



Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy

School of International Affairs

AZERBAIJAN IN THE WORLD **ADA Biweekly Newsletter**

Vol. 3, No. 18
September 15, 2010

adabiweekly@ada.edu.az

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RUSSIA'S DIFFICULT BALANCING ACT IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS: MEDVEDEV COMES TO BAKU AFTER VISITING YEREVAN

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At the end of August, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev visited Yerevan and signed an agreement extending Moscow's lease on a military base in Armenia and committing Russia to defend that country. Then, less than two weeks later, the Russian leader made his third visit to Baku, the latest effort by Moscow to maintain its difficult balancing act among the countries of the South Caucasus even as the Russian government exploits its growing power there in the wake of the Russian-Georgian war of two years ago particularly relative to powers outside the region. It remains unclear at this writing how far he succeeded.

Azerbaijanis were outraged by the base agreement between Russia and Armenia, viewing it not only as a step that will lead Yerevan to be even more intransigent in negotiations on the withdrawal from the 20 percent of Azerbaijani territory that Armenian forces occupy but also as an indication that Moscow is not going to be an honest broker in talks between Baku and Yerevan, a role Russia has been promoting for itself in recent months at the expense of the OSCE Minsk Group which has little to show for its more than 15 years of effort.

And because of that, Azerbaijanis had extraordinarily high expectations that Medvedev would offer something equally valuable to Baku to restore the balance, all the more so because they believe that Moscow, despite its tilt on occasion toward Armenia, continues to view oil-rich and geographically-central Azerbaijan as "the prize" in the South Caucasus. While the specific agreements reached between Medvedev and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev were in the eyes of some less important than Medvedev's accord with Armenian leader Serzh Sargsyan, both the implications of those agreements and the tone of the discussion suggest that the balance has been maintained, albeit at a new level.

Even before Medvedev arrived in Baku, Russian officials said that the new Russian base arrangements in Armenia do not mean that Moscow would come to the defense of Yerevan if Baku seeks to recover the occupied territories by force. And once the Russian president arrived, he suggested that the accords in Yerevan represented "nothing new" but rather were required by the Organization of the Collective Security Treaty, a pointed comment given that Armenia is a member and Azerbaijan is not.

But more to the point, the Russian president said that he had come to Baku in order to sign an agreement with President Ilham Aliyev on the delimitation of the land border between Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation. That accord, he said, "close[s] the last of the major issues which existed between our countries," a somewhat exaggerated claim given the absence of an accord on the sea border but one that does serve as a model for the eventual conclusion of land border accords with Azerbaijan's other neighbors.

(Negotiations about that border have been proceeding for years, and the accord, as several Russian officials noted, does little more than ratify the administrative border of Soviet times as the international state border of today. But one thing it does do, something some Russians are concerned about, is define the distribution of water from the river there, something that will certainly help Azerbaijan even if it hurts Russia's Daghestan).

Perhaps still more important, Gazprom signed an agreement with Baku to purchase up to two billion cubic meters of natural gas next year and more than two billion cubic meters beginning in 2012. Gazprom's Aleksey Miller said that what made this agreement special is that it does not define "an upper limit" for Russian purchases of Azerbaijani gas, an arrangement that clearly is intended to make Baku think again about participating in the Western-backed Nabucco project and consider taking part instead in the Russian-favored Southern Flow pipelines. Indeed, Medvedev said during his visit that this accord "lays the foundations for relations [between Moscow and Baku] for many years ahead."

Those agreements attracted most of the attention of the media, but there were others in the security area that may prove even more important in advancing

Moscow's interests—and Azerbaijan's as well. As Kremlin officials said prior to Medvedev's visit, the Russian president planned to "touch on questions of military-technical cooperation," including the exploitation by Russia of the Gabala radar station after 2012 when the current agreements call for Russian staffers to withdraw, expanded military training in the Russian Federation for Azerbaijani officers, and the possible sale of advanced military equipment to Baku.

