



Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy

School of International Affairs

AZERBAIJAN IN THE WORLD **ADA Biweekly Newsletter**

Vol. 4, No. 6
March 15, 2011

adabiweekly@ada.edu.az

In this issue:

- Paul Goble, "Training Abroad As a Key Element in Azerbaijani State Policy"
- Elkin Nurmammadov, "Human Capital Development in Azerbaijan: The Role of ASAIF"
- Sarah Hennessey, "Exchanges and Information: IREX's Contribution to Human Capital Development in Azerbaijan"
- A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy
- Note to Readers

TRAINING ABROAD AS A KEY ELEMENT IN **AZERBAIJANI STATE POLICY**

Paul Goble
Publications Advisor
Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy

Azerbaijan, like other former Soviet republics, has found it far easier to create new institutions for the future than to reform those inherited from the communist past. Nowhere has this pattern been more obvious and the stakes greater than in the case of higher education. Reforming existing educational institutions and especially their administrative culture has proved a daunting task, and creating new ones on the ground has been almost as difficult. As a result, Baku as a matter of state policy has encouraged its young people to study abroad, thereby allowing such students to gain

from educational institutions already functioning in other countries and helping to create post-Soviet elite for Azerbaijan.

Two events this month called attention to this process. On March 10, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, the president of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, told Alice Gast, the special representative of the President of the United States for Science, that "the Azerbaijani state is interested in broadening the process of the instruction of Azerbaijani children and young people abroad," a desire that the American official said she and the American government welcome. [1]

At the same time and as an indication of both how large this phenomenon has become and how much importance the Azerbaijani government devotes to it, more than 150 Azerbaijanis studying in 25 countries came together at a two-day *Azerbaijani Students and Alumni International Forum* in the offices of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, a meeting that also attracted senior Azerbaijani government officials and educators. [2]

The two-day meeting was organized around four panels: the Creation of a Network and the Application of New Methods for the Development of Azerbaijan; Human Capital as a Main Goal; Young People and Public Diplomacy; and Azerbaijanism—Unity for the Future. Sports Minister Azad Rahimov in his presentation stressed that young people, especially those with training abroad, will play a key role in the future of Azerbaijan, and he called on those studying abroad to be "strugglers for the unity of our country" as well as importers of new ideas.

Rahimov also stressed the importance of Azerbaijanis studying abroad as public ambassadors who can combat the ideological and information "wars" now being directed against their homeland. Daryal Batybey, Turkey's permanent representative to the Council of Europe, supported that idea and called attention to the importance of developing contacts among students from various Turkic countries. And Samad Seyidov, the head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, put it bluntly: "The future of Azerbaijan is in the hands of Azerbaijani young people" and especially those with training abroad.

Elnur Aslanov, the head of the political analysis and information support department of the Presidential Administration, went even further. He said that there is "a sharp need" for every student receiving education abroad to return to Azerbaijan where he or she will be able to "play an important role in the future development of the country."

"Democracy begins," the Presidential advisor added, "at the moment when each young person on returning to his country begins to work and to introduce innovations in the sector in which he is working. Democracy is the norm and stereotype of the transformation of consciousness." Because that is so, Aslanov said, the government is today supporting "thousands of young" Azerbaijanis studying abroad.

Azerbaijani young people," he continued, "must today occupy themselves with these real tasks. A young person, thinking about his country, must not give in to provocations. Each representative of Azerbaijani youth, having received an education, must communicate to the world Azerbaijani realities."

Among the officials taking part were three Milli Majlis deputies—Jeyhun Osmanly, Sabir Hajiyev and Fuad Muradov—Azerbaijani ambassadors to London, the Hague, and Budapest; the Azerbaijani consul general in Los Angeles; Azad Rahimov, minister of youth and sports; Intigam Babayev, the deputy minister of youth and sports; Hasan Mammadzade and Farhad Mammadov of the Presidential Administration; Hamlet Isakhanly, the former rector of Khazar University; Fariz Ismailzade of the Azerbaijani Diplomatic Academy; Elkhan Mammadov, the secretary general of AFFA; Ilgar Huseynov, the director general of the Trend News Agency; Farid Novruzi, the president of NOVCO; Vagif Hasanov, the director of the *Garant Sigorta* insurance agency; Rufat Abbasov of the Central Bank; Rauf Mardiyev of the *Ireli* Group; and Shahin Ismayilov, the president of the Union of Student Youth Organizations of Azerbaijan.

