



## School of International Affairs

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### Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy

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#### **NATO-AZERBAIJAN:** **ASSESSING THE PAST, LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE**

Kamil Khasiyev, Amb.  
Head of Mission  
Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to NATO

This year NATO is celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its foundation, while Azerbaijan is marking the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its accession to the Partnership for Peace. On these significant occasions, it gives me a special pleasure to glance through past years and to assess the current level of partnership that we have achieved.

Let me first stress that the foundations of this mutually beneficial partnership were laid down by President Heydar Aliyev when he signed the Framework Document about accession to PFP during the official visit to NATO HQ on 4 May 1994.

Over the past 15 years Azerbaijan has made considerable progress by developing practical cooperation with NATO through available partnership mechanisms such as Individual Partnership Program (IPP), Planning and Review Process (PARP) and Individual Partnership Action Plan with NATO.

The Individual Partnership Program, annually adopted on the basis of Euro-Atlantic Partnership Work Programme (EAPWP) includes all joint activities and events to be attended by national military and civilian representatives. Every year Azerbaijan participates in more than 200 NATO/PFP activities and events, including training courses, conferences and military exercises.

The Planning and Review Process (PARP) is aimed at closely engaging Azerbaijan into NATO's Defence planning for operational readiness. Since 1997, based on two-year cycles Azerbaijani Armed forces have taken on the implementation of increasing number of the so-called Partnership Goals, which were focused on achieving military interoperability with NATO troops through introduction of NATO's military, training and technical standards. Starting from 2002, the PARP and Partnership Goals of Azerbaijan have been extended to broader security sector areas such as Defence against terrorism, Border Security and reform of Internal Troops and their preparation for peace-keeping operations.

The Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) is an important instrument for strengthening cooperation with NATO in both short and a longer-term perspective. In May 2003, Azerbaijan formally applied for joining the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with NATO, adopted as a new PFP mechanism at the NATO/EAPC Prague Summit in 2002. In May 2004, President Ilham Aliyev officially submitted to the Alliance the IPAP Presentation Document, which included comprehensive information about democratic, political, judicial, social and economic developments as well as the current status of defence and security institutions of Azerbaijan.

On the basis of the Presentation Document Azerbaijan and NATO elaborated and approved the first Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) of Azerbaijan in May 2005. The IPAP covers all major political, defence and security areas as well as security related economic, scientific and environmental issues. The IPAP is implemented and updated on the basis of two-year cycles. Final two-year implementation assessment reports are also considered at the meetings NATO PC and NAC in the format 28+Azerbaijan. Our country has successfully completed the first cycle of IPAP for 2005-2007, and is currently implementing the second cycle for 2008-2010.

Let me now elaborate on concrete achievements in our multi-faceted partnership with NATO:

First, in the past years Azerbaijan has enhanced political dialogue with the Alliance through frequent and high-level contacts. It is worth mentioning the recent visit of President Ilham Aliyev to NATO Headquarters on 29 April 2009. The visit has significantly contributed to further strengthening the substantial political dialogue and the practical cooperation between Azerbaijan and NATO.

This dialogue is being actively supported by Mr. R. Simmons, the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative to South Caucasus and Central Asia, who pays regular visits to our country. As to the substance of the dialogue, it is mainly

focused on such important issues as regional security issues of mutual concern, including the Euro-Atlantic security, the situation in the South Caucasus and energy security.

In this context, I would also like to emphasize the continuous support by the NATO member states for the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of Azerbaijan and peaceful resolution of the conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan founded on these principles. The recent NATO Strasburg/Kehl Summit declaration is a clear expression of that support.

Second, Azerbaijan continues to contribute to the Euro-Atlantic security by participating in NATO-led operations sanctioned by the UN SC resolutions. Between 1999 and 2008, Azerbaijan participated in the KFOR in Kosovo. Currently the peacekeeping contingent of Azerbaijan, which was re-doubled in 2008, is participating in ISAF operation in Afghanistan. Moreover, our country conducts bilateral consultations with the Afghan Government on possibilities of contributing to the peace and stability in Afghanistan through engagement in other areas, including civilian reconstruction projects.