Such arrangements not only reflect Moscow's appreciation of Azerbaijan's geopolitical position and Russian hopes that Baku will not over-read the new Russian basing agreement with Armenia but also the Kremlin's desire to continue to pursue a balanced policy in the South Caucasus, albeit at a level where the Russian Federation plays a greater role than earlier on both sides.

Whether Moscow will be successful in doing this or whether Azerbaijan will be put off by what Moscow has been doing with Yerevan remains to be seen, but it sets the stage for a reset of the balance in the region, all the more so because Azerbaijan under President Ilham Aliyev himself is committed to pursuing a balanced foreign policy, something that has achieved a great deal for Baku but a strategy that may prove more difficult to carry out when other powers and particularly the Russian Federation are pursuing a balanced foreign policy as well.

PROMOTING ENDURING US-AZERBAIJAN TIES

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In 2011, Azerbaijan will mark the 20th anniversary of the recovery of its independence, and during that period, it has had close ties with the United States, despite all the vicissitudes of the international system. The United States was among the first to recognize Azerbaijan's independence (December 25, 1991) and to establish bilateral ties (February 28, 1992). Later in 1992, each country opened an embassy in the capital of the other. Since that year, there have been 74 bilateral agreements signed between Azerbaijan and the United States, and these provide the basis for cooperation in many areas.

Speaking to the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy in Baku on February 19, 2010, William Burns, the US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, pointed out that Washington wants closer ties and broader cooperation with Azerbaijan and values its bilateral relations with this country. "Our history of shared relationships with Azerbaijan is a long and fruitful one on many fronts, with the notable success of the Baku-Tbilisi pipeline as only one example of that cooperative and collaborative work," Burns said (VoaNews.com 2010).

Relations between the two countries have gone through some complicated times, especially at the outset given the disruption of economic ties, two coups, general instability, and the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh. Despite the establishment of a ceasefire in May 1994 thanks to Russian efforts and

the creation of the OSCE Minsk Group, there have not yet been any tangible results in efforts to resolve that conflict.

Because of the influence of the Armenian community in the United States, the US Congress passed legislation prohibiting direct assistance to Azerbaijan, the so-called Section 907 of the US Freedom Support Act, given what its authors said was Azerbaijan's "continued blockade" of Armenia. But as Thomas Goltz has pointed out, "Baku imposed a trade embargo, and for the very good reason that it thought that conducting business as usual with the enemy is not a particularly good idea in time of war. Ask Lincoln or Wilson or Roosevelt or Kennedy/Johnson/Nixon about that." Indeed, Goltz continues, "Section 907 (a) would seem to be one of the most successful lobbying efforts ever made. An influence group with a very specific agenda got in, got the job done and then got out, erasing almost all traces of its activity in the corridors of power" (Goltz 1996).

That measure has cast a shadow on relations between the two countries and provided support for the view in Baku that "ethnic groups like Armenian Americans can import their hatred into U.S. politics and turn it into government policy and legal precedent of that country" (Pashayev 2009, p. 113). But despite that shadow, U.S.-Azerbaijani relations nevertheless developed rapidly during the Clinton administration (1993-2001) largely because of Washington's focus on the development of energy resources in non-OPEC countries.

On September 20, 1994 the "Contract of the Century" was signed between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey and a consortium of international companies, including US majors. This landmark event changed the economic landscape of the entire region and led to the development of two pipelines—the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum natural gas pipeline (also known as the South Caucasus Pipeline).

"Another highlight of the rapidly developing relationship," as Hafiz Pashayev, Azerbaijan's first ambassador to Washington, has noted, "was the first official visit of President Heydar Aliyev to the United States in 1997," where he met "with President Bill Clinton, Vice-President Albert Gore and other high-ranking U.S. government officials, as well as with representatives of major energy companies... The Joint Statement of Presidents Aliyev and Clinton highlighted the importance of the U.S.-Azerbaijan relations for the peace, stability and prosperity of the region. President Clinton called the visit a new stage in the development of bilateral relations, while President Aliyev called the visit historic for Azerbaijan-U.S. ties" (Pashayev 2009, pp. 114-115).