Other Azerbaijani leaders taking part included Shahhmar Movsumov, the president of the State Oil Foundation of Azerbaijan; Elmar Gasymov, the deputy education minister; Bahram Khalilov from the Commission on Questions of State Service; Arif Mammadov, the permanent representative of Azerbaijan to the Council of Europe; Gamil Hasanov, the secretary general of the Turkic Parliamentary Assembly; and Tural Karimli, the representative of the US-based Karabakh Foundation. Still others involved with this conference included ASAIF President Orkhan Akbarov; Farhad Hajiyev, the deputy head of the State Committee for Work with the Diaspora.

Notes

[1] See <http://news.day.az/politics/257099.html> (accessed 13 March 2011).

[2] See <http://news.day.az/politics/257279.html> (accessed 13 March 2011).

HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN AZERBAIJAN: THE ROLE OF ASAIF

Elkin Nurmammadov
Assistant Professor, Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy
Co-founder, ASAIF

ASAIF, the Azerbaijani Students and Alumni International Forum, was established in 2010 to provide opportunities for interaction among and resources for support of young Azerbaijanis planning to study abroad, already doing or having already done so. By pooling knowledge and efforts of these students and alumni, the organization aims to enhance networking among foreign-educated Azerbaijani youth, promote public diplomacy, and contribute to human capital development in Azerbaijan. The last is especially important because human capital, the accumulation of knowledge and skills as a result of education, on-the-job training and/or life experiences, plays a primary role in increasing productivity.

Human capital can better explain why economies are able to grow over the long term because human capital, unlike physical capital, is not subject to the *law of diminishing returns*, i.e. higher amount of human capital does not imply lower

contribution to growth in productivity. That is because it creates *positive externalities* to society by contributing to its common pool of knowledge, thereby providing opportunities for others to reap benefits without incurring costs.

In recent years, Azerbaijan has experienced spectacular growth, but because this has been based primarily on hydrocarbon sales, this boom may prove short-lived absent important economic diversification, and that will be impossible without an adequate supply of highly skilled workers. Unfortunately, the level of human capital now fails to meet even the demand of the currently small non-energy sector, let alone those of a largely diversified economy. As a World Bank study notes, the current state of the educational system, particularly at the tertiary level, is poor, and at the same time, there is a serious mismatch between degrees granted by local universities and skills demanded by the changing economy (World Bank 2009).

The government of Azerbaijan has acknowledged the need for human capital development. Over the past few years, it has built or renovated more than 1200 schools, it has invested in the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, and it has created a Science Development Foundation. Another important effort was begun in 2007 with the adoption of the State Program on Education of Azerbaijani Youth Abroad. It funds training of Azerbaijani students in the leading world universities. As of the end of 2009, the number of Azerbaijani young people receiving such support totaled 483 persons, [1] a number slated to reach 5000 by 2015.

So what is ASAIF's role in human capital development in Azerbaijan? ASAIF was created by and aims to work with foreign-educated Azerbaijanis. In broadest terms, the organization serves as a facilitator, organizer and catalyst in attracting foreign-educated Azerbaijanis to engage in human capital development issues in Azerbaijan, among other goals. It works to facilitate technological transfer by providing medium of communication and interaction both within professions and among them.

A forthcoming forum for medical students and alumni in Mannheim, Germany is a case in point to explain the interaction at the "within profession" level. There are hundreds of Azerbaijanis who have graduated from medical schools in Turkey, Germany and other countries and are pursuing their professional careers in those countries. This ASAIF forum will provide an opportunity for them to hear about the developments in medical sphere in Azerbaijan and thus help encourage them to return to their homeland. But even if they do not come back, they can serve as "voluntary ambassadors" of Azerbaijan in their respective workplaces and facilitate the cooperation with doctors and medical workers from Azerbaijan, thus contributing toward their professional development. At the same time, the ASAIF forum held in Strasbourg earlier this month is a case in point to explain the interaction at the "between professions" level. There is a growing importance of networking and collaboration between representatives of different professions.

ASAIF can also contribute toward the goal of reversing the brain drain. Foreign-educated young people are often skeptical about developments in Azerbaijan. They think there are few employment opportunities in the country and that jobs there offer low salaries. Many of these assumptions are simply wrong, the product of an information gap. While the overall unemployment picture may be bleak, the demand for high-skilled specialists is considerable, and ASAIF forums and other activities can help close this information gap.

ASAIF, which plans to hold two forums every year, also serves as a bridge between foreign-educated Azerbaijani youth and government institutions. Although a purely student and alumni initiative, ASAIF has benefited from strong government support. During the Strasbourg forum, students had the chance not only to network with their peers but also to interact with senior Azerbaijani officials. Both sides benefit from such interaction and consequently, Azerbaijan does as a whole.