Third, our practical cooperation includes such broad and diverse areas as defence modernization and reform, democratic control of the armed forces, peace support operations, security sector reform, civil emergency planning, security related scientific, economic and environmental cooperation.

Azerbaijan made significant steps in the field of application of modern standards in the Armed Forces, increasing interoperability, in particular, through further development of the military education and training system.

Despite the on-going conflict the process of gradual transformation of the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan has been started. Structural changes are under way within Ministry of Defence (MOD), General staff and army units. The MOD has already launched a preparatory work for Strategic Defence Review that should consequently cover the whole security sector.

Considerable work has been done for gradual transformation of security sector to modern standards, including the reinforcement of technical capabilities and improvement of personnel management systems within the State Border Service and Internal Troops. Appropriate measures are being taken for gradual transformation of the State Border Service (SBS) from military structure into a law-enforcement type of organization.

Over the recent years, Azerbaijan has continued to improve national civil emergency planning capabilities and has made effective use of appropriate partnership mechanisms and NATO expertise assistance in that area.

Other notable developments include Azerbaijan's contribution to energy security issues within the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, successful initiatives in the public diplomacy and humanitarian fields, as well as training and education.

The NATO/PfP Saloglu Trust Fund Project, funded by the contributions of NATO member countries and Partners is aimed at fully clearance of 600 hectares of land from the Unexploded Ordinances (artillery shells and other ammunition) in the Agstafa region of Azerbaijan and render it for the use of local population. The final

third phase of the project should ultimately solve the UXO problem in the mentioned area.

Another large environmental project is the NATO-sponsored Melange (rocket fuel) pilot project which was completed in summer 2008. It disposed 1.400 tonnes of dangerous rocket fuel inherited from the stocks of the former Soviet Union stored in the territory of Azerbaijan.

In the sphere of education and training, NATO International School of Azerbaijan has proved itself as an important venue for constructive discussions on the topics of strategic importance for the Euro-Atlantic Partnership and NATO. In the meantime, NISA has greatly contributed to raising public awareness on Euro-Atlantic and NATO related security issues within Azerbaijan and in the broader Euro-Atlantic area.

Finally, it would be to the point here to note the increasing role of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy in our partnership with NATO on civilian education and training. Currently, the Diplomatic Academy is considering ways of extending its participation in the work of the PfP Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes.

May I conclude by stressing that both political dialogue and practical cooperation with NATO serve the strategic goal of the Republic of Azerbaijan to integrate into the European and Euro-Atlantic political, security, economic and other institutions, as indicated in the National Security Concept.

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**THE SOUTH CAUCASUS HAS CHANGED SINCE LAST YEAR,  
BUT AZERBAIJAN'S NATIONAL INTERESTS REMAIN THE SAME**

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What happened in Georgia last summer, Turkey's rapprochement with Armenia, and closer ties between Azerbaijan and Russia since that time have led many to conclude that there has been a complete redrawing of the geopolitical map of the South Caucasus and that Azerbaijan must recalibrate its approach. But less has changed than meets the eye, and Azerbaijan's national interests remain what they were, an underlying reality many more alarmist analysts have failed to recognize or to include in their analyses of what is likely to happen next.

The events of August 2008 cannot be understood apart from what is taking place in the world and in Russia itself now. At that time, Russia was very ambitious: the price of oil was high and Moscow expected it to remain that way. Now, the price of oil has fallen dramatically, and Russia is having to recalculate its position. In many ways, one can compare the impact of high oil prices on Russian thinking to the taking of a strong narcotic. Having tasted high oil prices, Russia fell into a kind of euphoria and lost its connection with reality.

A year ago, Moscow began to talk about reforming and rearming the Russian military by 2020, about the reformation of the country's nuclear arsenal and all the rest, despite the fact that some Russian analysts predicted that oil prices would fall, that Russia would have problems with food, that inflation would return and that the ruble would be devalued. Instead, the Russian elite listened to those who said demand from China and India would push prices up to 200, 300, or even 500 dollars a barrel. And that led Putin to deliver his anti-American speech in Munich and ultimately to send his military into Georgia.