U.S.-Azerbaijani relations were further strengthened during the George W. Bush Administration (2001-2009). The tragic event of 9/11 has completely changed a nature and the dynamics of these bilateral relations. Azerbaijan's unequivocal support of the US's global fight against terrorism led to closer cooperation with U.S. on security matters. Reflecting that trend, on October 24, 2001, the U.S. Senate adopted a waiver of section 907 giving the President the power to waive Section 907 on an annual basis, something the US leaders have done since that time. After the waiver of Section 907 by President Bush in 2002, the security cooperation has become more inclusive, including bilateral military ties in the context of Caspian energy and the BTC pipeline security and participation of Azerbaijan in the US-led military missions in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq.

During the Bush Administration, President Heydar Aliyev and then his successor President Ilham Aliyev visited the US, in February 2003 and in April 2006 respectively. At the same time, US Vice-President Dick Cheney made an official visit to Azerbaijan in September 2008.

Despite the international difficulties President Barak Obama has faced over the last two years, he has found in Azerbaijan a reliable ally and strategic partner of the U.S. But despite that, it must be said, bilateral relations have deteriorated. President Obama's support for Armenian-Turkish rapprochement independently of progress on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the delay in the appointment of a U.S. ambassador in Azerbaijan, US failure to invite President Ilham Aliyev to the 47 country Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, and a Congressional decision to allocate 10 million USD in direct aid to Nagorno-Karabakh have all contributed to this deterioration.

In a June 2010 letter to President Ilham Aliyev, President Obama wrote that "I am aware of the fact that there are serious issues in our relationship, but I am confident that we can address them" (Oguz 2010). And U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, in presenting this letter to President Aliyev, said he had come because he wanted to dispel "concerns in Azerbaijan that we weren't paying enough attention to them" (Whitlock 2010).

Azerbaijan's proximity to Afghanistan makes Baku extremely important to the United States, which heavily relies on Azerbaijan's railroads, ports and airspace to move troops and material. Less than a month after Gates' visit, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also visited Baku. She met with President Aliyev and Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov and, in discussion of Karabakh, she "urged a peaceful solution to the conflict and pledged continued U.S. support for efforts to negotiate a settlement" (Sheridan 2010).

For US – Azerbaijani relations to recover to their previous level, three things are necessary: First, Washington must unambiguously declare that Armenia must withdraw from all Azerbaijani territories in order for there to be progress on other fronts. Second, the US needs to confirm an ambassador for Baku, given that that post has been vacant for more than a year. And third, the US needs to repeal Section 907 and the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. Until 907 is eliminated, "Azerbaijan will always view the U.S. as biased and unjust" (Pashayev 2009, p. 128).

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THE EU AND THE SOUTH CAUCASUS: MORE ATTENTION BUT LITTLE SUCCESS

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Despite the increasing attention the European Union is devoting to the South Caucasus, the EU's current approach is not capable of influencing the countries in that region to a significant degree. And that has proved to be the case despite the interest of all the countries in that region of developing closer ties with the EU and other European institutions and despite the evolution of EU policy over the course of the last 20 years from one that accepted Moscow's predominance in the region to an approach predicated on the ultimate integration of the three South Caucasus countries into Europe.

A major step in this evolution was the signing of Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA) between the EU and the three countries of the region in April 1996. These Accords were intended to provide a suitable framework for political dialogue, to support the efforts made by the countries to strengthen their democracies and develop their economies, and to accompany their transition to a market economy and to encourage trade and investment. The PCAs also were designed to provide a basis for cooperation in the legislative, economic, social, financial, scientific, civil, technological and cultural fields. [1]

But things have not worked out that way. Because of the Karabakh conflict in the case of Azerbaijan and Armenia and because of the Russian-Georgian war which resulted in Moscow's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, these agreements have not been able to promote a regional approach to relations between the EU and the South Caucasus. Indeed, the European Union, despite these agreements and despite the EU's professed interest in conflict resolution, has failed to develop the cooperation it might have because of these conflicts (Nuriyev 2007).