Reference

World Bank (2009) *A New Silk Road: Export-Led Diversification*, Azerbaijan Country Economic Memorandum, Report No. 44365-AZ.

Note

[1] Information derived from the State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan. This number should, in fact, have exceeded 1000 by the end of 2010. However, there does not seem to be any reliable online source to confirm the number. According to the late 2009 numbers, most of the students study in Great Britain (24.6%), Turkey (15.5%), Germany (13.3%), and France (12.4%).

EXCHANGES AND INFORMATION: IREX'S CONTRIBUTION TO HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN AZERBAIJAN

Sarah Hennessey
Country Director
IREX/Azerbaijan

IREX (www.irex.az) was formally established as a non-governmental organization in Azerbaijan in 1998, but has been facilitating exchanges between Azerbaijan and the US since 1968. In the past five years alone, IREX has sent more than 150 teachers, scholars, NGO and business leaders, and students from Azerbaijan to the United States on US State Department-funded exchange programs. Currently, IREX implements two exchange programs—the Global UGRAD program, and the Edmund S. Muskie graduate fellowship program—as well as the Azerbaijan New Media Program.

All of IREX's programs make contributions toward human capital development in Azerbaijan—that is, the nurturing of people's skills and abilities and the usage of their talents to make the world a better place. In this sense, people are one of Azerbaijan's greatest natural resources. If petroleum companies spend time and money finding the most effective ways to take oil from the ground, so should governments, NGOs, and institutions spend time and money finding the most effective way to use the brainpower and the skills of individuals to benefit a country and the world.

IREX's USAID-funded Azerbaijan New Media Program makes resources available to young people in Azerbaijan who wish to learn more about new media, the internet,

or the basics of using a computer. Community Information Centers (CICs) currently operate in eleven different regions of Azerbaijan with plans to expand to eight more regions in the next two years. The CICs offer free access to anyone wishing to use a computer and/or the internet. CICs also offer training on topics ranging from the basics of web browsing to the more nuanced uses of social media. These programs contribute to human capital development in Azerbaijan by bringing internet access (and by virtue information access) to those who want to learn new information or share information. If one person wants to research new techniques for planting crops in rocky soil, and another wants to post YouTube clips of a Talysh dance, both are adding to the knowledge base in Azerbaijan and the world.

The educational exchanges that IREX facilitates target undergraduate students (the Global UGRAD program) and anyone who has completed university and wishes to study at the Masters level (the Edmund S. Muskie graduate fellowship program). UGRAD is for the undergraduate students who speak English and are looking to experience a year at a US university and immerse themselves in US culture; UGRAD students also serve as ambassadors of Azerbaijan, sharing cultural presentations in their towns and at their universities across America. UGRAD alumni return and finish their university degrees in Azerbaijan. They go on to work in all sectors. Employers find UGRAD alumni attractive because they are able to multitask, think critically, they have good public speaking skills, and they have good communication skills—skills which all students have, but which UGRAD students have a chance to refine and strengthen during their time in the US.

The Muskie program is for those looking to gain Masters-level study that will help them to advance in their field and that will benefit the society of Azerbaijan as a whole. Muskie fellows study in fields like public administration, business, and economics—fields that are growing in Azerbaijan and that add to the forward movement of the country. After studying in the US, some Muskie fellows return to their same places of work, while others move to positions of more responsibility or management in different organizations. Muskie alumni work as teachers, writers, in the Central Bank, in private business, for NGOs—again, in all sectors in Azerbaijan.

The connection between higher education and human capital development might seem fairly obvious, but it is important to note that it is not just the acquisition of more education or a degree that adds to human capital development. IREX places strong emphasis on having alumni of exchange programs “give back”—that is, contribute ideas, visions, and encouragement to their communities. UGRAD and Muskie alumni are afforded a large number of opportunities to network, socialize, and volunteer. IREX sponsors a number of activities during the year—a monthly book club and movie nights, various networking events, as well as volunteer opportunities like an annual clean-up of the beach at Nabran. IREX supports the efforts of the US-Educated Azerbaijan Alumni Association, which brings together alumni of all US exchange programs and those who have studied independently in the US. IREX also offers small grant opportunities, which allow alumni to develop and implement their own ideas to change their communities and to positively affect Azerbaijan. This is one of the most exciting areas of human capital development, seeing people do great things with only a few resources. Alumni are full of great ideas and positive energy, and they dream up many big ideas and see them realized with lots of energy and creativity. Last year, for example, alumni provided dental care and training on oral health to children from *internats*. This year, alumni will implement programs like a stop smoking campaign and an HIV/AIDS awareness campaign.