Now oil prices have fallen, and the Russian government is not in a position to talk about renewing the arms race or about confrontation with the West, since it understands that such links led once to the collapse of the USSR, although Moscow is still in a position to continue to talk about the return of the empire and of lost territories, and in this way, Russia has again converted itself in the eyes of others into a revisionist regional player, something that has had a most profound effect on the Europeans.

If before the Georgian war, Moscow had succeeded in using the gas weapon to split Europe and America, after it, the Russian government succeeded in eliminating its gains in that regard because the Europeans recognized that Russia might attack them and that they needed NATO and close ties with the American. Indeed, one can say that Moscow's attack on Georgia helped to promote the coming together of both NATO and the entire Free World, all of whose members understood as a result that although the Soviet Union had fallen apart, Russia nonetheless remains the heir of the Soviet Union.

Today's Russia does not seem to understand that Russia must not enter into a confrontation with the US and the West and that Russia must be concerned about how to re-establish its economy or more precisely create an economy, something that will be possible only if Moscow cooperates with the West and does not threaten it. Until Moscow understands that and acts accordingly, Russia won't get the Western assistance it needs.

Of course, Georgia also suffered as a result of the August war. Domestic forces there are using it against Saakashvili, although I personally believe that the Georgian president was absolutely right in what he did. Those opposing him are not pro-Russian, as some suppose, but rather are engaged in a struggle for power. It is possible that some new group will take power as a result of the street demonstrations, and for that reason, it is incorrect to consider that Georgia at present is a democratic country. It is not, and one must not try to be a democratic leader in an undemocratic country. A leader in such a country as Saakashvili heads must be an authoritarian leader and allow democracy only on a dose by dose basis in order to maintain stability.

Let us see how events will develop in Georgia. The Russian-Georgian conflict will be resolved. Abkhazia and South Ossetia will never gain international recognition either as part of Russia or as independent states. The economic crisis is limiting Russia's options and threatening the future of the country. And therefore, because of the weakness of today's Russia, the events in Georgia will not be repeated anytime soon elsewhere. The balance has shifted, and Moscow was not able to get any of the three South Caucasus countries to refuse to participate in NATO exercises in Georgia in May.

The second event that needs to be considered is the rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia. Turkey has its own national interests. It wants to become a member of the European Union, America supports Turkey in this – and without American support, Turkey cannot even dream about this as the major European countries are opposed to having Turkey in the EU. At the same time, the US very much wants to pay back the Armenian diaspora which played a not so small role in the election of the current president and to which Barak Obama promised to recognize the genocide.

That promise of course was made during an election campaign, and Obama wanted to get out of having to fulfill it in an intelligent way. Therefore, in my view, the entire peace process between Turkey and Armenia was calculated in order to give Obama an excuse not to recognize the genocide because he could point to progress in talks between Ankara and Yerevan. But despite this progress, the time for a real peace process has not yet been reached. That will happen when Armenia withdraws all its forces from out territory and then the border between Russia and Turkey will be opened.

Turkey has become a powerful state. It has grown both economically and demographically. And Turkey naturally is playing and will play in this region a still greater role. And as such, Turkey must have normal relations with all its neighbors, in particular with such difficult neighbors as the Armenians. Difficult because they have active diasporas in all the developed countries of the world. Consequently, Turkey needs to establish normal relations with Armenia. This move will give Turkey the opportunity to influence Armenia, and Armenia will serve as a market for its goods, an opportunity that will allow Turkey to drive Russia out of that market. For that reason as well as out of geopolitical concerns, Russia does not want to see a rapprochement between Armenia and Turkey or a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

It is in the context of these two developments that the recent steps Azerbaijan has taken in its relations with the Russian Federation. I look at all of these as absolutely normal. The opening of centers of various kinds here and there does not mean much in strategic terms. On the other hand, Russia remains a country with a great culture and great intellectual potential. Consequently, in the future, cooperation with Russia in the areas of science, culture and language will bring only good to Azerbaijan.

In the recent exchanges, Azerbaijan has made a large number of good gestures, but on the basic questions, Azerbaijan has adopted a principled position. Azerbaijan has not given Russia all its gas, and the diversification of the export of energy is in our interests. More than that, diversification is necessary. And it is important to remember that Russia will not always be what it is today. It is completely possible that in the future, Russia will become a liberal state and will then have relations of a completely different nature with its neighbors, not imperial and not driven by a desire to re-establish its military presence in Azerbaijan.

