/politica06.shtml).

22 November

President Ilham Aliyev receives Prince Andrew of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and stresses the dynamic development of bilateral ties between Azerbaijan and the UK (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/137817.html>).

Vagif Sadykhov, deputy foreign minister, receives Sada Cumber, special representative of the United States to the Organization of the Islamic Conference, who says that Azerbaijan can take pride in its traditions of religious tolerance (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/137777.html>).

Azerbaijani parliamentarians take part in an international forum in the Ukrainian capital devoted to the 75th anniversary of the Terror Famine (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=96245>).

21 November

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva goes to Istanbul to take part in an international symposium on the role of businesswomen in the course of global change (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=96279>).

Gudsi Osmanov, Azerbaijan's consul general in St. Petersburg, visits Bashkortostan and says ties between Baku and Ufa can develop further as sister cities (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/137650.html>).

20 November

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with his Swiss counterpart Micheline Calmi-Rey during his visit to Switzerland (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/137547.html>).

The monitoring committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) says that “the presidential elections in Azerbaijan met international standards and the requirements of the Council of Europe” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/137484.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov takes part in a GUAM coordination session in Kyiv (http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_11/1937/politica05.shtml).

19 November

Azerbaijani parliamentarians take part in the four-day conference of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic Language Countries in Istanbul (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/137180.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev receives Greece foreign ministry’s special representative, Ambassador Nikolaos Kalantzianos, whose country will chair the OSCE in 2009 (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=96048>).

18 November

David Kramer, US deputy assistant secretary of state for European Affairs, meets with the leaders of Azerbaijan’s political parties in Baku (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/137160.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Swedish employment minister Sven Otto Littorin who thanks the Azerbaijani leader for opening an embassy in Stockholm and promoting bilateral ties (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=95992>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that “the resolution of the [Nagorno-Karabakh] conflict is in the interests of Azerbaijan and Armenia and perhaps of Armenia to an even greater degree than of Azerbaijan” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/137133.html>).

The Azerbaijan foreign ministry warns the Norwegian embassy that Oslo's statement opposing the closure of foreign radio broadcasting in Azerbaijan does not correspond to the facts and is counter to the position of Azerbaijan (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=95964>).

17 November

President Ilham Aliyev receives US Gen. Duncan McNabb, the commander of the US transportation command (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/137082.html>).

Azerbaijan marks the 20th anniversary of the first protests against Moscow as its Day of National Revival (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136970.html>).

Matthew Bryza, US deputy assistant secretary of state and co-chair of the Minsk Group, denies reports that there is a secret agreement between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=95747>).

The Azerbaijan foreign ministry states that "Azerbaijan and Russia have friendly and dynamically developing relations," that "no pressure in the relations between our states exists," and that "cooperation is intensifying" on a wide range of issues (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/137041.html>).

15 November

Leaders from Turkey, Georgia, Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Estonia, Bulgaria and Hungary meet in Baku with Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev to discuss the diversification of energy routes between the Caspian basin and the outside world.

14 November

President Ilham Aliyev receives Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136751.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev confirms the declaration on friendship and strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation after its approval by the parliament (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136787.html>).

The Azerbaijan parliament approves the withdrawal of Azerbaijan peace-

keepers from Iraq (http://www.istockanalyst.com/article/viewiStockNews+articleid_2801765.html).

Azerbaijan Prime Minister Arthur Rasi-zade visits Chisinau to attend the meeting of the Council of heads of government of the CIS countries (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136702.html>).

Romanian Foreign Minister Lazar Comanescu tells his Azerbaijani counterpart Elmar Mammadyarov that the Karabakh dispute must be resolved on the basis of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136821.html>).

Azerbaijan Defense Minister Safar Abiyev meets with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko to discuss defense cooperation between the two countries (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136766.html>).

13 November

Matthew Bryza, U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state and co-chair of the Minsk Group, says that "the status of Nagorno-Karabakh cannot be defined unilaterally and in this question the position of both sides must be considered." He adds that "the resolution of the conflict should begin with the guaranteeing of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, and only after this can other questions be discussed" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136572.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus, Turkish President Abdulla Gul, and Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136682.html>, <http://www.day.az/news/politics/136680.html>, and <http://www.day.az/news/politics/136675.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives the co-chairs of the Minsk Group (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136608.html>).

12 November

The Azerbaijani parliament ratifies all the accords signed earlier between President Ilham Aliyev and his Turkmenistan counterpart (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136530.html>).

11 November

President Ilham Aliyev receives visiting US Senator Bob Corker (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136373.html>).

10 November

President Ilham Aliyev asks the parliament to approve the withdrawal of Azerbaijani peacekeepers from Iraq (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136176.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Estonian parliament vice speaker Kristina Ooland (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136208.html>).

The Israeli foreign minister says the question of why there is no Azerbaijani embassy in Israel should be addressed to the Azerbaijani government (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136167.html>).

7 November

President Aliyev addresses the Turkish parliament during his first foreign visit after being re-elected as President of Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135891.html>).

A European Union delegation comes to Baku to underscore that organization's interest in the completion of the Nabucco gas pipeline project (http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_11/1928/politica05.shtml).

Turkish President Abdulla Gul proposes holding a summit with the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135932.html>).

The US State Department says it awaits an explanation for Baku's decision to take VOA and RFE/RL off the air in Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135994.html>).

5 November

President Ilham Aliyev arrives in Turkey for an extensive set of meetings, including the one with President Abdulla Gul (<http://day.az/news/politics/135620.html>).

Ann Derse, US ambassador in Baku, says that the election of Barak Obama will not lead to any fundamental change in Washington's relationship with Baku. At the same time, she expresses concern about Baku's decision to take VOA and RFE/RL off the air (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135616.html> and <http://www.day.az/news/politics/135621.html>).

Vasily Istratov, Russian ambassador in Baku, says that Moscow is ready to work with the incoming administration in Washington to solve problems in the Caucasus, including the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135619.html>).

The European Union's special representative for the South Caucasus Peter Semneby criticizes Baku's decision to shut down Western radio broadcasts in Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135679.html>).

4 November

Lluís Maria de Puig, the president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, welcomes the signing of the Moscow declaration by the presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia and calls on the sides to continue talks in the spirit of that declaration (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135563.html>).

3 November

Khazar Ibrahim, the spokesman of the Azerbaijani foreign ministry, says that the Moscow declaration "reflects all basic aspects of the negotiations which were discussed during the negotiations between the Azerbaijani and Armenian sides" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135386.html>).

2 November

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan, and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev sign after a Moscow meeting a declaration on the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135324.html>).

1 November

The US Broadcasting Board of Governors expresses its strong “dissatisfaction” with the plans of Azerbaijan to stop foreign broadcasters, including VOA and Radio Liberty, from being carried on Azerbaijani affiliates (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135265.html>).

OCTOBER

31 October

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with the foreign ministers of Armenia and Russia in Moscow in advance of the November 1 summit meeting among Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/134991.html>).

30 October

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin sends a message of greetings to Arthur Rasizade on his re-appointment as prime minister (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135007.html>).

Milli Majlis Vice Speaker Ziyafat Askerov says that “at the present time, relations between Azerbaijan and NATO are developing on a normal level” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135008.html>).

29 October

Elin Suleymanov, Azerbaijani consul general in Los Angeles, says that “whoever is elected president of the United States, the interest of Washington

in expanding cooperation with Baku will be the defining factor in the policies of the White House" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/134855.html>).

28 October

The Milli Majlis confirms the re-appointment of Arthur Rasizade as prime minister (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/134740.html>).

Hulusi Kılıç, Turkey's ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that Ankara "will open its borders with Armenia after Armenia withdraws its forces from the occupied territories." He added that Turkey has always supported the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/134747.html>).

Azerbaijan establishes diplomatic relations with the Republic of Zimbabwe (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/134723.html>).

27 October

U.S. President George W. Bush sends President Ilham Aliyev a message on the latter's re-election as president, expresses his "best wishes" and his hopes for a deepening of bilateral partnership in energy and other areas (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/134691.html>).

26 October

President Ilham Aliyev tells a reception following his inauguration that "today Azerbaijan is a democratic country" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/134536.html>).

25 October

President Ilham Aliyev receives the special representative of the NATO Secretary General for the South Caucasus and Central Asia Robert Simmons (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/134496.html>).

24 October

President Ilham Aliyev takes the oath of office for a second term. Among

the dignitaries present were Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Jamil Cicek, the chief of the Presidential Administration of Russia Sergey Naryshkin, and the chairman of the executive committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States Sergey Lebedev (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/134372.html>).

23 October

President Ilham Aliyev receives a delegation of American business executives interested in national security led by Vice Admiral Richard Gallagher, the deputy chief of the US European Command (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/134241.html>).

Vasily Istratov, Russian ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that all election monitors from the CIS countries who came to Baku concluded that “the elections were conducted in model fashion, and all plan to exchange experience [with Baku] on how to organize elections” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/134229.html>).

Kristiina Ojuland, the vice speaker of the Estonian parliament says that Azerbaijan should not view NATO “only as a military organization.” Instead, she says, “NATO is an organization based on common values. And if a country like Azerbaijan shares these values, then I consider that there is a place for Azerbaijan in NATO” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/134179.html>).

22 October

President Ilham Aliyev has a telephone conversation with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on the organization of a summit meeting in Moscow looking toward the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/134145.html>).

The Azerbaijani foreign ministry expresses its disappointment in the statement of the president of the European Union concerning the presidential elections in Azerbaijan. The ministry’s press office says that the statement, which suggested that the vote was less than fully free and fair, differed

significantly from what monitors on the ground had concluded (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/134121.html>).

Qatar names Sheikh Mubarak bin-Fahad bin-Jassem Al-Tani as ambassador to Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/134086.html>).

Fakhraddin Gurbanov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to UK, meets with members of the British parliament to discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh issue and the recent presidential elections in Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/134072.html>).

21 October

UNESCO General Director Koichiro Matsuura sends congratulations to President Ilham Aliyev on his re-election (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133947.html>).

20 October

President Ilham Aliyev receives departing Belgian Ambassador Frank Girkency (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133871.html>).

Omani Sultan Kabus ben Said sends congratulations to President Ilham Aliyev on his re-election (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133883.html>).

19 October

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad sends congratulations to President Ilham Aliyev on his re-election (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133735.html>).