The government of Azerbaijan is taking many steps and constantly increasing the human capital development of the country. The State Scholarship is a wonderful initiative, and will help to develop the future business, government, and economic leaders of Azerbaijan. Expanding exchanges that bring students to Azerbaijan would be another step. Educational exchanges are one of the easiest ways to dispel stereotypes and misconceptions while at the same time contributing to the educational development of a young person. Creating opportunities for foreign students to study in Azerbaijan will expose them to language, music, and culture that they might otherwise not know of; it also provides opportunities for Azerbaijan to share its expertise with, and to contribute to, the human capital development of the world.

A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

President Ilham Aliyev says at a reception for visiting Swiss Confederation President Micheline Calmy-Rey that "the agreements achieved in the negotiations and the declarations adopted are being violated by Armenia" (<http://news.day.az/politics/257484.html>).

Bahar Muradova, the vice chairman of the Milli Majlis, says that "the export of the events in the countries of the Middle East to Azerbaijan is impossible" because "Azerbaijan is a democratic country and it would be naïve to suppose that here everyone thinks the same way" (<http://news.day.az/politics/257715.html>).

Novruz Mammadov, head of the foreign relations department of the Presidential Administration, says that the Sochi meeting of the Azerbaijani, Russian and Armenian presidents was marked by "an insignificant change of the position of Yerevan in a positive direction" (<http://news.day.az/politics/256622.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

Audronius Azubalis, Lithuanian foreign minister and OSCE chairman-in-office, tells Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov that "the Sochi meeting on Karabakh opened the way to new prospects for the resolution of the conflict" (<http://news.day.az/politics/257566.html>).

Hannah Rosenthal, the US Department of State special envoy to monitor and combat anti-Semitism, says that "the US intends to study and disseminate throughout the world the Azerbaijani model of tolerance" (<http://news.day.az/politics/257580.html>).

Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, the Vatican's culture minister, tells Elchin Amirbayov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to France who is jointly accredited to the Holy See, that "Azerbaijan is an example of tolerance" (<http://news.day.az/politics/257209.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

15 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives the three co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (<http://news.day.az/politics/257747.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev names Dashgyn Shikarov ambassador to Pakistan (<http://news.day.az/politics/257786.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev names Khazar Ibrahim Azerbaijan's representative to NATO (<http://news.day.az/politics/257785.html>).

Azerbaijan offers assistance to Japan (<http://news.day.az/politics/257658.html>).

Bahar Muradova, the vice speaker of the Milli Majlis, criticizes the OSCE Minsk Group for failing to hold Armenia to account for actions like the killing of a nine-year-old Azerbaijani child (<http://news.day.az/politics/257695.html>).

Micheline Calmy-Rey, the president of the Swiss Confederation, visits Nakhchivan (<http://news.day.az/politics/257657.html>).

Bernard Fassier, the French co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, says that the group has decided not to publish the report on the occupied territories until all sides are provided the chance to become acquainted with its content (<http://news.day.az/politics/257726.html>).

Austrian Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger calls on the sides of the Armenia-Azerbaijani, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to continue their efforts within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group (<http://news.day.az/politics/257683.html>).

Darius Semaska, foreign policy advisor to the president of Lithuania, says that Lithuania will devote its efforts during its OSCE presidency to the resolution of frozen conflicts, including the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/257700.html>).

The Baku Office of the International Red Cross says that that institution will be conducting talks with Azerbaijani and Armenian officials to secure the return of Azerbaijani prisoners (<http://news.day.az/politics/257660.html>). The office adds that Yerevan has indicated that it was ready to return those it had imprisoned (<http://news.day.az/politics/257631.html>).

14 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives Audronius Azubalis, Lithuanian foreign minister and OSCE chairman-in-office (<http://news.day.az/politics/257600.html>).

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva says that "our greatest fortune is our cultural heritage" (<http://news.day.az/politics/257622.html>).

Justice Minister Fikrat Mammadov signs a cooperation agreement with his Moroccan counterpart Muhammad Nasir (<http://news.day.az/politics/257474.html>).

Ali Ahmadov, the executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that all the parties of Azerbaijan share a common position on the resolution of the Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/257482.html>).

Audronius Azubalis, Lithuanian foreign minister and OSCE chairman-in-office, is presented with a report on the killing of an Azerbaijani child by an Armenian sniper (<http://news.day.az/politics/257444.html>).