Another shortcoming of the PCAs is that they do not create the basis for the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital as is the case with EU partnership accords elsewhere. The PCAs only give the three states the status of most favored nations, a necessary but insufficient condition for a move toward a free trade zone (Merdanov 2007). Moreover, because there is no reward for moving in that direction, the three countries have not been given incentives by the EU to do so. And consequently, the EU has not succeeded in promoting its policies in the South Caucasus.

One reason for this failure is that until 2003, the South Caucasus was a relatively low priority for the EU. Until that time, Brussels did not develop a specific policy for relations with that region but instead simply transposed policy formulations it had developed for other regions to it, something that could not but fail given the very different challenges the South Caucasus presents (Macfarlane 2004, pp. 119-134).

Another factor was the EU's deference to Russia in the region, especially in the light of Moscow's growing assertiveness there and elsewhere in "the near abroad" (Taylor 1996, p. 126). In the face of that development, the EU preferred to avoid direct involvement and promote the interests of its regions through other bodies such as the Council of Europe, the UN or the OSCE. And that was easy for it to do because membership for the South Caucasus states has not been on the agenda of the European Union and because the three states have not sought a more active EU involvement there (Lynch 2003).

But over the last seven years, the region has become more important for the EU not only because of Europe's interest in energy supplies but also because of security threats emanating from the region (Aliyeva 2006). As a result of these twin concerns, in 2004, the EU included the South Caucasus within the European Neighborhood Policy and appointed a Special Representative for the South Caucasus.

Unfortunately, these steps did not achieve their intended goals, all the more so because of the weakness of the mandate of the Special Representative. Unlike analogous positions for the Balkans or the Middle East, the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus was charged only with generating ideas rather than promoting outcomes and his initiatives did not go beyond making visits to the capitals and calling for peaceful settlements of conflicts.

In addition, the European Neighborhood Policy suffered from several other problems in the South Caucasus. The lack of prospects for full membership anytime soon limited its role as a stimulus for reforms (Light, et.al., 2000, p. 77). Moreover, the policies of individual European countries often were in conflict with those of the European Union (Helly 2007, p. 110; Cianciara 2008). And the European Neighborhood Policy never was able to square the circle of dealing with the three countries as individuals and the three as members of a region (Gurbanov 2008).

The EU's Eastern Partnership is the latest initiative intended to improve the political and economic relations with the EU of the six post-Soviet states of "strategic importance"—Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. At the core of this program are the promotion of human rights, rule of law visa free travel, free trade, and closer cooperation on various inter-state projects. But it has suffered from internal inconsistencies and the doubts of states on both sides (Sadowska & Swieboda 2009, p. 1) and from opposition by Russia to some aspects of this program (Cianciara 2008).

Obviously, the further integration of the South Caucasus into the European Community will require a great deal of time and effort, but first of all, the EU needs to define a more coherent role for itself. There are some encouraging signs in this regard in the Association Agreements, but the EU clearly needs to approach both the region and the individual countries there with clearer goals and more energy.

Specifically, the EU should encourage the governments to design a well-defined strategic vision for integration into the EU, urge the establishment in each country of a special European integration ministry, promote democratization and economic growth, develop judicial reform, promote the fight against corruption, and upgrade the role of the Special Representative, even as it addresses broader security challenges together with Russia, Turkey and the United States.

Notes:

[1] The texts of the Agreements are available at <http://www.europa.eu> (last accessed 11 August 2010).

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A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

President Ilham Aliyev says on the occasion of the visit to Baku by his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev that "the right of a people to self-determination must not lead to the violation of the territorial integrity of countries." In other comments, he says that Azerbaijan's relations with Russia are those "between strategic partners, neighbors and good friends" (<http://news.day.az/politics/226791.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev says that "Muslim countries must always demonstrate solidarity" (<http://news.day.az/politics/226374.html>).