18 October

Azerbaijan marks its Day of State Independence. On October 18, 1991, Azerbaijan declared its independence from the Soviet Union, and itself a successor to the Azerbaijan Republic of 1918-1920 (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133677.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev sends congratulations to Turkish President

Abdulla Gul on Turkey's election as a member of the UN Security Council (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133702.html>).

Polish President Lech Kaczynski and Romanian President Traian Basescu send their congratulations to President Ilham Aliyev on his re-election (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133672.html>).

17 October

The U.S. State Department through its spokesman "greet the Azerbaijani people on the occasion of the presidential elections," noting that observers had found "certain improvements in the conduct of the current elections in comparison with previous ones" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133538.html>).

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte telephones President Ilham Aliyev to congratulate him on his re-election (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133695.html>).

Carl Bildt, the chairman of the committee of ministers of the Council of Europe, says that "we are satisfied that the elections of the president of Azerbaijan took place in a calm and peaceful way" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133613.html>).

Valdis Zatlers, the president of Latvia, telephones President Ilham Aliyev to offer his congratulations on the latter's re-election (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133595.html>).

16 October

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev greets President Ilham Aliyev on his re-election and wishes him "new success" in office (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133440.html>).

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin greets President Ilham Aliyev on his re-election (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133492.html>).

Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko telephones President Ilham Aliyev to congratulate him on his re-election (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133427.html>).

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili telephones President Ilham Aliyev to congratulate him on his re-election (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133394.html>).

Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev congratulates President Ilham Aliyev on his re-election (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133463.html>).

Tajikistan President Emomali Rakhmon sends a telegram to President Ilham Aliyev to congratulate him on his re-election (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133460.html>).

King Abdullah II of Jordan congratulates President Ilham Aliyev on his re-election (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133486.html>).

15 October

Azerbaijan holds presidential elections; Ilham Aliyev re-elected with 88,73 percent of the vote.

13 October

Matthew Bryza, U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state and co-chair of the Minsk Group, says that the United States hopes that "the next step" after the Bishkek meeting of the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan will be a meeting of the presidents of the two countries (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133149.html>).

12 October

A special committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe arrives in Baku to observe the elections (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/133032.html>).

11 October

Fikret Sadykhov, a professor at Baku's Western University, says that the distribution of Russian passports in the northern part of Azerbaijan is worrisome, especially after Moscow invoked the presence of Russian citizens in Abkhazia

and South Ossetia to justify its intervention there (http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_10/1909/politica04.shtml).

Even though Georgia has left the Commonwealth of Independent States, its GUAM partners, Moldova and Ukraine, have assumed key positions in that organization, leading some Azerbaijanis to suggest that as a result of the changes, “GUAM Heads the CIS” (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=91151>).

Igor Panarin, the dean of the international relations faculty of the Russian Foreign Ministry’s Diplomatic Academy, says that the recent conflict in Georgia has strengthened the position of Russia in the South Caucasus and increased the activities there of other powers, including the United States, Iran and Turkey, as a result (http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_10/1909/politica03.shtml).

10 October

President Ilham Aliyev receives the national security advisor of the president of Poland, Vladislav Stasiak, to discuss expanding cooperation between Baku and Warsaw in the security area (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132890.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with his Russian and Armenian counterparts, Sergey Lavrov and Eduard Nalbandyan, on the sidelines of the foreign ministers’ meeting of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Bishkek (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132865.html>).

The Central Asian and Caucasus Institute of Johns Hopkins University hosts a roundtable on “Azerbaijan’s Forthcoming Presidential Elections in the Context of National and Regional Developments” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132608.html>).

9 October

President Ilham Aliyev expresses his sympathy to President Abdullah Gul after a series of terrorist attacks in Turkey (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=91103>).

Prime Minister Artur Rasizade leaves for the CIS summit in Bishkek (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132786.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov says in Brussels that Azerbaijan does not consider the European Union to be able to play the role of intermediary in peace talks in the South Caucasus, and he rejects the idea that the EU might become “a partner” within the Minsk Group (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132758.html>).

8 October

President Ilham Aliyev says that Azerbaijan has already been transformed into a major transportation corridor as a result of the efforts of his father, the late President Heydar Aliyev (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=90960>).

7 October

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Cripsin Gray-Johnson, the Gambia's state secretary for higher education, science and technology, who says that he is visiting Azerbaijan to learn from Baku's successes in the energy sector (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132549.html>).

Husein Baguirov, Azerbaijan's minister of ecology and natural resources, says that Armenians in occupation of parts of Azerbaijan are intentionally using the Terter River in ways that harm residents of the adjoining regions (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132538.html>).

The Azerbaijani foreign ministry says that “Azerbaijan in any case will invest in Nagorno-Karabakh which is an inalienable part of our country” but not because Yerevan has suggested it (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132532.html>).

6 October

President Ilham Aliyev receives Peter Semneby, the special representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus. Semneby also meets with the other candidates for president of Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132369.html> and <http://www.day.az/news/politics/132426.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives participants of the fourth conference of ministers of higher education of Islamic countries and says that such meet-

ings increase the solidarity of this group of states (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=90721>).

4 October

U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan Ann Derse says that “the basic goal of the visit of Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte was to convey a message from President Bush and Secretary Condoleezza Rice that the United States has a serious interest in building stronger relations with Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132285.html>).

3 October

President Ilham Aliyev receives the letter of credence from Ionannis Metaxas, the newly arrived ambassador from Greece (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132180.html>).

2 October

President Ilham Aliyev receives U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte to discuss both economic development and security cooperation (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132053.html>).

Azerbaijan's parliament indicates that it will increase the size of the country's peacekeeping contingent in Afghanistan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/132066.html>).

SEPTEMBER

29 September

NATO's international exercise Cooperative Longbow / Lancer 2008 is launched in Armenia under the framework of Partnership for Peace (PfP) and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). Azerbaijan's forces, like those of Turkey, Georgia and the Russian Federation, will not take place in these exercises (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=90093>).

A working group of the International Conference on Border Affairs meets in Baku to discuss problems Azerbaijan and other countries face in defending their borders (<http://news.trendaz.com/index.shtml?show=news&newsid=1307494&lang=EN>).

Turkish President Abdulla Gul reassures Turkish diaspora organizations that Ankara will not open the border with Armenia "until the occupied Azerbaijani lands are returned" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/131858.html>).

27 September

The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group release a joint statement welcoming the constructive atmosphere of talks with Azerbaijan and Armenia in New York (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/131749.html>).

26 September

After the meeting of the Azerbaijan and Armenian foreign ministers, Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan says both support Ankara's proposal for a platform of security in the Caucasus (http://www.analitika.az/articles.php?item_id=20080926092337066&sec_id=8).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with Ambassador Mark Lagon, the director of the US Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/131527.html>).

25 September

President Ilham Aliyev receives visiting deputy speaker of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation Svetlana Orlova (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/131637.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives visiting Turkish Justice Minister Mehmet Ali Shahn (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/131638.html>).

24 September

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with his GUAM counterparts at the UN General Assembly session in New York (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/131413.html>). He also meets with Romanian Foreign Minister Lazar Comanescu (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/131409.html>).

23 September

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with the foreign ministers of Croatia, Luxemburg, Georgia and Ukraine at the UN General Assembly session in New York (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/131290.html>).

22 September

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with his Turkish counterpart Ali Babacan at the UN General Assembly meeting in New York (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/131173.html>).

21 September

Iranian Ambassador to Baku Nasir Hamidi Zare says that Tehran “is conducting talks with Armenia and Azerbaijan and offering both sides itself as a mediator in the regulation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/131138.html>).

Azerbaijani officials and commentators react to a suggestion by Armenian President that Baku could win over the Armenian community of Karabakh by investing there and in Armenia (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/131210.html>).

Russian Ambassador to Baku Vasily Istratov says that “the deterioration of relations between Russia and the United States will not affect the format of the [OSCE] Minsk Group” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/131123.html>).

19 September

President Ilham Aliyev receives awards from the Council of the Commanders of Border Forces of the CIS Countries (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/131007.html>).

Bernard Fassier, the French co-chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group, pays a visit to Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/131006.html>).

Foreign minister Elmar Mammadyarov while in London meets with British Foreign Secretary David Miliband and the British foreign ministry’s special representative for the South Caucasus Brian Fall (<http://en.apa.az/news.php?id=88917>).

Ruslan Aushev, the former president of Ingushetia, arrives in Baku at the invitation of the Azerbaijani Union of Veterans of Afghanistan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/131016.html>).

18 September

President Ilham Aliyev receives visiting US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Bryza (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/130857.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev receives visiting US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Bryza (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/130845.html>).

The defense ministry announces that Azerbaijan's military doctrine has been prepared and will be adopted this year (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/130844.html>).

17 September

President Ilham Aliyev tells a group of ambassadors from Islamic countries that he received on the occasion of Ramadan that Baku is "interested in the further all-sided development of relations with Muslim countries" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/130763.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Andres Herkel and members of his PACE delegation who arrived in Azerbaijan to observe the presidential election (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/130742.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets in Brussels with Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the EU commissioner for external relations and European neighborhood policy (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/130746.html>).

Azerbaijan officials meet with the members of NATO in Brussels in "NATO plus Azerbaijan" format to discuss the implementation of IPAP (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/130752.html>).

16 September

President Ilham Aliyev holds a one-on-one meeting with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in Moscow.

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev tells a delegation of the Assembly of the West European Union that the OSCE's Minsk Group has been working for 15 years without producing any results (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/130662.html>).

U.S. Ambassador to Baku Ann Derse says that events in Georgia show that the time has come for resolving all conflicts in the region (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/130605.html>).

15 September

Iran's oil minister Gholam Hussein Nozari tells the Austrian newspaper "Wiener Zeitung" that Nabucco can go forward if and only if Iran is included among the countries involved.

14 September

President Ilham Aliyev speaks by telephone with Russian Federation President Dmitry Medvedev to congratulate the Russian leader on his birthday and to discuss their Moscow meeting scheduled for September 16.

Turkish President Abdulla Gul officially invites Armenian President Serge Sargsyan to visit Ankara.

Members of the Political Committee of the Assembly of the West European Union arrive in Baku for meetings.

13 September

President Ilham Aliyev receives visiting Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki to discuss bilateral relations and regional security.