Asim Mollazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Yerevan is "freezing the progressive tendencies" in the South Caucasus (<http://news.day.az/politics/257338.html>).

Elman Mammadov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "the Armenian sniper [who killed an Azerbaijani child] acted consciously and intentionally" (<http://news.day.az/politics/257126.html>).

Asim Mollazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, tells Lithuanian Foreign Minister Audronius Azubalis, that Azerbaijani patience is "not unlimited" regarding the resolution of the Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/257452.html>).

Latif Huseynov, a professor of international law at Baku State University, has been elected head of the Council of Europe Committee on the Prevention of Torture (<http://news.day.az/politics/257529.html>).

Audronius Azubalis, Lithuanian foreign minister and OSCE chairman-in-office, says that the OSCE welcomes Azerbaijan's efforts towards the adoption of the law on defamation (<http://news.day.az/politics/257574.html>).

Matthew Bryza, US ambassador to Baku, says that the recent killing of an Azerbaijani child by an Armenian sniper shows that "there are no alternatives to the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" (<http://news.day.az/politics/257568.html>).

Mehmet Erdogan, a deputy in Turkey's Grand National Assembly, says that the killing of an Azerbaijani child by an Armenian sniper is "a provocation" (<http://news.day.az/politics/257245.html>).

The Ukrainian foreign ministry says that official delegations will not visit the occupied territories (<http://news.day.az/politics/257464.html>).

The US House of Representatives for the first time adopts a resolution on the Azerbaijani diaspora in the United States (<http://news.day.az/politics/257510.html>).

13 March

Emergency Situations Minister Kamaladdin Heydarov receives Cristobal Gonzalez-Aller Jurado, the Spanish ambassador to Baku (<http://news.day.az/society/257397.html>).

Audronius Azubalis, Lithuanian Foreign Minister and OSCE chairman-in-office, says that the recent killing of an Azerbaijani child by an Armenian sniper "snows the necessity of withdrawing snipers" from the ceasefire line (<http://news.day.az/politics/257411.html>).

12 March

Interior Minister Ramil Usubov receives US Ambassador Matthew Bryza (<http://news.day.az/politics/257283.html>).

Milli Majlis Speaker Ogtay Asadov receives US Ambassador Matthew Bryza (<http://news.day.az/politics/257358.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov meets with Ishyk Koshaner, the chief of the general staff of Turkey's armed forces, to discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/257284.html>).

Ismatulla Irgashev, Uzbekistan's ambassador to Baku, says that relations between Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan have a great future (<http://news.day.az/politics/257300.html>).

Philip Gordon, US assistant secretary of state, says that the US and the European Union intend to increase cooperation with the OSCE Minsk Group in order to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/257302.html>).

US Senator Mark Warner, responding to a letter from the US Azerbaijani Network, says that Washington remembers the victims of the Hojaly tragedy (<http://news.day.az/politics/257351.html>).

11 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives the letters of credence from incoming ambassadors Ian David Grainge Biggs of Australia and Cristobal Gonzalez-Aller Jurado of Spain (<http://news.day.az/politics/257207.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov says that Turkey has always supported Azerbaijan on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/257222.html>).

The Defense Ministry denies Armenian reports that an Armenian soldier has been killed in a firefight along the ceasefire line (<http://news.day.az/politics/257191.html>).

Vagif Sadykhov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Italy, speaks to Rome's Institute of Oriental Studies on "Azerbaijan at the Crossroads of East and West" (<http://news.day.az/politics/257366.html>).

Leyla Aliyeva, vice president of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and president of the Azerbaijani Youth Organization of Russia, says that "Azerbaijan is experiencing one of the glorious pages of its history" (<http://news.day.az/politics/257392.html>).

The Azerbaijani Students and Alumni International Forum takes place in Strasbourg (<http://news.day.az/politics/257279.html>).

Turkey's Grand National Assembly ratifies Ankara's strategic partnership and mutual assistance treaty with Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/257124.html>).

The French Foreign Ministry, in a response to a protest note from Azerbaijan's ambassador to Paris, Elchin Amirbayov, says that the French position on Karabakh has not changed (<http://news.day.az/politics/257194.html>).

Muhyettin Aksak, a deputy in Turkey's Grand National Assembly, says that combined international efforts will be sufficient to change Armenia's position on Karabakh (<http://news.day.az/politics/256908.html>).