As a result, I think that after the August events, nothing of principle changed here. The Russian position on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, for example, remains the same and is well known to all – the preservation of a state of neither peace nor war. Consequently, Russia will not permit the conclusion of any agreement which will lead to the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Indeed, I think it is fair to say that Russia has increased its imitation of activity in this regard, even as the US sincerely wants a resolution of this conflict. We must remember that Russia is trying to slow things down even as it talks about making progress. But at the same time, many in Russia know that destabilizing Azerbaijan would not be in Russia's interests. Until a resolution is achieved, Russia will be against us because that is the geopolitical logic of the region and of Russia's historical animosity to Turkey.

In this situation, Azerbaijan will keep on sticking to its independent, balanced foreign policy. We are and will remain an independent sovereign state.

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### **IF TURKEY REOPENS ITS BORDER WITH ARMENIA: WHAT IT MIGHT MEAN AND WHAT IT WON'T**

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Turkey's rapprochement with Armenia and especially the publication of the five-part "road map" for future relations between Ankara and Yerevan have sparked much anger in Baku with some people viewing this Turkish move, in the absence of significant progress on ending the Armenian occupation of 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territory as a betrayal and others predicting that it will force Azerbaijan to re-orient its foreign policy away from Turkey and the West and towards Moscow.

Such reactions, perhaps understandable under the circumstances, require at least three correctives: First, it is critically important to consider exactly what the road map means and how it is likely to be implemented given the statements of Turkish leaders underscoring their continued support for Azerbaijan. Second, it is equally important to recognize what this move by Turkey and Armenia does not change in the South Caucasus, however dramatic a reading some are inclined to give it. And third, it is worth calling attention to the fact that the changes this road map could lead to do not in every case work against the interests of Azerbaijan but may in fact create opportunities for Baku to achieve its goals.

Only by considering each of these three realities can Azerbaijan hope to find a way to navigate in a future which is neither entirely transformed nor completely the same and thus take advantage of the situation rather than being caught like a deer in the headlight and assuming that there is nothing to be done except to get angry or to radically change its relations with its key interlocutors in the region and beyond.

First of all, everyone concerned with evaluating the latest moves by Turkey and Armenia needs to remember the following: Neither Turkey nor Armenia signed the road map; they simply agreed to it as a text for future discussions, points repeatedly made by the president and prime minister of Turkey, both of whom have been at pains to say that nothing in it points to a change in Ankara's policy toward Azerbaijan. Moreover, Turkey and Armenia had their own compelling reasons for moving in this direction, reasons that had little or nothing to do with Azerbaijan –

however much Azerbaijanis may naturally have focused on the consequences of the road map for themselves.

Ankara, for example, clearly hoped to prevent the US Congress or President Barak Obama from officially declaring that the events of 1915 in Anatolia were "a genocide," a hope that has been at least partially realized. And Yerevan was interested both in gaining another transportation and communication route to the world in order to improve its economic situation and also – and quite possibly more important from its perspective -- in highlighting that Yerevan's policies are not equivalent to or a direct manifestation of the views of the Armenian diaspora.

That has two important consequences that Azerbaijani and other analysts should attend to. On the one hand, announcing a road map does not mean that all of its provisions will be implemented or that any of them will be implemented soon. Instead, as other "road maps" around the world have shown, it creates a new forum for discussion, but it does not prevent any of the players in the region – including Azerbaijan – from pressing their case or mean that such players cannot block and or shape the path forward. And on the other hand – and this is the most important reality of all as far as Azerbaijan is concerned – the fact that Turkey and Armenia announced a road map rather than a treaty or other signed agreement almost certainly means that neither government is in a position to realize the declarative language of the road map. To the extent that is true – and evidence for this is certain to grow in the coming days – Azerbaijan and other countries will have enormous opportunities to press their respective cases, blocking some or all of the provisions of the road map or modifying them in ways that will work to their benefit.