The Azerbaijani embassy in Moscow says that it will follow closely the case of Enver Mansurov, an Azerbaijani resident in the Russian Federation who has been accused of pedophilia but who denies the charges.

Ukrainian Ambassador in Baku Boris Klimchuk says that his country's relationship with Azerbaijan is developing rapidly and that the two countries are developing an ever closer foreign policy line (www.zerkalo.az/rubric.php?id=35992&dd=13&mo=9&yr=2008).

The Azerbaijani Academy of Sciences hosts a scholarly conference on the 90th anniversary of the Azerbaijani Republic.

12 September

U.S. Ambassador Anne Derse reaffirms Washington's commitment to Azerbaijan's territorial integrity as the basis for any resolution of the Karabakh dispute and to the OSCE Minsk Group as the best forum for negotiations

toward that end and says that this is an especially auspicious time for the resolution of the conflict (www.day.az/news/politics/130302.html).

11 September

President Ilham Aliyev receives visiting Uzbekistan President Islam Karimov and signs a series of bilateral agreements to strengthen relations between their two countries.

Azerbaijan is recognized as the leader in making economic reforms over the last year by the World Bank.

10 September

President Ilham Aliyev receives visiting Turkish President Abdulla Gul.

Azerbaijan's minister for industry and energy Natig Aliyev says that Azerbaijan remains committed to the Nabucco project.

President Ilham Aliyev accepts the letters credential from the new ambassadors to Baku from Cuba, Greece and Egypt.

9 September

President Ilham Aliyev receives Boyden Gray, the U.S special representative for energy issues, who assures him that cooperation between the United States and Azerbaijan will continue after the upcoming elections in both countries.

President Ilham Aliyev receives the OSCE election observers mission.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Hilmi Guler, Turkey's minister of energy and natural resources.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Christos Pholias, Greece's minister for development.

Azerbaijan's parliamentary commission for international relations delays consideration of a memorandum on strategic partnership with the Russian Federation (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/129947.html>).

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of Black Sea Economic

Cooperation holds in Baku its 31st session on questions of economic, trade, technology and ecology.

Representatives from 31 countries attend the opening of a two-day conference in Baku on "The Potential for Oil and Gas of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan."

8 September

Polls show that a majority of Azerbaijanis have a negative view of Turkish President Abdulla Gul's visit to Armenia and believe that his appearance there will have a negative impact on any resolution of the Karabakh dispute (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/129892.html>).

Baku hosts the third session of the Organization of Economic Cooperation on Agriculture.

Azerbaijan formally opens a consulate general in the Kazakhstan city of Aktau (http://www.day.az/view_day.php?date=2008-9-8).

7 September

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov receives visiting Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov.

6 September

President Ilham Aliyev receives the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Claudio Gujerotti, who transmits to him the greetings of Pope Benedict XVI.

Hungarian parliamentarian Katalin Seili says in Baku that Budapest will soon open an embassy in Baku. Meanwhile, Austrian officials indicate that they plan to do the same thing.

5 September

Representatives of the Caspian littoral states conclude a two-day meeting in Baku without achieving an agreement on the delimitation of the sea bed.

The Federation of Azerbaijani Organizations of Turkey say that Turkish

president's visit to Armenia "does not correspond to the highest interests of Turkey" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/129652.html>).

Matthew Bryza, US deputy assistant secretary of state, says that Washington "will do everything possible for moving in the direction of a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/129583.html>).

4 September

President Ilham Aliyev receives visiting US Vice President Dick Cheney and then receives a telephone call from Russian Federation President Dmitry Medvedev (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/129452.html>).

U.S. Ambassador Anne Derse says that the Cheney visit marks a new stage of relations between the United States and Azerbaijan (www.day.az/news/politics/129515.html).

President Ilham Aliyev receives visiting Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mehdi Safari (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/129487.html>).

Azerbaijani parliamentarians participate in a Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe session devoted to the problems of the South Caucasus.

Azerbaijan again leads the CIS in GDP growth.

3 September

Orudzh Zalov, Azerbaijan's deputy interior ministry, says that "all mosques function normally" in his country and that no one is persecuted on a religious basis (<http://www.islam.az/modules/news/article.php?storyid=3347>).

Nikolai Bekarsyak, the European Union's manager for the South Caucasus, arrives in Baku for a three-day working visit.

Elmira Suleymanova, Azerbaijani ombudsman, takes part in a Dublin conference of the ombudsmen of Europe.

2 September

Russian foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says that Moscow has nothing against the construction of the Nabucco gas pipeline.

A delegation of the International Atomic Energy Agency arrives in Baku for talks about the peaceful use of atomic power in Azerbaijan.

1 September

Goran Lenmarker, the special rapporteur of the parliamentary assembly of the OSCE on Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia and Abkhazia visits Baku.

Azerbaijan and NATO sign an agreement calling for additional joint exercises as part of Baku's participation in the Partnership for Peace program.

Azerbaijani transportation officials visit Austria to discuss cooperation in their field.

Boris Firles, the head of the observer mission of the OSCE Bureau of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, arrives in Baku to supervise that group's observers in advance of the October 15 Azerbaijani presidential election.

AUGUST

31 August

The first group of OSCE election observers arrives in Baku.

30 August

Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets his Turkish counterpart Ali Babacan in Ankara and the two announce that they have a common position on Ankara's proposal for new security arrangements in the Caucasus (<http://www.anspress.com/nid86055.html>).

Sheikh ul-Islam Haji Allahshukur Pashazade discusses the situation in Georgia with spiritual leaders there and in the Russian Federation via telephone.

29 August

Azerbaijanis demonstrate in front of the Russian Embassy in Baku to demand that Moscow withdraw its troops from Georgia.

Veronica Kotek, the special representative of the OSCE Secretary General in Azerbaijan, expresses the hope that Azerbaijan's upcoming presidential elections will be free and fair.

27 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives Michai Rezvan Unguryanu, the head of the Romanian foreign intelligence service.

Vasily Istratov, Russian Federation ambassador in Baku, says that the events in Georgia do not have any effect on Moscow's respect for and commitment to the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

26 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives Stephan Goris, the honorary president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Union.

The Council of Europe holds a conference in Baku on "Media and Elections: The Democratic Responsibilities of the Media" (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=85602>).

25 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives U.S. Senator Richard Lugar.

Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that Baku is vitally interested in ensuring the security of energy transit corridors (http://www.day.az/view_day.php?date=2008-8-20).

Azerbaijan's foreign ministry reiterates its support for the territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia (<http://www.ans.az/index.php?nid=85489>).

23 August

The Congress of Azerbaijanis of the World announces plan to open an office in Daghestan (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=85320>).

22 August

Azerbaijani foreign minister dismisses concerns expressed in the European Parliament that Moscow will try the same strategy it has used in Georgia against Azerbaijan with regard to Karabakh (http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_08/1876/politica01.shtml).

21 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives Romanian President Traian Basescu at the conclusion of his visit to Baku.

The Center for Azerbaijani Culture in Tbilisi organizes a demonstration to protest the presence of Russian troops in Georgia (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=85146>).

The Venetian Commission expresses the hope that Azerbaijan will fulfill its commitments to meet the commission's standards on elections and referenda (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=85118>).

20 August

During the course of a meeting with visiting Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan, President Ilham Aliyev reiterates Azerbaijan's support for the territorial integrity of Georgia. The two also discuss other regional security matters (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=85008>).

A group of Azerbaijani parliamentarians travels to Los Angeles to meet with government and community leaders (http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_08/1874/politica04.shtml).

19 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives outgoing Egyptian Ambassador Ahmed al-Shaqawi (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=84858>).

Despite media reports to the contrary, Baku officials say that crossing points on the Azerbaijani-Russian border are operating normally (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=84768>).

18 August

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan arrives in Baku for a three day visit.

The United States embassy in Baku condemns the attack on the Abu Bakr mosque in the Azerbaijani capital.

U.S. Ambassador to Baku Anne Derse says that Moscow's actions in

Georgia threaten not only that country but the development of all the countries of the region (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/127900.html>).

16 August

Parliamentarian Sabir Rustamkhanli, the vice president of the Congress of Azerbaijanis of the World, says that Iran violates the rights of ethnic Azerbaijanis more often than any other country (http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_08/1872/politica01.shtml).

Azerbaijanis in Georgia take part in a general demonstration against the actions of Russian forces there.

David Harris, the executive director of the American Jewish Committee, says in Baku that his organization will work to secure the repeal of Section 907 which restricts U.S. assistance to Azerbaijan (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=84528>).

Vladimir Socor, an analyst at Washington's Jamestown Foundation, says that there will never be a settlement of the Karabakh dispute if Moscow has its way (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/127745.html>).

15 August

President Ilham Aliyev receives David Harris, the executive director of the Jewish Committee of the United States.

Azerbaijan dispatches humanitarian aid to Georgia via land (http://www.1news.az/articles.php?item_id=20080815063957092&sec_id=2).

Azerbaijani leaders in Georgia say that no ethnic Azerbaijanis have died as a result of the clashes between Russian and Georgian forces there although some have been injured (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/127639.html>).

Ilgar Gadzhiev, an official of the All-Russian Azerbaijani Congress, says that he does not believe there has been an increase in xenophobia against ethnic minorities, including Azerbaijanis, as a result of the events in Georgia (<http://www.day.az/news/society/127706.html>).

14 August

Azerbaijani and Georgian public organizations line up in support of Tbilisi against Russian intervention in Georgia (<http://www.newsazerbaijan.ru/conf/20080814/42438636.html>).

13 August

The Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy conducts a conference on "Azerbaijanis and Americans: How We View One Another" with participants including representatives of leading American news outlets.

12 August

Azerbaijan foreign ministry reiterates its support for the territorial integrity of Georgia but refuses to call Russia the aggressor in the current conflict (<http://www.zerkalo.az/rubric.php?id=35084&dd=12&mo=8&yr=2008>).

A TRACECA official says that military operations in Georgia will have no impact on the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway.

11 August

Azerbaijani police disperse a demonstration in front of the Russian embassy in Baku against Moscow's actions in Georgia. Meanwhile, the Russian embassy refuses to accept a protest petition from Georgians living in Azerbaijan.

Hundreds of foreign citizens leave Georgia by crossing the border by land into Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/127214.html>).