10 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives Edmond Haxhinasto, the deputy prime minister and foreign minister of Albania (<http://news.day.az/politics/257081.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives the letters of credence from the incoming ambassadors from Sudan, Argentina, Thailand, Slovenia, Guatemala, Paraguay, and Belgium (<http://news.day.az/politics/257103.html> and <http://news.day.az/politics/257096.html>).

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva tells Alice Gast, special representative of the US president for science, that "the Azerbaijani government is interested in broadening the process of the instruction of Azerbaijani children and young people abroad" (<http://news.day.az/politics/257099.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that he has informed the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group and has directed Azerbaijani ambassadors to inform the governments to which they are accredited that Baku is very upset by the killing of an Azerbaijani child by Armenian forces and the failure of the Armenian side to investigate the matter (<http://news.day.az/politics/257008.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov signs an agreement with his Albanian counterpart, Edmond Haxhinasto, eliminating the visa regime for persons with diplomatic and official passports (<http://news.day.az/politics/257025.html>).

Elchin Amirbayov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Paris, files a demarche with the French foreign ministry after the head of that institution, Alain Juppe, declares that the right of nations to self-determination is a fundamental right in international affairs (<http://news.day.az/politics/257095.html>).

Rabiyat Aslanova, a Milli Majlis deputy, says "the time has come to stop the occupier and not to give an assessment of his actions" (<http://news.day.az/politics/257059.html>).

Aydin Mirzazade, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that the killing of a child by a sniper as the Armenians have done is "the method of people alien to humanity who employ fascist methods" (<http://news.day.az/politics/257042.html>).

Azay Guliyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that under current conditions, Armenia can be forced to a peaceful resolution of the Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/256804.html>).

Lt. Gen. Zakir Hasanov, deputy interior minister and commander of the country's internal troops, says that Azerbaijan's internal forces besides being "a model in the CIS" are "largely comparable to corresponding structures of Europe" (<http://news.day.az/politics/256976.html>).

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin discusses the Karabakh issue with his Italian counterpart Alfredo Mantica (<http://news.day.az/politics/257097.html>).

Vladimir Dorokhin, Russian ambassador to Baku, visits Ganja (<http://news.day.az/politics/257028.html>).

OSCE officials express shock about the murder of an Azerbaijani child by an Armenian sniper (<http://news.day.az/politics/257017.html>).

Turkish President Abdulla Gul ratifies two Azerbaijani-Turkish intergovernmental agreements (<http://news.day.az/politics/256943.html>).

Turkish Defense Minister Vecdi Konul says that Ankara "wants to strengthen cooperation with Azerbaijan in the defense industry sector" (<http://news.day.az/politics/256921.html> and <http://news.day.az/politics/256922.html>).

US Congressman James Moran says that he and other members of Congress are carefully following the negotiations over Karabakh (<http://news.day.az/politics/256929.html>).

9 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives José Perurena López, the president of the International Canoe Federation (<http://news.day.az/politics/256856.html>).

Elkhan Polukhov, the head of the Foreign Ministry's press service, visits Rome to discuss cooperation with the Italian foreign ministry (<http://news.day.az/politics/257145.html>).

Rahman Mustafayev, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Athens, says that "Greece considers Azerbaijan to be an attractive and reliable partner" (<http://news.day.az/politics/256736.html>).

Baku officials announce the completion of the collection of information about MIAs in the Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/society/256835.html>).

Bahar Muradova, the head of the Azerbaijan delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, says that the new special representative of that body for Karabakh must be "an objective and experienced individual" (<http://news.day.az/politics/256793.html>).

Toyli Komekov, Turkmenistan's ambassador to Baku, says that Ashgabat believes that the construction of the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline should take into account ecological issues (<http://news.day.az/economy/256806.html>).

Azay Guliyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, discusses legal issues governing the operations of NGOs with Christopher Shields, an official of the US Agency for International Development (<http://news.day.az/society/256905.html>).

Uzbekistan President Islam Karimov ratifies Tashkent's agreement with Baku on economic cooperation over the next five years (<http://news.day.az/economy/256752.html>).

Audronius Azubalis, the Lithuanian foreign minister and OSCE president-in-office, says that it is inappropriate to use words like "quickly" and "in a short time" when speaking about resolution of the Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/256832.html>).

The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group express "deep concern" about reports of the violation of the ceasefire regime between Azerbaijan and Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/256852.html>).

Alice Gast, the US President's special representative for science, says that Washington welcomes Azerbaijani participation in scientific programs being conducted in the US (<http://news.day.az/society/256854.html>).

UNESCO gives high marks to the works of Azerbaijani scholars working in the area of nano-technology (<http://news.day.az/society/256900.html>).