Second, and equally important for Azerbaijan's consideration of this road map, it is important to remember what this accord does not change. It does not change the constellation of forces in the South Caucasus, it does not change the international community's support for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan as the basis for a resolution of the conflict, and it does not open the way for Armenia to become an economic powerhouse and thus to be an even more independent actor in the South Caucasus than it has been up to now.

Thus, the conclusions of some Azerbaijani commentators that this action requires Baku to reorient its foreign policy seem at a minimum overstated and more likely simply wrong. President Ilham Aliyev has taken pride in pursuing what he calls "a balanced foreign policy," one that sometimes nods in one direction and then in the other. Those who argue that what Turkey and Armenia have done requires a wholesale shift in Baku's approach away from Turkey and the West toward the Russian Federation are thus not only ignoring the facts on the ground which suggest little is going to change in the short term but also calling into question their own government's approach.

Obviously, exploring relations with Moscow on a wide variety of issues is not wrong. It is both consistent with Baku's past policies and is useful, as long as this effort is taken on the basis of a cool consideration of realities rather than as the result of an emotional response to a road map that may or may not lead anywhere anytime soon. The same approach should govern Baku's relations with all other countries, including Turkey and even Armenia, however angry some in the Azerbaijani capital may be about past actions or future possibilities.



And third, in the longer term, it is important to think about what the road map, if it were fully implemented and if the border between Azerbaijan and Turkey were opened, would in fact mean for Azerbaijan – especially because while there are some aspects of the road map Baku will certainly oppose, successfully or not, there are others including the opening of the border that Azerbaijan could exploit to its benefit rather than viewing the entire notion of the road map as a kind of geopolitical defeat.

Azerbaijanis assume that the opening of the border between Armenia and Turkey would have only negative consequences for their country. On the one hand, they believe, it would reduce the pressure on Yerevan to settle the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute and to withdraw from Azerbaijani territory. And on the other, some of them appear convinced, it would signal a serious rupture of the special relationship Azerbaijan has always assumed it has with Turkey, a relationship described in both countries as “one nation – two states.”

But it is worth asking whether the opening of the border by itself will have either of those effects. However much the opening of the border or the fulfilment of the other parts of the road map may help Armenia, it is important to reflect on three ways in which these actions could work to Azerbaijan’s benefit. First of all, a rapprochement between Armenia and Azerbaijan will destroy much of the linkage between Armenia and its diaspora. For Armenia, Turkey is a neighbor; for the diaspora, it is an existential question. If this linkage is severed or at least much reduced, the diaspora will not play the role in the US and Europe that it has played up to now, and Azerbaijan will be able to take advantage of that to increase its influence there.

Moreover, such a rapprochement will have the effect of reducing the influence of Moscow in Yerevan by giving the Armenian government another interlocutor who may be in a position to play an even greater role in its national future. While that could lead some in Yerevan to become more stubborn in negotiations on the occupied territories, it is likely to have just the opposite effect. On the one hand, Moscow not Yerevan has had the greater interest in opposing any resolution of the Karabakh dispute. Indeed, the Russian government has intervened whenever it appeared that Azerbaijan and Armenia might reach agreement to prevent that from happening, given that Moscow officials recognize that Russia’s influence in the South Caucasus will decline if the conflict is resolved.

On the other hand, an Armenian rapprochement with Turkey works to Azerbaijan’s benefit in yet another way. As Yerevan certainly understands, Ankara is not going to proceed very far down the path laid out in the road map if Armenia does not make concessions on the occupied territories in Azerbaijan. Given Armenia’s interest in breaking out from its current geographic isolation, Yerevan will thus have an interest in doing just that and will be less constrained by Russia or its diaspora populations from taking the necessary steps.

And finally, there is another aspect to all this that some in Baku appear to have forgotten in their anger that Turkey has taken this partial and, for Azerbaijanis, unexpected step toward Armenia: The road map may actually have the effect of allowing Armenians to become more comfortable with Turks, something that, given the principle of “one nation, two states” that Baku is so interested in defending, could make them more comfortable with Azerbaijanis as well. To the extent that happens – and such a change will require much time – the road map that Turkey and Armenia have agreed to but not yet signed or moved forward with could become a

road map for Azerbaijan as well, however unpalatable the sudden shift in Ankara's position may now be for some in Baku.