Transit of Azerbaijani goods through the Georgian ports of Poti and Batumi is suspended because of the fighting between Russian and Georgian forces. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan asks Russia to allow the doubling of oil shipments via Baku-Novorossiysk.

Azerbaijan's defense ministry hosts a two-day meeting of international experts on peacekeeping operations.

10 August

Azerbaijan Airlines stops flights to Tbilisi.

Azerbaijanis in Hungary call for withdrawal of both Russian and Georgian forces from the conflict zones.

Beijing hosts an Azerbaijan Day in connection with the Olympic Games.

8 August

President Ilham Aliyev confirms inter-governmental accords with Hungary, Russia, Moldova, and Qatar on a wide variety of issues.

Azerbaijan says none of its citizens or co-ethnics suffered during the bombing of Marneuli in Georgia but urges both Georgians and Russians to resolve their differences without resort to violence but on the basis of full recognition of the territorial integrity of Georgia.

7 August

President Ilham Aliyev leaves for China to take part in the opening ceremonies of the Beijing Olympics.

Azerbaijani experts say that their country will lose more than any other country from the terrorist attack on the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline.

Azerbaijan is acquiring a wide range of military equipment from Israel, according to reports in Jerusalem (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/126796.html>).

Azerbaijan expresses concern about the level of cooperation between the special services of Iran and Armenia (http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_08/1865/politica01.shtml).

6 August

A poll finds that 73 percent of Azerbaijanis think that their culture and values are significantly different than those of Europe (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/126733.html>).

5 August

President Ilham Aliyev orders the removal of all posters of himself in parks and squares so as not to violate the country's law on elections.

Iran continues to arrest ethnic Azerbaijanis who call for education in their native language (http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_08/1863/politica01.shtml).

Following a series of fires which Baku says Armenians set near the line of the front, the Azerbaijan ecology ministry announces the creation of a commission to assess the extent of the damages from such fires.

4 August

Azerbaijan's foreign ministry says that the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia should be established by negotiations but on the basis of the principle of maintaining the territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia.

Pakistani Ambassador to Azerbaijan Abdul Hamid says that his government believes that Nagorno-Karabakh is an inalienable part of Azerbaijan.

Elshad Miralam, a press spokesman for the State Committee for Work with Azerbaijanis Abroad, says that there are now more than 360 Azerbaijani organizations abroad in some 50 countries (<http://www.day.az/news/society/126426.html>).

2 August

The New Azerbaijan Party officially nominates incumbent President Ilham Aliyev for re-election. The leaders of most other major parties announce that they will not take part in the vote.

Novruz Mammadov, a foreign policy advisor to President Ilham Aliyev, says that a referendum about the status of Nagorno-Karabakh will be possible only in 15 to 20 years.

1 August

Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets his Armenian counterpart Edvard Nalbadyan in Moscow.

Azerbaijan's ambassador to the United States, Yashar Aliyev, wins praise for presentation to Helsinki Commission hearings (<http://www.zerkalo.az/rubric.php?id=34797&dd=1&mo=8&yr=2008>).

An Echo commentary questions what is behind Moscow's announcement that it will set up a USAID-type organization for the CIS (http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_08/1861/politica08.shtml).

The Azerbaijani communications ministry announces plans to set up a center to promote security of electronic security as part of its effort to bring Baku's approach into line with Europe's and to protect Internet communications in Azerbaijan.

JULY

31 July

President Ilham Aliyev receives EU special representative for the South Caucasus Peter Semneby.

29 July

President Ilham Aliyev receives Heikki Talvitie, special envoy of the OSCE chairman-in-office.

The Turkish parliament proposes making February 26 a special Commemoration Day of Khojaly massacre (<http://en.apa.az/news.php?id=85999>).

The US Helsinki commission holds hearings on human rights and democratization in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan's electronic equipment maker Kur LLC starts exporting the Optima 510 model of its computers to Moldova (<http://en.apa.az/news.php?id=85940>).

28 July

AZAL signs a contract with American Sikorsky Aircraft company to purchase two S-92 helicopters in 2010 (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=82236>).

Binali Yildirim, Turkish transport minister, says Nakhchivan – Igdir – Tuzluca highway will be in service by the end of 2008 (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=82232>).

25 July

The GUAM Youth Summit starts in Kyiv, Ukraine. Intigam Babayev, deputy youth and sports minister, represents Azerbaijan (<http://en.apa.az/news.php?id=85749>).

24 July

President Ilham Aliyev joins the presidents of Georgia and Turkey to inaugurate in Kars (Turkey) construction on the 76-km long Turkish section of the Kars-Akhalkalaki-Tbilisi-Baku railway.

Goran Lennmarker, former president of the OSCE parliamentary assembly, is named OSCE special representative for the Karabakh conflict (<http://today.az/news/politics/46603.html>).

23 July

Marlen Asgarov, vice-president of AzerEnerji, says Azerbaijan will completely cover its electricity debt to Iran by October 2008 (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=81831>).

22 July

After serving in Iraq's Al-Hadida city for six months, 88 Azerbaijani peacekeepers return to Azerbaijan. Another Azerbaijani unit is dispatched to Iraq to replace them (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=81602>).

21 July

Turan Air begins regular direct flights between Baku's Heydar Aliyev Airport and Kars.

Riga hosts the second session of the intergovernmental commission on

economic, scientific-technological and cultural cooperation between Azerbaijan and Latvia.

18 July

Russia names a station on the Baikal-Amur Mainline (BAM) after Heydar Aliyev in recognition of his role in the construction of that line (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=81292>).

17 July

A US House of representatives subcommittee rejects by one vote calls by the Armenian Caucus to cut all military aid to Azerbaijan (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=81116>).

15 July

Steven Mann, the US deputy assistant secretary of state pays a visit to Baku.

14 July

President Ilham Aliyev receives Mr. Gianni Buquicchio, the secretary of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Boyden Gray, US president's special envoy for Eurasian energy.

11 July

35 representatives of Azerbaijani diplomatic missions abroad visit the front-line area in Fizuli region (<http://www.today.az/news/politics/46359.html>).

President of Azerbaijan extends revolution day greetings to his Mongolian counterpart.

09 July

President Ilham Aliyev signs order on allocation of additional funds to the employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

08 July

President Ilham Aliyev attends the commissioning ceremony for the "Garabagh" dry cargo vessel to be used to carry cargo via the TRACECA transport corridor.

President Ilham Aliyev receives a delegation led by Mushahid Hussain Sayed, chairman of the foreign relations committee of the Senate of Pakistan.

GUAM introduces to the UN General Assembly a draft resolution called "The influence of frozen conflicts in GUAM countries on international peace, security and development."

07 July

President Ilham Aliyev receives the prime minister of Hungary Ferenc Gyurcsány.

President Ilham Aliyev attends the third meeting of heads of diplomatic missions and consulates of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

06 July

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attends the meeting on 10th anniversary of Astana in Kazakhstan (http://www.president.az/articles.php?item_id=20080707044514829&zsec_id=18).

President Ilham Aliyev and Turkish President Abdullah Gul meet in Astana.

05 July

President Ilham Aliyev meets with Jordanian King Abdullah II in Astana.

04 July

President Ilham Aliyev receives a delegation led by Karel Schwarzenberg, foreign minister of the Czech Republic.

President Ilham Aliyev receives the credentials of newly appointed ambassadors of the Czech Republic, France and Pakistan to Azerbaijan (<http://www.anspress.com/index.php?nid=79543>).

President Ilham Aliyev extends Independence Day greetings to the US president.

03 July

Following the talks between Azerbaijani and Russian delegations chaired by Presidents Ilham Aliyev and Dmitry Medvedev, the parties sign several intergovernmental documents, including a joint declaration on friendship and strategic partnership between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation (http://www.president.az/articles.php?item_id=20080707023530418&sec_id=12).

02 July

President Ilham Aliyev receives Lluís Maria de Puig, president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), and his accompanying delegation.

01 July

President Ilham Aliyev attends the GUAM leaders' plenary meeting in Batumi (http://www.president.az/articles.php?item_id=20080707033921682&sec_id=15).

President Ilham Aliyev meets in Batumi with David Merkel, US deputy assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs.

JUNE

30 June

Azerbaijan's Minister of Communications and Information Technologies Ali Abbasov signs a document on Azerbaijan's joining Council of Europe's Convention on Cybercrime (<http://www.today.az/news/society/46054.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev meets with Victor Yushchenko, president of Ukraine, within the framework of the latter's one-day official visit to Azerbaijan.

President Ilham Aliyev meets with Monique Barbut, Chief Executive Officer of the Global Environment Facility.

27 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives David Kramer, the US assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor affairs.

President Ilham Aliyev receives OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs and the personal representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Anjey Kaspshik.

President Ilham Aliyev receives special representative of NATO secretary general on South Caucasus and Central Asia Robert Simmons.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Dagestani leader Mukhu Aliyev who is leading a large delegation to Baku.

25 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Bulgaria to Azerbaijan Ivan Paltsev due to completion of his diplomatic mission.

24 June

Khalaf Khalafov, Azerbaijani deputy foreign minister, meets with his Russian counterpart Grigoriy Karasin within his working visit to Moscow.

23 June

Speaker of EU commissioner on external policy, Christian Homan, announces that in spring of 2009 the European Union will present definite proposals and potentials for expansion of cooperation with Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and Armenia (<http://www.today.az/news/politics/45896.html>).

20 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives a delegation led by deputy chairman of Iranian parliament Muhammad Abu Turabi.

President Ilham Aliyev receives a delegation led by deputy chairman of the parliament of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Tahir al-Masr.

President Ilham Aliyev meets with Kristina Ojuland, vice-speaker of the parliament of Estonia.

An Azerbaijani, Mubariz Garayev, is appointed an adviser to the Georgian President.

19 June

Azerbaijan's economic development minister Heydar Babayev receives EBRD director on the Caucasus, Moldova and Belarus Michael Davy.

President Ilham Aliyev meets with the Turkmen parliamentary delegation led by Akja Nurberdiyeva, speaker of the parliament of Turkmenistan.

18 June

President Ilham Aliyev meets with a delegation headed by Vadim Popov, Chairman of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of Belarus.

President Ilham Aliyev meets with a delegation headed by Arnaud Breuillac, Total's vice-president for Continental Europe and Central Asia.