8 March

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad says that "Iranian-Azerbaijani relations are the relations of two fraternal countries" (<http://news.day.az/politics/256672.html>).

7 March

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov proposes establishing 24 hour-a-day border crossing posts with Iran during his talks with his Iranian counterpart Ali Akbar Salehi, who responds by calling for the creation of working groups in all spheres (<http://news.day.az/politics/256552.html>).

Ambassador Agshin Mehdiyev, Azerbaijan's permanent representative to the United Nations, sends a message to all UN member countries about the Hojaly tragedy (<http://news.day.az/politics/256561.html>).

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi says that "Iran devotes importance to the broadening of bilateral ties with Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/256626.html>).

Mihal Labenda, Poland's ambassador to Baku, says that "Poland has found a true partner in Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/256666.html>).

Matthew Bryza, US ambassador to Baku, and his wife Zeyno Baran, meet with Azerbaijani women entrepreneurs on the occasion of International Women's Day (<http://news.day.az/politics/256664.html>).

Dmitry Vyatkin, a Duma deputy, says that it is important for Azerbaijan and Armenia, both of whom are members of the CIS, to resolve their differences (<http://news.day.az/politics/256762.html>).

Turkish and Azerbaijani think tanks sign a cooperation agreement (<http://news.day.az/politics/256547.html>).

5 March

President Ilham Aliyev and his Russian and Armenian counterparts, Dmitry Medvedev and Serzh Sargsyan, meet in Sochi and release a joint declaration on the Karabakh negotiation process (<http://news.day.az/politics/256396.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev meets with the three co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (<http://news.day.az/politics/256469.html>).

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva is the subject of a profile on the French culture site, <http://www.toutelaculture.com> (<http://news.day.az/politics/256363.html>).

Hafiz Pashayev, Deputy Foreign Minister and rector of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, says on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of ADA that the goal of that institution is "to become a regional center of science and education" (<http://news.day.az/politics/256356.html>).

Nizami Jafarov, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that "the leading people of Armenia place their hopes on their foreign protectors" (<http://news.day.az/politics/256254.html>).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov meets with the three co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (<http://news.day.az/politics/256488.html>).

US Representative Daniel Boren becomes co-chair of the Azerbaijani Working Group in the US House of Representatives (<http://news.day.az/politics/256364.html>).

4 March

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva receives US Ambassador Matthew Bryza (<http://news.day.az/politics/256327.html>).

The Milli Majlis ratifies the Joint Declaration on the Southern Gas Corridor (<http://news.day.az/economy/256305.html>).

Ambassador Agshin Mehdiyev, Azerbaijan's permanent representative to the United Nations, signs an agreement with his Dominican counterpart Vince Henderson establishing diplomatic ties between Azerbaijan and Dominica (<http://news.day.az/politics/256365.html>).

Fahraddin Gurbanov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to London, says that "the development of the theoretical principles of the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict shows the attachment of the Azerbaijani people to the peaceful path of the resolution of the conflict" (<http://news.day.az/politics/256174.html>).

Elnur Aslanov, the head of the political analysis and information department of the Presidential Administration, says that Baku "wants international organizations to show political will and put pressure on Armenia" (<http://news.day.az/politics/256243.html>).

Adil Aliyev, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Yerevan "will agree to the return of the occupied territories" (<http://news.day.az/politics/256203.html>).

Russian and Azerbaijani officials meet in Baku to discuss the legal status of Russian citizens living in the Khrakh-Uba village of Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/256318.html>).

The Azerbaijan Community of Nagorno-Karabakh of the Azerbaijan Republic launches a website, <http://www.karabakh.az>, in four languages, Azerbaijani, Russian, English, and Armenian (<http://news.day.az/politics/256264.html>).

Bayram Safarov, the head of the Azerbaijani Community of Nagorno-Karabakh, says that "the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh will support Azerbaijan" (<http://news.day.az/politics/256282.html>).

Indonesia opens an embassy in Baku (<http://news.day.az/politics/256355.html>).

US Assistant Secretary of State Philip Gordon says that he does not agree with the view that "by initiating meetings between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Russia is step by step taking 'under its control' the process of resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" (<http://news.day.az/politics/256201.html>).

James Appathurai, the special representative of the NATO secretary general for the Caucasus and Central Asia, says that Azerbaijan is "a very important partner" for the Western alliance (<http://news.day.az/politics/256185.html>).

US Congress Representative Sue Myrick says that Azerbaijan is "a strong ally of the United States, especially now" (<http://news.day.az/politics/256183.html>).