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## **A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY**

### **I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy**

President Ilham Aliyev says after his meeting at the presidential residence just outside of Moscow with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev that "definite progress supports our hope that the Karabakh conflict will be resolved quite quickly." He also says that he expects Azerbaijani gas to flow through Russia as well as through other countries reflecting Baku's interest in diversification of routes. And he says that "Russia is a friend of Azerbaijan, a neighbor, and a strategic partner, and on this basis we will develop our relations" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153911.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev says during an interview on Moscow's "Vesti" television channel that "relations between Russia and Azerbaijan are an important factor of stabilization in the region of the entire Caucasus." He says that relations between Baku and Moscow and between himself and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev are "very close and friendly," and he says that at their meetings, they have discussed a wide variety of issues, including Nagorno-Karabakh and gas, and reached a large measure of agreement (<http://www.day.az/print/news/politics/154077.html>).

Fuad Akhundov, the head of a sector in the Administration of the President, says that the declaration of the president of the Russian Federation on the necessity of resolving the Karabakh conflict on the basis of the norms of international law and the decisions of the UN Security Council is "a just and honest position." In response to journalists' questions at the end of President Ilham Aliyev's two-day visit to Moscow, Akhundov adds that there exists "both competition and cooperation" among the co-chair countries of the OSCE Minsk Group but that "it is obvious that all the remaining co-chairs and member countries of the Minsk Group must if, of course, they really want a breakthrough, support the efforts of the most active and successful intermediary which today is Russia" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154073.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev says in Brussels that Baku will not interfere in Armenian-Turkish relations but would like to know what bearing the development of these relations has on the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Azerbaijan (<http://www.ia-centr.ru/publications/digest/4563/?print>).

### **II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan**

Turkish President Abdulla Gul says on April 22 that the restoration of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Armenia is a positive step for all the countries of the region "including Azerbaijan" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154777.html>). And Turkish Prime minister Erdogan points out that "not a single document was signed with Armenia. There exists only an initialled text" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154741.html>).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says that Russia is absolutely neutral on the question of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and is ready to support any resolution of the dispute that Baku and Yerevan find acceptable (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153701.html>). And Russian Ambassador to Baku Vladimir Dorokhin says on ATV that "Russia is the only country which has worked as an intermediary on the resolution of the Karabakh dispute at the level of presidents" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154465.html>).

### **III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy**

30 April

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev leads world leaders in expressing his sympathy to President Ilham Aliyev and the Azerbaijani people on the occasion of the killings at Azerbaijan State Oil Academy in Baku (<http://www.anspress.com/nid112611.html>).

29 April

President Ilham Aliyev tells NATO Secretary General Jan de Hoop Scheffer that Baku is grateful to NATO that "on the question of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict the alliance occupies a decisive position which operates on the principles of territorial integrity." The NATO official responds by saying that the alliance considers Azerbaijan a most important country in the region (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/155439.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev says after his meeting with Belgian Prime Minister Herman van Rompuy that "the goal of Azerbaijan is to become one of the most developed states in the world" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/155305.html>).

28 April

During a working visit to Brussels, President Ilham Aliyev meets with European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/155172.html>).

Oktay Asadov, speaker of the Millis Majlis, says that "at the international level, Armenians have shown greater activity than have [Azerbaijanis]" and that for this "we have only ourselves to blame" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/155196.html>).

Matthew Bryza, US deputy assistant secretary of state and co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, rejects media reports that there will be changes in the number of co-chairs in that process (<http://www.day.az/news/armenia/155146.html>).

Elkhan Nuriyev, the director of the Center of Strategic Research in the Administration of the President of Azerbaijan, says that "Azerbaijan does not need either an exclusively pro-American or pro-Russian policy" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/155199.html>).

27 April

Gennady Zyuganov, the head of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, says that "without the active policy of Russia in the Caucasus, there will never be peace or calm" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/155121.html>).