17 June

President Ilham Aliyev meets with a delegation headed by Koksal Toptan, speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Saudi Arabian minister of culture and information Iad bin Emin Al-Madani.

President Ilham Aliyev receives a delegation led by Iranian energy minister Seid Perviz Fattah.

16 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives chairman of Central Asia-Caucasus Institute at Johns Hopkins University Frederick Starr.

15 June

Azerbaijan marks 15th Day of National Salvation in honor of the time when Heydar Aliyev returned to take power in the country (www.day.az/news/politics/121342.html).

13 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives former Belgian prime minister Jean-Luc Deun.

President Ilham Aliyev issues a decree on protecting the Caspian Sea (http://www.president.az/articles.php?sec_id=30&item_id=20080614103917253).

Baku court in closed session convicts five Azerbaijanis of spying for the Russian Federation.

12 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives a delegation from the Islamic Development Bank.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Britain's Prince Andrew, the duke of York.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Faruq Nafiz Osaka, Turkey's minister of architecture and urban planning.

Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov begins a two-day official visit to Poland. An earlier scheduled visit to Belarus was postponed.

11 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the secretary general of the Islamic Conference.

President Ilham Aliyev expresses his sympathies to the family of Chingiz Aitmatov on the death of the Kyrgyz writer.

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, already a goodwill ambassador for UNESCO and ISESCO, becomes one for the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Yagub Eyubov, Azerbaijan's first deputy prime minister, leads a government delegation to Makhachkala for a working visit.

An International Atomic Energy Agency delegation arrives in Baku for three days of consultations.

9 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives Sergei Shoigu, the Russian Federation's civil defense and disaster response minister.

Araz Azimov, deputy foreign minister, says that Armenia would receive definite economic benefits from Azerbaijan if it withdraws from the occupied territories (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/120730.html>).

Oktay Asadov, the speaker of the Azerbaijani parliament, is in Athens to attend the 31st meeting of speakers of the members of the Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

8 June

Congress of Azerbaijanis of the World (KAM) adopts a resolution calling for the liberation of the occupied territories (www.day.az/news/society/120582.html).

6 June

President Ilham Aliyev meets with Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian in St. Petersburg. The two agree to continue consultations.

President Ilham Aliyev meets with Russian Federation President Dmitry Medvedev in St. Petersburg.

5 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives Alirezah Sheikh Ettar, Iran's deputy foreign minister, who says that Tehran is prepared to work as an intermediary to help resolve the Karabakh dispute.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Digby Johns, Great Britain's minister for trade and investment.

Congresswoman Allison Swartz joins the Working Group on Azerbaijan bringing its membership to 41.

4 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Nakhchivan.

Azerbaijan purchases ten pilotless drones from Israel, of the kind Georgia has used over Abkhazia.

Vasily Istratov, Russian ambassador in Baku, says that the status of the two villages in northern Azerbaijan whose population largely consists of Russian citizens should be determined by Azerbaijani law in a way that reflects the interests of all concerned.

Matthew Bryza, U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state, says that the status quo between Azerbaijan and Armenia is "dangerous."

3 June

Prime Minister Artur Rasizade says that Azerbaijan must continue to build up its military forces in order to be in a position to liberate the occupied territories.

Kyrgyzstan names Raimkul Attakurov as its ambassador to Azerbaijan. Amb. Attakurov who will be based in Moscow also serves as Kyrgyzstan's ambassador to Armenia and Georgia.

OSCE conducts monitoring of ceasefire line between Azerbaijan and Armenian forces.

2 June

President Ilham Aliyev receives Yuri Yekhanurov, Ukraine's minister of defense.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Benjamin ben Eliezer, Israel's minister of national infrastructure.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Liv Monika Stabholt, Norway's state secretary and deputy minister of oil and energy.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Peter Semneby, the European Union's special representative for the Southern Caucasus.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Stephen Mann, U.S. State Department coordinator for Eurasian energy diplomacy.

Two new monuments are erected in Kazakhstan dedicated to Azerbaijanis who suffered there under Stalin.

1 June

Mexican academic suggests his country is interested in being associated with GUAM (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/119816.html>).

MAY

31 May

Bulgarian Energy and Economics Minister Peter Dimitrov arrives in Baku.

30 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State David Merkel.

Amnesty International releases annual human rights report, including a section on Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/119604.html>).

Azerbaijan participates in a working group in Dushanbe on the establishment of an information sharing pool among CIS countries.

29 May

President Ilham Aliyev begins two-day visit to Finland.

The U.S. announces a grant of \$700,000 to support the work of the GUAM secretariat.

U.S. Ambassador Ann Derse presents Hafiz Pashayev, deputy foreign minister and former Azerbaijani ambassador to Washington, with the first Hafiz Pashayev Prize for his contributions to U.S.-Azerbaijani relations.

U.S. Department of State releases annual human rights report, including a section on Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/119576.html>).

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan visits Nakhchivan.

Czech parliamentary delegation arrives in Baku to discuss expanding scientific cooperation.

28 May

President Ilham Aliyev leads the nation in the commemoration of the 90th anniversary of the proclamation of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan.

27 May

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe points to a deterioration in human rights in Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/119435.html>).

26 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives UAE Foreign Trade Minister Sheikh Liubna bin Halil al-Kasimi, who is in Baku to participate in the first UAE-Azerbaijan intergovernmental commission meeting.

President Ilham Aliyev receives incoming Finnish ambassador to Baku Petri Salo.

Azerbaijani Ambassador to Minsk Ali Nagiyev says that the crisis in relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia is useful "in the first instance" to Russia.

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov conducts political consultations with Czech officials in Prague.

Egyptian pharmacological industry delegation visits Baku.

German-Azerbaijan Forum takes place in Baku.

24 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives U.S. Congressmen Adam Schiff, Edilson Swarz, and Wayne Gilchrist.

23 May

President Ilham Aliyev meets in Kyiv with U.S. Special Representative for Energy Issues Bowden Gray and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Bryza.

Prime Minister Artur Rasizade takes part in the council of CIS heads of government in Minsk.

22 May

Azerbaijan participates in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Berlin. Azerbaijani Parliamentary delegation departs for Strasbourg.

21 May

President Ilham Aliyev begins two-day visit to Ukraine.

Prime Minister Artur Rasizade begins two-day visit to Turkey.

Sheikh ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade begins visit to France.

20 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives General Ibrahim Acigmes, chief of general staff of the Turkish gendarmerie.

Azerbaijan First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva takes part in a meeting of UNESCO's ambassadors of good will in Paris.

19 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdimukhammedov at the start of his official visit to Baku.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Korean Prime Minister Han Sun Su.

President Ilham Aliyev receives the co-rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

At a two-day meeting of Caspian littoral states at which Azerbaijan was represented, the Russian Federation proposes the creation of a Kasfor, a security group to protect the sea.

Azerbaijan government delegation on social security visits Tehran for consultations.

18 May

Azerbaijanis mark the 16th anniversary of the occupation of Lachin by Armenian forces.

17 May

Andres Herkel and Evguenia Jivkova, the co-rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe for Azerbaijan, arrive in Baku.

16 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives former U.S. official and dean of the Kennedy School, Harvard Professor Joseph Nye.

15 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Israel's agricultural minister Shalom Simkhon.

14 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives UNESCO General Director Koishiro Matsuura.

President Ilham Aliyev receives incoming Ukrainian Ambassador Boris Klimchuk.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Grigoriy Karasin, Russia's deputy foreign minister. The latter says Moscow and Baku have reached agreement on transit of materials for Iranian nuclear power station, but an Azerbaijani foreign ministry spokesman says Azerbaijan will continue to check all goods crossing its territory.

German-Azerbaijan business forum holds meeting in Baku.

The US House of Representatives takes up a resolution urging the Bush Administration to expand ties with Azerbaijan, Turkey and other countries in the East-West corridor (<http://www.rus.azadinform.az/index.php?dn=news&cto=art&id=4120>).

13 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives outgoing Cuban Ambassador to Azerbaijan Jorge Marti Martinez.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Boris Gryzlov, the speaker of the Russian State Duma.

12 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Pasquale Couchpen, the president of the Swiss Confederation.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Indonesian foreign minister Noer Hasan Viraudu.

Azerbaijan marks the 14th anniversary of the ceasefire with Armenia.

Azerbaijan and Austria sign an accord on expanding economic cooperation and exchange.

11 May

Azerbaijan acquires a building for its consulate general in Istanbul. Up to now, the consulate had been operating in rented facilities.

10 May

Azerbaijan marks the 85th birthday of former President Heydar Aliyev. President Ilham Aliyev visits his father's grave and opens a variety of projects in his honor.

9 May

President Ilham Aliyev marks Victory Day by visiting the memorial to Azi Aslanov, who was twice awarded the order of Hero of the Soviet Union.

8 May

President Ilham Aliyev invites incoming Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to visit Baku and sends a message to outgoing Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Azerbaijanis mark the 16th anniversary of the occupation of Shusha by Armenian forces (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/117322.html>). The Ecology Ministry notes that by its actions in the period since that time Armenia has despoiled the natural resources around that city (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/117358.html>).

7 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Jim Murphy, the British foreign ministry official responsible for Europe.

Ramiz Mekhtiyev, the head of the Administration of the President of Azerbaijan, says that "American-Azerbaijani relations are at a high level," thus ending the exchange of criticism over freedom of the press, election assistance and other issues.

6 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives King Abdullah of Jordan; the two issue a joint declaration reaffirming their common views.

Azerbaijani foreign minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with his Armenian counterpart and the co-chairs of the Minsk Group in Paris.

5 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Maj. Gen. Hasym Rezai, the chief of the border guards of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Lt. Gen. Zakir Gasanov, commander of Azerbaijan's internal troops, begins a five-day official visit to Turkey.

4 May

Russia announces that it will no longer send nuclear power station equipment for Iran through Azerbaijan.

3 May

Ramiz Mekhtiyev, the head of the Administration of the President of Azerbaijan, rejects President Bush's criticism of the state of media freedom in Azerbaijan and says that Washington's commitment of \$3 million to promote open elections constitutes interference in Azerbaijan's internal affairs. He characterizes the statements of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as "unserious."

2 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Jean-Paul Costa, the chief justice of the European Court of Human Rights.

US President George W. Bush says that Azerbaijan is one of the five worst countries in the world in terms of the number of journalists the governments has arrested for engaging in journalism.