3 March

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev receives US Ambassador Matthew Bryza (<http://news.day.az/politics/256057.html>).

Bahar Muradova, the vice speaker of the Milli Majlis, calls on the OSCE to fulfill its obligations and press for the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/256053.html>).

Garib Mammadov, the head of the State Committee on Land and Cartography, says that Azerbaijani and Georgian experts have completed the demarcation of the border between the two countries (<http://news.day.az/politics/256097.html>).

The Azerbaijani and Turkish diasporas in the US launch a new campaign of sending messages to President Barak Obama and other senior officials concerning pressing issues of the Turkic world (<http://news.day.az/politics/256073.html>).

Catherine Ashton, high representative of the European Union, says that the Eastern Partnership is "an ambitious instrument for the rapprochement of the EU with its eastern neighbors" (<http://news.day.az/politics/256251.html>).

Anvar Azimov, the permanent representative of Russia to the OSCE, says that the OSCE Minsk Group must remain the main center for negotiating the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/256125.html>).

The Russian foreign ministry says that it expects progress at the upcoming Sochi meeting of the presidents of Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia (<http://news.day.az/politics/256098.html>).

The US Department of State says that Azerbaijan is continuing to improve its efforts to counter the flow of narcotics through Azerbaijan and the use of drugs on its territory (<http://news.day.az/politics/256050.html>).

European Union ambassadors in Azerbaijan visit Nakhchivan (<http://news.day.az/politics/256003.html>).

The House of Lords in London hosts a book launch reception for a new book on "The Conceptual Bases of the Rehabilitation of the Post-Conflict Territories of Azerbaijan" by Nazim Muzaffarli and Eldar Ismailov (<http://news.day.az/economy/256169.html>).

2 March

President Ilham Aliyev receives Slovenian Defense Minister Ljubica Jelusič (<http://news.day.az/politics/255977.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Rustam Minnikhanov, the president of the Republic of Tatarstan (<http://news.day.az/politics/255965.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev signs a cooperation agreement with his Slovenian counterpart, Ljubica Jelusič (<http://news.day.az/politics/255903.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Mahmoud Mammadgulyev takes part in the Eastern Partnership meeting in Bratislava (<http://news.day.az/politics/255868.html>).

Arastun Mehdiyev, the deputy head of the social-political department of the Presidential Administration, says that "the formation in Azerbaijan of a pluralistic media is a basic principle adopted by the state and society" (<http://news.day.az/politics/255874.html>).

The Azerbaijani embassy in Paris together with the French Senate and the Institute of France-Europe-Asia hosts a conference on Azerbaijani foreign policy (<http://news.day.az/politics/256161.html>).

Elin Suleymanov, Azerbaijan's consul general in Los Angeles, speaks on developments in Eurasia to the Claremont Graduate University (<http://news.day.az/politics/255891.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, a Milli Majlis deputy and deputy executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, says that "the UN must devote greater attention to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem" (<http://news.day.az/politics/255987.html>).

The Azerbaijani embassy begins operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (<http://news.day.az/politics/255971.html>).

The International Federation of Journalists, the International Eurasia Press Foundation, the Democratic League of Journalists, the Professional Union of Journalists, and the Azerbaijani Committee for the Defense of Journalists host in Baku an international conference on editorial freedom (<http://news.day.az/politics/255920.html>).

1 March

President Ilham Aliyev says that "the business climate in Azerbaijan must be at the level of developed countries" (<http://news.day.az/politics/255683.html>).

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva says that "the future of Azerbaijan will depend on the children and youth in school today" (<http://news.day.az/politics/255818.html>).

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva meets with Ali Dođramaci, head of Bilkent University (<http://news.day.az/politics/255811.html>).

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva meets with Mark Hereward, the UNICEF representative in Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/255810.html>).

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva meets with Fikrat Akchura, the UN resident coordinator for Azerbaijan (<http://news.day.az/politics/255809.html>).

Defense Minister Safar Abiyev receives the Hungarian and Georgian ambassadors, Csolt Chutora and Teymuraz Sharashenidze (<http://news.day.az/politics/255689.html>).

Mubariz Gurbanly, a Milli Majlis deputy, says that Russia's initiative in hosting trilateral meetings of the presidents of Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia may accelerate the resolution of the Karabakh conflict (<http://news.day.az/politics/255712.html>).

The Azerbaijani embassy in Slovenia distributes a declaration about the Hojaly tragedy (<http://news.day.az/politics/255658.html>).

The embassy of Serbia in Baku officially begins operations (<http://news.day.az/politics/255759.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.