Samad Seyidov, the vice president of PACE and a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the visit of President Dmitry Medvedev shows that while "Russia periodically strengthens its positions in Armenia," such actions "do not threaten Azerbaijani-Russian relations" (<http://news.day.az/politics/227086.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

Former Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga says the UN should name a special representative on the Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/228252.html>).

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev says in Baku that his visit is "a very important day in the history of Russian-Azerbaijani relations" because "today we have closed the last of the major issues which had existed between our countries" by signing an agreement delimiting the land border between the two states (<http://news.day.az/politics/226791.html>).

Vladimir Dorokhin, Russian ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that the border between Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation, to which Presidents Ilham Aliyev and Dmitry Medvedev recently agreed, is "with very small exceptions, the line of the administrative border which existed at one time between the RSFSR and the Azerbaijan SSR" (<http://news.day.az/politics/228725.html>).

Citing an anonymous Kremlin source, RIA Novosti says that "Moscow does not intend to defend Armenia from Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/226681.html>).

Bernard Fassier, the French co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, says that for the first time in the last nine years, the three co-chairs have travelled directly from Baku to Karabakh passing through the ceasefire line (<http://news.day.az/politics/227594.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

15 September

President Ilham Aliyev meets with his Turkish counterpart Abdulla Gul in the framework of the summit of Turkic language countries in Istanbul (<http://news.day.az/politics/228692.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with his Turkish counterpart Ahmet Davutoglu and discusses the opening of Azerbaijani representations within Turkish embassies in African countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/228779.html>).

Elchin Guliyev, the head of the State Border Service, visits Tehran to discuss border issues with his counterparts (<http://news.day.az/society/228507.html>).

US Defense Secretary Robert Gates confirms that the United States is interested in cooperating with the Russian Federation in the operation of the Gabala radar station (<http://news.day.az/politics/228673.html>).

The summit of Turkic language countries agrees to the establishment of a new international organization, the Council of Cooperation of Turkic Language Countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/228633.html>).

Robert Bradtke, the US co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, says that he and his colleagues expect additional proposals about the resolution of the Karabakh conflict at the OSCE summit in Astana in December (<http://news.day.az/politics/228598.html>).

14 September

President Ilham Aliyev and his Georgian counterpart Mikhail Saakashvili, his Romanian counterpart Traian Basescu, and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban sign the Baku Declaration on the AGRI [Azerbaijan-Georgia-Romania Interconnector] project (<http://news.day.az/economy/228440.html>; <http://news.day.az/politics/228597.html>; <http://news.day.az/politics/228595.html> and <http://news.day.az/politics/228605.html>).

Milli Majlis Speaker Oktay Asadov receives former Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga to discuss her proposal for the appointment of a special UN representative on the Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/228524.html>).

Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov decorates Elman Zeynalov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Sofia (<http://news.day.az/politics/228290.html>).

13 September

President Ilham Aliyev receives former Latvian president Vaira Vike-Freiberga (<http://news.day.az/politics/228312.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives World Bank Vice President Philippe Le Houérou (<http://news.day.az/politics/228319.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev signs several decrees on visa regulations (<http://news.day.az/society/228369.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that the acquisition of the S-300 defense system will deter "Armenian adventurism" (<http://news.day.az/politics/228197.html>).

Industry and Energy Minister Natic Aliyev says that the AGRI project "opens the opportunity for the supply of gas not only to Romania but also to Hungary, Bulgaria

and other European countries and also to Turkey”
(<http://news.day.az/economy/228232.html>).

Elkhan Gahramanov, Azerbaijani ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, says that there exists “an enormous potential” for the development of economic ties between the two countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/228167.html>).

Emin Eyyubov, Azerbaijani ambassador to Belgium and Luxembourg and permanent representative of Azerbaijan to the European Union, takes part in the 20th Economic Forum in Poland (<http://news.day.az/politics/228274.html>).