US Department of State praises Azerbaijan for its contribution to the anti-terrorist coalition.

1 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Gen. Aydagon Babaoglu, the commander of the Turkish Air Force.

Azerbaijan allows the Russian train containing nuclear power station equipment to pass into Iran.

Azerbaijani Ambassador to Georgia Namig Aliyev says that Tbilisi recognizes that the Georgian Azerbaijanis are "the wealth of the country."

Saudi Arabia establishes a quota of 6,000 for Azerbaijan for this year's haj. A parliamentary delegation from Bavaria arrives in Baku.

APRIL

30 April

President Ilham Aliyev receives the credentials of incoming ambassadors from Portugal, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Denmark, Australia, and Indonesia.

Azerbaijan releases Russian equipment for transit to Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant, ending diplomatic standoff.

President Ilham Aliyev signs the papers to establish an Azerbaijani consulate in Aktau, Kazakhstan.

29 April

President Ilham Aliyev receives Norwegian foreign minister Jonas Storr. Azerbaijan and Montenegro establish diplomatic relations.

President's Office says that Baku has no plans to ban Wahhabism.

28 April

President Ilham Aliyev receives Slovak foreign minister Jan Kubish in the latter's capacity as President of the Council of Europe.

Azerbaijan announces a 32 percent increase in defense spending.

Azerbaijani experts take part in an IAEA conference in Vienna on non-proliferation.

Russian embassy in Baku hands over documentation on shipment of materials for Bushehr reactor detained at the Azerbaijani border with Iran since March 29.

27 April

Iranian foreign ministry demands Azerbaijan release Russian equipment for Bushehr nuclear power plant.

25 April

President Ilham Aliyev receives Nobel Foundation head and Russian scientist Ronald Sagdeyev.

Foreign minister Elmar Mammadyarov visits Estonia, announces Baku ready to allow visa-free travel by Estonians to Azerbaijan.

The Kazakhstan-Azerbaijan intergovernmental commission meets in Astana.

24 April

President Ilham Aliyev receives visiting Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin.

President Aliyev receives Turkey's social security minister Faruq Celik.

Azerbaijani officials and experts participate in TRACECA meeting in Odessa.

Foreign minister Elmar Mammadyarov visits Latvia.

23 April

Azerbaijan's national security minister visits Poland.

Baku hosts a NATO-Azerbaijan seminar on peacekeeping operations.

22 April

President Ilham Aliyev receives U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Issues Ruben Jeffrey.

Foreign minister Elmar Mammadyarov discusses on the telephone Caspian security issues with Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov.

21 April

President Ilham Aliyev receives Lithuanian Prime Minister Gediminas Kirkilas.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Kalmyk President and FIDE head Kirsan Ilyumzhinov.

Azerbaijan's Trend News Agency begins distributing news in Arabic.

19 April

Foreign minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with Minsk co-chairs in Paris.

Foreign minister Elmar Mammadyarov proposes during his visit to Sofia that Bulgaria become a member of the Friends of GUAM within the EU.

18 April

President Ilham Aliyev says the next few months must bring clarity to the Karabakh conflict, adding that Azerbaijan will not tolerate double standards on this issue.

Azerbaijan and Armenian delegations at PACE discuss Karabakh.

17 April

President Ilham Aliyev receives Sergei Lebedev, the executive secretary of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Jeffrey Gedmin, president of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade returns from five day visit in Saudi Arabia, calls for international meeting of world's religious leaders in Baku in 2009.

Dutch diplomats complete four days of consultations with Azerbaijan foreign ministry officials.

16 April

President Ilham Aliyev receives Daniel Feith, an advisor to the U.S. secretary of defense.

Azerbaijani jurist Hanlar Gajiev is elected a judge of the European Court of Human Rights.

Two-day experts conference on GUAM hosted by the Azerbaijan foreign ministry ends.

April 15

Azerbaijani peacekeepers return home from Kosovo.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Ukraine's new ambassador to Azerbaijan, Stepan Volkovetskiy.

Azerbaijani Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov says that GUAM plans to introduce a resolution at UNGA on the conflicts on the territory of GUAM countries.

Azerbaijan and the United States hold bilateral military consultations in Baku.

The Azerbaijani foreign ministry hosts a two-day conference on "Principled Foundations of the Regulation of Conflicts on the Territories of the GUAM Countries."

President Ilham Aliyev receives Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty President Jeffrey Gedmin.

April 14

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov says Azerbaijan, Russia and Kazakhstan have reached agreement on the legal status of the Caspian seabed.

Valeri Chechelashvili, the secretary general of GUAM, arrives in Baku for a two-day working visit.

April 12

An Azerbaijani parliamentary delegation leaves to attend the spring session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.

April 11

President Ilham Aliyev receives Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Cemil Çiçek.

U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Bryza in his capacity as U.S. co-chair of the Minsk Group arrives in Baku for talks.

April 10

Azerbaijani Defense Minister Safar Abiyev holds talks with a visiting Turkish military delegation.

Azerbaijani and American defense officials open a two-day conference to discuss bilateral military cooperation.

April 9

Vasiliy Istratov, the Russian ambassador in Baku, says Moscow's proposal for joint US-Russian operation of the Gabala radar station remains open.

April 8

President Ilham Aliyev receives the European Union's new ambassador to Baku Alan Waddams as well as Turkmenistan's new ambassador to Baku, Annamamed Mamedov.

President Ilham Aliyev delays his official visit to Kuwait.

Azerbaijan's embassy in Moscow protests to the Russian Foreign Ministry over the decision of the Russian Duma to include representatives from Karabakh in a conference on conflicts in the CIS.

April 7

President Ilham Aliyev receives the participants of an international conference on "The Defense of Political Rights in Azerbaijan – New Criteria."

President Ilham Aliyev receives Turkmenistan's defense minister, General Agageldy Mamedgeldyyev.

Azerbaijani and American defense officials open a four day conference on coastal defense.

April 4

Azerbaijan's ambassador in Moscow, Polad Bul-Bul, says that Baku is in no hurry to join NATO (<http://www.anspress.com/nid67202.html>).

April 3

President Ilham Aliyev participates in NATO discussions on Afghanistan.

President Ilham Aliyev meets with the presidents of the United States, the Russian Federation, Latvia, and other countries participating in the Bucharest summit.

The Azerbaijan government says that more than 2500 Azerbaijanis have been killed or wounded by landmines in the course of the Karabakh conflict (<http://www.echo-az.com/obshchestvo07.shtml>).

The Congress of Azerbaijanis of Georgia is formally founded in Tbilisi (http://www.1news.az/articles.php?item_id=20080402054837929&zsec_id=2).

April 2

President Ilham Aliyev arrives in Bucharest, meets with the Minsk Co-chairs at their request, and discusses Karabakh and energy security.

Prior to his departure for Bucharest, President Ilham Aliyev meets with Jose Luisa Herrero Ansol, the head of the Baku Office of the OSCE.

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov says that Baku is generally satisfied with the Minsk Group but has been troubled by its recent actions, including the UNGA vote by the three co-chairs.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference elects Azerbaijan to its commission on technology.

Azerbaijan announces that it hopes to open a consulate in the Georgian city of Marneuli later this year.

April 1

NATO seminar begins in Baku.

MARCH

31 March

Azerbaijan marks the Day of the Genocide of Azerbaijanis, the 90th anniversary of Armenian killings of Azerbaijanis in Quba.

Slovak Foreign Minister Jan Kubich visits Baku.

President Ilham Aliyev tells international meeting in Baku on fighting corruption that there must not be any double standards in that effort. He also notes that poverty in Azerbaijan has fallen from 49 percent of the population to 16 percent over the last four years (<http://www.day.az/news/economy/112942.html>).

Kristina Ojuland, deputy speaker of the Estonian parliament, arrives in Baku to discuss economic ties.

Azerbaijani diaspora organizations hold meetings around the world to mark the Day of the Genocide of Azerbaijanis.

30 March

Azerbaijani, Iranian and Russian Federation officials meeting in Iran sign a protocol on the construction of the Kasvin-Resht-Astara railroad.

29 March

President Ilham Aliyev issues a statement in advance of the Day of the Genocide of Azerbaijanis (<http://www.day.az/news/society/112719.html>).

The United Nations Human Rights Commission adopts an Azerbaijani proposal on the treatment of missing persons during armed conflict.

28 March

Mario Loudes Aranda Besauri, the deputy foreign minister of Mexico, visits Baku.

26 March

The Azerbaijan Foreign Minister sends a request to the OSCE for information on procedures for changing the co-chairs of the Minsk Group (<http://www.anspress.com/nid65795.html>).

The Azerbaijan government announces that it has set up radar stations to guard its territorial waters in the Caspian Sea (<http://www.day.az/news/society/112435.html>).

24 March

Azerbaijan parliamentarian Adil Aliyev says that no one gave the United States, France and Russia the right to exercise a monopoly over peace talks on Karabakh and the other occupied territories (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/112377.html>).

Azerbaijan's ambassador in Moscow tells *Nezavisimaya gazeta* that Baku will do everything it can to resolve the question of the occupied territories by peaceful means.

20 March

On the eve of the week-long Novruz holiday, President Ilham Aliyev speaks to his nation, welcoming the recent UNGA vote and reaffirming his commitment to integrate Azerbaijan into Europe.

19 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives the head of Interfax, praises the role of that Russian news agency and gives an extensive interview.

Iran informs Azerbaijan that it has sent a letter to the United Nations announcing that it supports the recent UNGA resolution on the occupied territories in Azerbaijan, even though it did not participate in the earlier vote.

Azerbaijanis and Georgians participate in a tele-bridge concerning the Kura River which flows from Georgia into Azerbaijan.

18 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives a high-level Saudi Arabian delegation to discuss bilateral ties.

Azerbaijan and the United Arab Emirates sign an agreement on enhanced political consultation.

17 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives Sergei Lebedev, the executive secretary of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Christos Filias, the economic development minister of Greece.

The Russian Foreign Ministry criticizes Azerbaijan for its reaction against Moscow's vote against the UNGA resolution on the occupied territories.

The Azerbaijanis of Georgia form the Congress of Azerbaijanis of Georgia to promote that community's interests in Tbilisi and its relations with Azerbaijan.