25 April

Azerbaijani Ambassador in Ankara Zakir Hashimov says that "there is no place for a crisis in relations" between Azerbaijan and Turkey. He was responding to media comments that the "road map" Turkey and Armenia have announced represents some kind of tilt by Turkey away from Azerbaijan. "Turkey and Azerbaijan are one nation with two states," and that remains unchanged, Hashimov adds (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154850.html>).

Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan tells visiting Azerbaijani Defense Minister Col. Gen. Safar Abiyev that "Turkey will not take any step which would contradict the interests of Azerbaijan or offend Azerbaijan" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154719.html>).

24 April

President Ilham Aliyev takes a telephone call from Turkish President Abdulla Gul during which the two discuss the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154696.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives the three co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group and the special representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Andriy Kaspshik (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154799.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives the first deputy director of the Russian Federation Security Service (FSB), Gen. Vladimir Pronichev, who is in Baku to take part in a meeting with the border services of Azerbaijan, Russia and Iran (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154828.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev names two honorary consuls, Margarita Costa in Genoa, Italy, and Jalal Gasymov in Slovakia (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154835.html> and <http://www.day.az/news/politics/154825.html>).

23 April

President Ilham Aliyev tells the council of ministers that thanks to economic and social progress over the last five years, "today Azerbaijan is a country with whose words and interests others reckon and a country which is playing a stabilizing role in the region" (<http://www.day.az/news/economy/154528.html>).

Fuad Akhundov, the head of a sector of the Administration of the President, says after the release of the five-part "road map" for the development of relations between Turkey and Armenia, that there is no basis for suggesting that Turkey had imposed a blockade on Armenia or that relations between the two countries will develop fully without progress on the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154611.html>).

The Foreign Ministry says that "the process of the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations must take place in parallel with the withdrawal of Armenian forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154557.html>).

Ambassador Bernard Fassier, the French co-chair of the Minsk Group, says that there are reasons to expect progress given the recent activity of the intermediaries (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154598.html>).

US Ambassador to Baku Anne Derse says that the attention of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and President Barak Obama to the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process will help to promote long-lasting peace in the region (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154643.html>).

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the EC's commissioner for foreign relations and European policy, says that Azerbaijan is an important partner of the European Union and that the two sides "must continue their efforts to strengthen our joint work" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154667.html>).

## 22 April

Parliamentary Speaker Oktay Asadov receives outgoing Iranian Ambassador to Baku Nasir Hamidi Zare and tells him that "the development of multi-sided relations with Iran is one of the basic directions of the foreign policy of Azerbaijan" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154494.html>).

Justice Minister Fikret Mammadov says that "the lack of a treaty about legal assistance among the countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference" – including on questions like extradition – is restricting the development of relations among these countries (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154486.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov tells the Baku meeting of law enforcement officials of the countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference that they and other members of the international community should step up "the struggle with separatism and extremism" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154467.html>).

The law enforcement officials of the Organization of the Islamic Conference adopt the Baku Declaration following a two-day meeting in the Azerbaijani capital that calls for expanding cooperation among the member states on a wide range of law enforcement issues (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154469.html>).

Russian Ambassador to Baku Vladimir Dorokhin says on ATV that "Russia is the only country which has worked as an intermediary on the resolution of the Karabakh dispute at the level of presidents" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154465.html>).

Azerbaijan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Akshin Mekhtiyev, tells the UN Security Council that Yerevan, by its actions in Nagorno-Karabakh and other occupied territories, is "openly demonstrating its lack of respect to the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154406.html>).

## 21 April

President Ilham Aliyev tells law enforcement officials of the countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference that "the crimes which have been committed on the occupied territories represent a danger not only for Azerbaijan but for the entire region" and indeed for all Islamic civilization (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154274.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov says that the Baku meeting of law enforcement officials from the member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference "lays the foundation for a new format of cooperation" among those states (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154283.html>).

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan says that "Turkey will never cast Azerbaijan aside" but rather will, as it has in the past, defend Azerbaijan even if that involves Ankara in arguments with others (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154326.html>). And Camil Çiçek, the vice prime minister of Turkey says that "the [Turkish] border with Armenia will be closed until the resolution of the Karabakh conflict" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154257.html>).

An OSCE conference on "Cooperation of the State and Society in the Struggle with Terrorism in Azerbaijan" is cancelled by the organizers without explanation (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154254.html>).