Milli Majlis deputies support the idea of appointing a special representative of the UN secretary general on the Karabakh conflict
(<http://news.day.az/politics/228304.html>).

The Administration of Muslims of the Caucasus protests against the plans of an American clergyman to desecrate the Koran
(<http://news.day.az/politics/228289.html>).

12 September

Former German Foreign Minister Joscha Fischer says that Nabucco is “the last chance for European countries to gain access to the Central Asian market of natural gas” (<http://news.day.az/economy/228116.html>).

10 September

Azerbaijani citizens were among those who died or were injured during the terrorist attack in Vladikavkaz (<http://news.day.az/society/227935.html>).

9 September

Zakir Hashimov, the incoming Azerbaijani ambassador to Astana, presents his credentials to Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev
(<http://news.day.az/politics/227847.html>).

E. Agayev, an administration head in the foreign ministry, takes part in the GUAM ministerial meeting in Kyiv (<http://news.day.az/politics/227998.html>).

Azerbaijan retains its leadership among CIS countries in terms of business competitiveness, according to the World Economic Forum
(<http://news.day.az/economy/227825.html>).

8 September

President Ilham Aliyev greets the Azerbaijani people on the Ramazan holiday
(<http://news.day.az/politics/227752.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Rene van der Linden, the president of the Dutch Senate (<http://news.day.az/politics/227702.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Tina Kaidanov, US deputy assistant secretary of state for Europe and Eurasia (<http://news.day.az/politics/227697.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives copies of the letters of credence of the incoming ambassadors from Latvia and Norway (<http://news.day.az/politics/227700.html>).

Interior Minister Ramil Usubov receives incoming Brazilian ambassador to Azerbaijan Paulo Antoniu Pereira Pinto (<http://news.day.az/politics/227743.html>).

Zahid Orudzh, a member of the Milli Majlis defense and security committee, says that the recent visit of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev shows that Moscow "is not pursuing any imperial goals" in this region and "does not intend to threaten the strategic and national interests of Baku" (<http://news.day.az/politics/227592.html>).

Elman Rustamov, the president of the National Bank of Azerbaijan, receives a delegation of FATF to discuss Azerbaijan's success in combating illegal currency flows, money laundering and the financing of terrorism (<http://news.day.az/economy/227730.html>).

Fakhri Hasanov, the deputy director of the Economic Reforms Institute, receives a delegation of Korean officials who are in Baku to study Azerbaijan's approach to economic reform (<http://news.day.az/economy/227714.html>).

Ian Biggs is named the new Australian ambassador to Turkey with joint accreditation to Azerbaijan and Georgia (<http://news.day.az/politics/227699.html>).

7 September

President Ilham Aliyev receives the three co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group together with the special representative of the chairman-in-office of the OSCE (<http://news.day.az/politics/227456.html>).

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva in her capacity as president of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation signs a memorandum of cooperation with James Billington, the Director of the Library of Congress (<http://news.day.az/politics/227564.html>).

Veronica Kotek, the CoE representative in Azerbaijan, says that the Council of Europe "devotes great importance" to the upcoming parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/227424.html>).

Peter Semneby, the EU special representative for the South Caucasus, says that internally displaced people are "a serious obstacle" for resolving conflicts in that region (<http://news.day.az/politics/227393.html>).

Hulusi Kılıç, Turkish ambassador to Baku, greets the Azerbaijani people on the occasion of the Ramazan holiday (<http://news.day.az/society/227475.html>).

Elkhan Nuriyev, the director of the Baku Center for Strategic Studies, receives Ji-ha Lee, South Korea's ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/227512.html>).

Former US Defense Secretary William Perry speaks at the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy (<http://news.day.az/politics/227537.html>).

6 September

President Ilham Aliyev receives Peter Semneby, special representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus (<http://news.day.az/politics/227272.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives the letters of credence from incoming Dutch Ambassador (<http://news.day.az/politics/227282.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov says that Yerevan is trying to shift the blame for the lack of progress in talks on Karabakh from itself to Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/227333.html>).