15 March

Azerbaijani foreign ministry officials indicate that Baku may modify its relationship with countries that voted against the UNGA resolution.

14 March

The UN General Assembly passes by a vote of 39 for to 7 against with 100 abstentions an Azerbaijani resolution about the situation in the occupied territories. Among those voting against are the three Minsk Group co-chairs. The text of the resolution is available at <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2008/ga10693.doc.htm> and <http://www.anspress.com/nid64536.html>.

Azerbaijan and the United Kingdom sign a cultural cooperation agreement during the Azerbaijani tourism minister's visit to London.

13 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives Georgian Prime Minister Vladimir Gurgenzidze.

12 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives a group of senior Turkish specialists on international affairs.

The Azerbaijan foreign ministry criticizes the findings about Azerbaijan in the U.S. Department of State's annual human rights report.

10 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives Bulgarian President Parvanov.

Azerbaijan's foreign minister leaves to attend the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Senegal.

Azerbaijan opposes an OIC resolution in support of Kosovo independence.

Azerbaijan and Bahrain sign a memorandum on military cooperation during the Azerbaijani defense minister's visit there.

7 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives Robert Simmons, NATO Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Cardinal Bertone, Vatican Secretary of State.

Azerbaijan introduces to the United Nations General Assembly a document calling for the immediate release of women and children in any case of hostage taking.

Peter Semneby, the European Union's Special Representative for the South Caucasus and Central Asia, visits Baku.

6 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives the departing Pakistani ambassador and the incoming ambassadors of Kazakhstan and Turkey.

NATO Parliamentary Assembly meeting opens in Baku.

5 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives Jose Iallo, head of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Turkmenistan's foreign minister who visited Baku to sign bilateral accords on financial settlements and cooperation.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Matthew Bryza, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary Of State in the latter's capacity as co-chair of the Minsk Group.

4 March

Azerbaijan's parliament votes to withdraw its contingent from the international peace-keeping force in Kosovo.

Azerbaijan's parliament seeks an explanation from Iran on why Tehran banned commemorations of the Hojali massacre this year.

3 March

President Ilham Aliyev telephones Dmitry Medvedev to congratulate him on his election as president of the Russian Federation.

Azerbaijan's foreign ministry receives parliamentary delegations from Bulgaria and the Czech Republic.

Azerbaijan military personnel take part in the first of four NATO exercises in March.

1 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives U.S. energy coordinator Steven Mann.

FEBRUARY

29 February

President Ilham Aliyev sends congratulations to Raul Castro on his election as chief of State of Cuba.

Chingiz Aitmatov, during a visit to Azerbaijan on his 80th birthday, praises President Ilham Aliyev as an intellectual. The Azerbaijani Writers Union nominates Aitmatov for the Nobel Prize.

The Azerbaijani foreign ministry issues a statement saying that Kosovo cannot be a precedent for the resolution of the Karabakh dispute.

28 February

Azerbaijan's foreign minister tells the OSCE that upcoming presidential elections in his country will be democratic.

27 February

President Ilham Aliyev receives visiting Finnish Foreign Minister Illka Kanerva in the latter's capacity as OSCE president.

The city of Sumgait marks the 20th anniversary of violence there which played a major role in triggering the war over Karabakh.

26 February

President Ilham Aliyev leads Azerbaijanis in remembering the massacre of Azerbaijanis in Hojali. Governments, diaspora organizations, and human rights groups in more than 60 countries also mark the 16th anniversary of this tragedy.

President Ilham Aliyev goes to Poland for a two-day visit.

The Azerbaijan-Japanese inter-governmental economic commission meets in Tokyo.

Baku announces that more than 1.3 million foreign tourists visited Azerbaijan last year, up 11 percent from the year before.

25 February

President Ilham Aliyev receives U.S. energy coordinator Steven Mann.

Allahshukhur Pashazade, the sheikh ul islam, arrives in Turkey for a six-day visit.

Azerbaijani parliamentarians join their counterparts from other Turkic countries to set the stage for the creation of a Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic World.

The Azerbaijan foreign ministry calls on the United Nations to support the creation of democratic system in Karabakh within Azerbaijan.

22 February

President Ilham Aliyev rejects Kosovo's declaration of independence as illegitimate and says Baku will not recognize Prishtina.

21 February

President Ilham Aliyev arrives in Moscow for an informal summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States, meets Russian President Vladimir Putin and says that there are no fundamental problems in Azerbaijani-Russian relations.

A working-level meeting of GUAM Plus Poland takes place in Warsaw.

Azerbaijani and Austrian parliamentarians meet in Vienna.

The Azerbaijani foreign minister sends a note to the OSCE, PACE, and the European Parliament on the Armenian elections and the failure of Yerevan to end its occupation of Azerbaijani territory.

Iranian police fire upon and then arrest more than 100 ethnic Azerbaijanis who were taking part in demonstrations calling for more linguistic rights on International Native Language Day. More than 70 are still in detention at the end of the month.

20 February

President Ilham Aliyev receives visiting U.S. Senator Sam Brownback.

President Ilham Aliyev receives the visiting first deputy chief of the Russian FSB.

Azerbaijan's foreign minister visits Libya.

Azerbaijan's representatives at the winter session of PACE say that the Armenian-occupied portions of Azerbaijan are becoming "a seedbed of terrorism." Meanwhile, Baku officials suggest Yerevan is permitting up to 60,000 Kurds to resettle there.

19 February

Azerbaijan's MIA Commission expresses its displeasure with the international MIA Commission's failure to do more to find Azerbaijanis missing in the Karabakh conflict.

The Azerbaijan foreign ministry says that it is exploring how it might transfer control of the Gabala radar station to the United States and Turkey.

Baku news outlets report that skinhead violence in the Russian Federation was responsible for the deaths of 50 ethnic Azerbaijanis there during the past year.

Azerbaijan joins 15 other countries in calling on the UN General Assembly to call for greater transparency and a fight against corruption in extractive industries.

18 February

President Ilham Aliyev departs for a two-day official visit to Hungary.

Azerbaijan's defense minister meets with his opposite number in Tehran.

Azerbaijani officers take part in a NATO exercise in Ankara on preventing human trafficking.

Ayatollah Khamenei tells Azerbaijanis that they are "the bastion of the revolution" in Iran on the 30th anniversary of the Tabriz protests that led to the fall of the shah.

16 February

President Ilham Aliyev orders national commemorations of events surrounding the 90th anniversary of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan's foreign minister meets with France's foreign minister, who serves as a co-chair of the Minsk Process.

Azerbaijan's culture and tourism ministry says it will file suit against foreign companies that produce goods with "historically incorrect maps" of Azerbaijan.

15 February

The Azerbaijan government launches a new website for those interested in visiting the country (<http://www.tourism.az/>).

Azerbaijan's Jewish community announces the launch of a new website about Azerbaijan's tolerance for religious and ethnic minorities (<http://in-brief.aen.ru/story-id=47843/>).

14 February

President Ilham Aliyev receives Bruno Puez, the head of the United Nations office in Baku.

Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister meets with his French counterpart in Paris to discuss the resolution of the Karabakh conflict.

Azerbaijani officials meet with Frank Urbanchik, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary for counter-terrorism to discuss cooperation.

13 February

President Ilham Aliyev receives a Tajikistan trade delegation.

President Ilham Aliyev appoints Makhir Aliyev ambassador to Syria.

The Heydar Aliyev Foundation marks the reopening of a girls school in Pakistan it supported. The school had been destroyed by terrorists.

Azerbaijan's ombudsman takes part in the world conference of ombudsmen in Seoul.

12 February

President Ilham Aliyev receives the outgoing Turkish ambassador.

10 February

Azerbaijan Working Group in U.S. Congress Expands to 34 Members.

9 February

Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister meets with his GUAM counterparts in an informal session during the 44th Munich Conference on International Security.

8 February

President Ilham Aliyev receives the departing Saudi Arabian ambassador.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Lord Russell Johnston of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe's Karabakh monitoring group.

President Ilham Aliyev appoints Azerbaijan scholar Elkhan Nuriyev as head of the Baku Institute of Strategic Studies.

The British Council said that the map on its website showing Karabakh as part of Armenia has been put there by hackers. It apologized and has taken the map off its site.

Azerbaijan's ambassador to Jakarta, Ibragim Gadzhiyev, says that Baku considers Indonesia its bridge to the Far East (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/107236.html>).

The Azerbaijani government announces that it has completed a national

registry of historical and cultural monuments in order to be able to specify the ones Armenian forces have damaged or destroyed.

7 February

President Ilham Aliyev confirms the Azerbaijani membership of a new Azerbaijani-Jordanian trade commission.

The speaker of the Azerbaijani parliament tells representatives of the Council of Europe that Baku is not yet ready to adopt a law on the protection of national minorities, noting that currently 20 of the 44 members in that body have not yet done so.

Azerbaijan's Defense Minister travels to Vilnius for a meeting of NATO and the alliance's partners.

6 February

President Ilham Aliyev receives the president of the International Olympic Committee.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Thomas Farrell, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State responsible for educational exchanges.

Azerbaijan holds consultations in Baku with Turkmenistan on the future status of the Caspian Sea.

Azerbaijani police announce that they have broken up a group involved in the trafficking of human persons from Azerbaijan to Turkey.

5 February

The Israeli parliament announces plans to hold a session on the Hojali massacres later this month. This is the first time the Israelis have taken this step.

AZ-IZ, the Azerbaijani-Israeli organization, says it will open an Azerbaijani cultural center in Israel in March. Azerbaijan does not yet have an embassy in Israel.

Azerbaijani students in France and other European countries open a four-day meeting in Paris to talk about their relationships with Baku and their host countries.

4 February

The Co-chairs of the Azerbaijan Monitoring Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe arrive in Baku for a four day visit.

President Ilham Aliyev receives the European 'troika' – OSCE President Dmitri Rupel, the European Union commissar on security questions Benito Ferrero-Waldner, and the EU's Special Representative for the countries of the Southern Caucasus Peter Semnebi – at the start of their Baku visit.

A monument to the victims of the Hojali massacre was erected in the Hague's central military cemetery near the offices of the International Court.

An Azerbaijani delegation leaves for Cairo to take part in the opening of a friendship park and the dedication of a statue to former President Heydar Aliyev.

3 February

The head of the Nakhichevan regional government meets with the Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran to discuss cross-border issues.

2 February

The Federation of National Cultural Autonomies of Azerbaijanis holds its annual meeting in Moscow.

1 February

The Azerbaijan Press Agency begins distributing its news file in Arabic, and the Baku-based Trend news agency begins distributing its file in Persian.

The Germany-based "Caucasus Review of International Relations" launched in Germany (<http://www.cria-online.org/>).

JANUARY

30 January

Azerbaijani parliamentarians take part in 7th Organization of the Islamic Conference Parliamentary Union in Cairo.

29 January

U.S. Senator Richard Lugar introduces a bill to lift Jackson-Vanik trade restrictions on Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan-Russian border demarcation talks held in Moscow.

Azerbaijani, Polish ombudsmen sign cooperation agreement.

World Health Organization Chief Margaret Chen visits Baku.

28-29 January

Azerbaijan-Lithuania Business Council meets in Baku.

28 January

Azerbaijan-Latvian Intergovernmental Economic Cooperation Commission meets in Riga.

23-27 January

President Ilham Aliyev takes part in World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, meets 15 foreign leaders, including the president of Ukraine, the president of Switzerland, the Hungarian prime minister, the president of the African National Congress, the U.S. secretary of state, the Israeli foreign minister, and other senior officials

25 January

Prime Minister Rasizade receives South Korean vice president.
Finnish parliamentary delegation visits Baku.

24 January

Azerbaijan and Turkey sign agreement on broadcasting Turkish television channel TRT in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan Economic Development Minister Heydar Babayev discusses trade relations with Latvian officials in Riga.

23 January

Azerbaijan names its first ambassador to Iraq, who will be resident in Amman.

22 January

President Ilham Aliyev grants interview to Japan's Panorama Reports.
President Mukhu Aliyev of Dagestan arrives in Azerbaijan for a visit.
IAEA Coordinator for Azerbaijan Andrei Chubov visits Baku.

21 January

Azerbaijani parliamentarian Samed Seidov elected vice president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

PACE observer co-chairmen arrive in Baku.

20 January

President Ilham Aliyev leads the national day of mourning on the 18th anniversary of Black January, the Soviet attack on Baku.

Prime Minister Rasizade represents Azerbaijan at the inauguration of Mikhiel Saakashvili as president of Georgia.

18 January

President Aliyev receives Minsk Group co-chairmen on their return from Yerevan.

17 January

The OIC announces that Baku has been chosen as the Islamic Cultural Capital of the World for 2009.

GUAM pushes for PACE resolution on frozen conflicts.

President Ilham Aliyev while on visit to front reaffirms that Karabakh will always be part of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan-Turkmenistan Economic Cooperation Commission meets in Ashgabat.

16 January

President Aliyev signs decree on the establishment of a branch of Moscow State University in Baku.

Azerbaijani border guards announce shift to NATO standards.

14 January

President Ilham Aliyev meets Minsk Group co-chairmen.

President Ilham Aliyev receives US Congressional delegation led by Senator Richard Lugar.

GUAM General Secretary Valeriy Chechelashvili visits Baku.

11 January

Azerbaijani, Iranian and Russian narcotics officers break up a major drug smuggling ring.

10 January

Lt.Gen. Elchin Guliyev, head of State Border Service, says Baku and Moscow will complete delimitation of border in 2008.

9 January

Azerbaijan Led All Countries in Economic Growth Rate in 2007, World Bank says.

President Ilham Aliyev receives U.S. Congressional delegation led by Rep. Robert Wechsler.

European Union welcomes Baku's amnesty of five journalists.

Russian government sends two million U.S. dollars to help in IDPs in Azerbaijan.

8 January

President Ilham Aliyev congratulates Mikheil Saakashvili on his election as president of Georgia.

7 January 2008

Azerbaijan dispatches additional peacekeeping troops to Afghanistan.

NOTES ON EDITORS

Paul Goble is publications advisor at the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, where he also co-edits ADA's biweekly online publication "*Azerbaijan in the World*". Earlier, he served as vice dean for the social sciences and humanities at Audantes University in Tallinn and a senior research associate at the EuroCollege of the University of Tartu in Estonia. While there, he launched the "Window on Eurasia" series, which he distributes both as a blog, at <http://www.windowoneurasia.blogspot.com> and via elist. Prior to joining the faculty there in 2004, he served in various capacities in the U.S. State Department, the International Broadcasting Bureau, at the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, as well as other institutions. He writes frequently on ethnic and religious issues and has edited five volumes on ethnicity and religion in the former Soviet space. Trained at Miami University in Ohio and the University of Chicago, he has been decorated by the governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania for his work in promoting Baltic independence and the withdrawal of Russian forces from those formerly occupied lands.

Murad Ismayilov holds MA in International Relations from the Baku State University (2004) and is currently studying at the University of Cambridge towards his MSt in International Relations (2009). In 2005, he completed a four-month NATO Senior Executive Program at the NATO Studies Center in Bucharest (Romania). He currently serves as projects coordinator at the Diplomatic Academy of Azerbaijan (ADA), where he also co-edits ADA's biweekly online publication *Azerbaijan in the World*. He is also a part-time lecturer in International Relations at the Baku State University. His research interests include international relations theory (especially constructivist and post-structuralist approaches), political theory, energy security, issues related to national identity and civil society of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan's national security, Euro-Atlantic security, and sociology and security of the Middle East.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Ali Hasanov is Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan and Chairman of the State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

Bakhtiyar Aslanbeyli holds BA (1997) and MA (1999) in International Relations from the Baku State University and is currently involved in his PhD research at the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences. He is lecturer at the School of Diplomacy and Integration Processes of the Baku State University. Along with academic activities, Aslanbeyli serves as Tax Advisor to BP in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. His academic interests include security studies, energy policy and fiscal aspects of energy projects in the region. He delivered numerous lectures and presentations on these subjects in Azerbaijan, Turkey, Georgia and Germany. He has authored 1 monograph, 3 syllabi and more than 30 scientific and analytical articles that cover different issues within international law and international relations.

Etibar Najafov, Dr. is head of the European Studies Department at the Baku Slavic University. He holds *kandidat nauk* in Social Philosophy from the Leningrad State University and doctorate in Social Philosophy from the

Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan. His research interests include Azerbaijan's post-communist transition and theory of international relations.

Gurban Mammadov, is Senior Lecturer in International Relations at the Baku State University. He holds a degree in History from the Baku State University. His research interests include international security, integration and international organizations.

Heidi Kjaernet is a research fellow of the Energy Program and Department for Russia and Eurasia Studies at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI).

Jamil Hasanly, Dr., MP. is Professor of History at the Baku State University and Member of Milli Majlis (Parliament) of Azerbaijan. He holds doctorate in history from the Baku State University. His interests include Azerbaijan in the system of international relations (1918-1920); Azerbaijani Iran and the Cold war; Turkey and the Cold war. Among Dr. Hasanly's most recently published monographs are: *At the Dawn of the Cold War: The Soviet-American Crisis over Iranian Azerbaijan, 1941-1946* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006); *USSR-Iran: Azerbaijan Crisis and Beginning of the Cold War*, in Russian (Moscow, 2006); *USSR-Turkey: from Neutralities to Cold War*, in Russian (Moscow, 2008).

Jeffrey Werbock, a master of the kamancha, the traditional Azerbaijani stringed instrument played with a bow, is one of the few Western interpreters of the highly complex music of Azerbaijan. For more than 35 years, he has used his knowledge of, and ability to, perform traditional Azerbaijani music on native instruments to present the country and people of Azerbaijan to the United States and other Western countries, as well as the Middle East. In 2001, Werbock was awarded an honorary degree from the Azerbaijan National Conservatory of the State Academy of Music.

Nazim Ibrahimov is the chief of State Committee on Work with Azerbaijanis Living Abroad.

Rauf Garagozov, Dr. is head of Social Science Department at the International Center for Social Research and leading research fellow at the Institute of Strategic Studies of the Caucasus (Baku, Azerbaijan). Currently serving as a member of the Editorial Board of *The Caucasus and Globalization* journal, he has authored over eighty articles, several book chapters and books and was a Fulbright Professor at Washington University in St.-Louis in 2002-2003. Dr. Garagozov holds PhD in Psychology from the Moscow State University.

Rick Fawn, Dr. is Senior Lecturer in International Relations at the University of St Andrews where he teaches graduate and undergraduate courses on International Relations theory and security, as well as on Central and East European politics, security and nationalism, and supervises doctoral dissertations in these areas. He has taught previously in the Departments of International Relations at the London School of Economics and at Keele University, as well as at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London. He has a wide range of research interests on aspects of international security and comparative foreign policy-making. He also works on various facets of transition, security and international involvement in the post-communist space.

Saban Kardas is associate instructor at the Political Science Department, University of Utah, USA.

Sevinje Yusifzade, Dr. is Professor of History at the Baku State University. She holds *kandidat nauk* in History from the Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University and a doctorate in History from the Baku State University. At different times, she taught History at the State Oil Academy and the Azerbaijan State Economic University. Since 1997, she has been teaching at the

Baku State University. Her research interests include foreign policy and diplomacy of Azerbaijan, and history of the UK-Azerbaijan relations.

Vugar Seyidov, Dr. holds MA in European Studies from the Central European University, MPhil in International Relations from the University of Cambridge, and PhD in History from Moscow University. His professional experience covers such areas as educational management, media consultancy, refugee relief, international development programs. His research interests include international relief, conflict management, and humanitarian law.

For Notes

This volume constitutes a hard copy of the biweekly electronic newsletter, *Azerbaijan in the World*, issued by the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy over the year of 2008. Like the Academy itself, the publication is guided and inspired by a multi-purpose mission: It is intended to provide training for the next generation of Azerbaijani foreign policy specialists. It is also committed to procreating Azerbaijani scholars capable of producing high quality research and policy-relevant analysis on issues pertinent to Azerbaijan's foreign policy. The publication seeks to provide a forum for, and looks to encourage, communication not only within the Azerbaijan foreign policy and academic community, but more broadly as well.

A special section of the book, *Chronology*, covers key developments in Azerbaijan's interaction with the world, including official, working and state visits, and public statements and milestone events. Such chronologies become more valuable overtime, and this volume is the first in a long series that will help practitioners and scholars in Azerbaijan and elsewhere keep track of Azerbaijan's foreign policy development.