Izzet Kamil Mufti, the deputy secretary general for political questions of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, says in Baku that the OIC supports "the just position of the Azerbaijan Republic on the Karabakh question" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154295.html>).

Ambassador Fakhraddin Gurbanov, Azerbaijan's representative in London, takes up his duties as Baku's ambassador in Copenhagen and presents his credential to Queen Margaret II (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154287.html>).

20 April

President Ilham Aliyev receives outgoing Iranian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Nasir Hamidi Zare on the occasion of the latter's departure from Baku (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154200.html>).

Novruz Mammadov, the head of the international relations department of the Administration of the President, says that Baku does not exclude the possibility of the signing of a document in the near future between Azerbaijan and Armenia directed toward the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem, but he adds there are many problems that must first be overcome (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154167.html>).

National Security Minister Lt. Gen. Eldar Makhmudov receives Maj. Gen. Saad Jasim, the general director of the Main Administration of General Security of Qatar's Ministry of Internal Affairs (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154204.html>).

Indian Ambassador to Baku Debnas Show tells Parliamentary Speaker Oktay Asadov that Delhi recognizes the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan

and supports the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154341.html>).

17 April

President Ilham Aliyev says after his meeting at the presidential residence just outside of Moscow with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev that "definite progress supports our hope that the Karabakh conflict will be resolved quite quickly." He also says that he expects Azerbaijani gas to flow through Russia as well as through other countries reflecting Baku's interest in diversification of routes. And he says that "Russia is a friend of Azerbaijan, a neighbor, and a strategic partner, and on this basis we will develop our relations" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153911.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev confirms five documents signed between Baku and Tehran concerning tourism, postal relations, cultural heritage, statistics, and educational cooperation and between Baku and Kuwait City on cooperation in various spheres (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153853.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov meets Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov to discuss Caspian sea issues (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153856.html>).

Defense Minister, Col. Gen. Safar Abiyev receives the newly assigned ambassadors of Bulgaria, Iraq and Russia to discuss bilateral relations in the security area (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153980.html>).

The foreign ministry says that media reports about a planned visit by Turkish journalists to the occupied territories are the result of an Armenian falsification (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153943.html>).

16 April

President Ilham Aliyev receives Latvian Foreign Minister Maris Riekstins who tells the Azerbaijani leader among other things that Riga recognizes and supports the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153740.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Ambassador Ali Bilge Cankorel, the new head of the OSCE office in Baku (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153824.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Matthew Bryza, US deputy assistant secretary of state and co-chair of the Minsk Group, and tells him that "negotiations on the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict are now being conducted with the taking into account of new factors that have arisen in the region" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153752.html>).

Leila Aliyeva, chief representative of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation in Russia, is elected president of the Azerbaijan Youth Organization of Russia (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/154075.html>).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says that Russia is absolutely neutral on the question of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and is ready to support any

resolution of the dispute that Baku and Yerevan find acceptable (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153701.html>).

Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babajan says that Ankara wants "complete normalization" of its relations with Yerevan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153704.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Makhmud Mammadgulyev reiterates Azerbaijan's position that "the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations is possible only in the case of the resolution of the Karabakh conflict" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153755.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Makhmud Mammadgulyev makes a one-day visit to Yerevan to attend the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation, where the chairmanship in office is passed from Armenia to Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153455.html>).

The Russian embassy in Turkey issues a statement saying that "Moscow is not involved in undermining Turkish-Azerbaijani relations" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153847.html>).

The Foreign Ministry asks the Azerbaijani embassy in Turkey to look into reports that Turkish journalists have visited the Armenian-occupied territories (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153825.html>).

Turkish President Abdulla Gul receives a group of Azerbaijani women who are taking part in a meeting in Ankara at the invitation of the Turkish World Women's Organization (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153809.html>).

Azerbaijani and Turkish parliamentarians meet in Baku to discuss foreign policy priorities and say they agree on all major issues including the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153749.html>).

Russian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Vladimir Dorokhin says that the definition of the status of the Caspian is "a very important component of bilateral and multilateral cooperation for Russia" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/153782.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](mailto: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.