Kanat Saudabayev, Kazakhstan foreign minister and chairman-in-office of the OSCE, condemns the recent violations of the ceasefire in the zone of the Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/227335.html>).

Elman Arasly, Azerbaijani ambassador to Amman, meets with Jordanian industry and trade minister Amer Hadidi to discuss bilateral economic cooperation (<http://news.day.az/politics/227298.html>).

Asim Mollazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the increase in the number of Armenian provocations on the ceasefire line is "not accidental" but represents a concerted policy by Yerevan (<http://news.day.az/politics/227153.html>).

Peter Semnebi, the special representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus, says that the EU is concerned by "incidents which have taken place on the line of the front" between Azerbaijani and Armenian forces (<http://news.day.az/politics/227180.html>).

Kanat Saudabayev, Kazakhstan foreign minister and chairman-in-office of the OSCE, condemns the recent violations of the ceasefire in the zone of the Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/227335.html>).

5 September

Movlud Chavushoglu, the head of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that "the main condition for the normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia is the liberation of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/227110.html>).

4 September

Samad Seyidov, the vice president of PACE and a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the visit of President Dmitry Medvedev shows that while "Russia periodically strengthens its positions in Armenia," such actions "do not threaten Azerbaijani-Russian relations" (<http://news.day.az/politics/227086.html>).

3 September

Ziyafat Askarov, the vice speaker of the Milli Majlis, says that the adoption by the United Nations of a resolution on the occupied territories will "put Armenia in a difficult position" (<http://news.day.az/politics/227073.html>).

Samad Seyidov, vice president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that the adoption by the United Nations of a resolution on the occupied territories of Azerbaijan will further "weaken the position of Armenia" (<http://news.day.az/politics/226928.html>).

2 September

President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva host Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Russian First Lady Svetlana Medvedeva at an official dinner in the Gulustan Palace (<http://news.day.az/politics/226791.html>).

Emil Karimov, Azerbaijan ambassador to Rome, says that "the government of Italy supports the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/226636.html>).

Aydyn Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy on the defense and security committee, says that "Armenia will never recognize the separatist NKR" (<http://news.day.az/politics/226492.html>).

Sabir Rustamkhanly, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that recent comments by Armenian officials are having a negative effect "on the image of Armenia in the world" (<http://news.day.az/politics/226333.html>).

Aydyn Aliyev, the head of the State Tariff Committee, signs a cooperation agreement with his Austrian counterpart Reinhold Lopatka (<http://news.day.az/economy/226631.html>).

Allahshukur Pashazade, the sheikh-ul-Islam, receives Ingushetia leader Yunusbek Yevkurov in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/226766.html>).

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu visits Nakhchivan (<http://news.day.az/politics/226797.html>).

1 September

Azay Guliyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Armenia has been challenging international law but that the international community has not responded in the way that it should to Yerevan's violations (<http://news.day.az/politics/226299.html>).

Azerbaijan and Georgian officials participate in a meeting of the council created by the Baku-Tbilisi memorandum on mutual assistance in the transportation sector (<http://news.day.az/economy/226592.html>).

Ramil Hasanov, the secretary of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic Language Countries, says that the role of that body in "broadening and

strengthening cooperation between tis members and Europe in the energy area will be significant” (<http://news.day.az/politics/226599.html>).

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu says that Ankara is carefully following the frequent violations of the ceasefire regime in the Karabakh region (<http://news.day.az/politics/226587.html>).

The United Nations thanks Azerbaijan for its assistance in overcoming the consequences of the earthquake in Haiti (<http://news.day.az/politics/226491.html>).

Note to Readers

The editors of “Azerbaijan in the World” hope that you find it useful and encourage you to submit your comments and articles via email (adabiweekly@ada.edu.az). The materials it contains reflect the personal views of their authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan.