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THE EUROPEAN UNION'S EASTERN PARTNERSHIP: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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The Eastern Partnership between the European Union and six former Soviet republics – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine – represents economic, political and cultural opportunities and challenges for the EU, the six countries who signed on to this accord in Prague on May 7th, and the Russian Federation.

Because some of these appear to be diffuse and uncertain, many commentators are dismissing this latest EU initiative either as, in the words of the Wall Street Journal,

“not worth the paper it is printed on,” or as a cover for arranging for a pipeline system that bypasses Russia. But because both have the potential to produce radical changes in the countries of the region over time, others are viewing this latest eastward expansion of Europe as representing a far more serious challenge to the status quo than the inclusion of new members in NATO.

The former have the better argument if one considers this latest EU initiative in terms of the program’s immediate goals and the amount of resources the Europeans have committed to them. But the latter have the better argument if one evaluates the Partnership in terms of its declared goals over a longer period of time.

Initially proposed by Poland and Sweden, the Eastern Partnership has been modelled on the European Union’s Mediterranean Policy which has been in existence since 1995 to promote cooperation between Europe and the countries of North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean. Like that program, the new accord, which is only seven pages long, is more a statement of intentions than an action plan. And what is perhaps more important is that it covers a highly variegated set of countries – three of the six signatories have indicated they hope to join the EU eventually while the other three have not – and calls not for a single policy toward all of them but rather individually crafted approaches with each, a reflection not only of their differences but also of differences within the EU on how to deal with them.

That has two consequences. On the one hand, it makes this Partnership document extremely general, with calls to promote democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights and freedoms, and cooperation to expand free trade, the elimination of visas, and the resolution of conflicts less specific than many would like. Azerbaijani commentators, for example, have already been critical of the document for failing to specify that all conflicts will be resolved on the basis of the territorial integrity of states, a call that might have made it more difficult to obtain the signatures of other countries and that could have been seen as a challenge to the Russian Federation given its policy in Georgia.

And on the other hand, it makes this Eastern Partnership a less serious and united activity than many in the region might like or that many in Europe and in Russia would oppose. That conclusion is reinforced by the fact that the new organization will not have its own secretariat or budget but rather will be financed through the EU’s existing Common Neighborhood Policy. And the amount of money allocated for the Partnership over the next few years will amount, according to European news reports but not the document itself, to only a billion Euros.

At the same time, however, there are three important reasons for thinking that this program, like the Common Neighborhood Policy which has played a larger role than many of its critics have thought, matters more than some may now think.

First, the partnership document was signed on a symbolically important day, the 64th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe, and represents yet another effort to overcome the division of Europe that occurred after that conflict by involving countries that were part of the Soviet Union itself in European institutions.

Second, at the same summit, the European Union signed a joint declaration with Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and Egypt about the NABUCCO gas pipeline project, one that if completed will allow gas from the Caspian Basin to reach the West bypassing Russia. That has led some commentators to suggest that the Eastern Partnership is

simply a cover for a broader effort to isolate Russia. But regardless of whether they are right, it shows the ways in which this new accord may be used to involve these countries in more immediately serious economic and political activities even if they never become members of the EU.

And third, behind all the verbiage of the accord and commentaries about it is an important reality: the EU is seeking to create at least a penumbra of Europeanness around it, and these six countries – three in the former Soviet West and three in the Caucasus – are interested in becoming part of that culture or at least gaining access to it in order to balance the Eurasian influence of Moscow. Such a culture shift, one difficult to quantify, may be the most important consequence of this partnership for all concerned.

All this can be seen by considering the economic, political, and cultural opportunities and challenges of the Eastern Partnership for the EU, the six former Soviet republics that have joined it, and the Russian Federation.

For the EU, the Eastern Partnership represents an economic imperative, a political compromise, and a cultural opportunity. Economically, the countries of the European Union need the oil and gas that come from or transit through these countries and would like to add these countries as markets for its own products. Politically, the partnership represents a compromise between those, mostly the EU's newest members, who would like to see the Union expand to the east, and those, mostly the original core states, who believe the EU cannot afford and should not try to take in any more members now. And culturally, the Partnership plays to Europe's strengths as a soft power, as an attractive option for many, even if it also highlights the EU's difficulties in acting in a unified fashion as a strategic player.

For the six countries who have signed on to the Eastern Partnership, this accord represents an economic opportunity, a political necessity, and a cultural option. Economically, these countries need help from Europe if they are to deal with an increasingly aggressive Russia, which is using its economic power to retake its political positions in what some in Moscow still refer to as "the near abroad." Politically and for the same reasons, these countries need any ties they can get with Europe either because they want to join Europe as Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia have indicated or because they want to have links with the EU as part of a balanced foreign policy as Azerbaijan does explicitly and the others do more implicitly.

And for the Russian Federation, the Eastern Partnership represents both challenges and opportunities in all three areas. Ten days before the accord was signed, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told RIA Novosti that "we have heard an announcement from Brussels that this is not an attempt to create a new sphere of influence and that it is not a process which is directed against Russia. We want to believe in this guarantee, but I won't deny that some comments on the initiative made by the EU have concerned us."

Lavrov's remarks reflect the divisions in Moscow between those who see the Eastern Partnership as an immediate threat and those who see it as an opportunity. Those who see it as a threat focus on NABUCCO when they are stressing economics, on Brzezinski's observation that Russia without Belarus or Ukraine is "a typical regional Asiatic power" when they are talking politically, and on the loss of Moscow's privileged cultural status in this region when they are talking about culture.

But others in Moscow see this as an opportunity. As the EU has approached Russia's borders, Brussels has worked hard to present its actions as anything but anti-Russian, and many in Moscow, including Lavrov, have been extremely successful in getting the Europeans to take Russia's views into consideration in ways that end by helping rather than hurting Moscow's interests. To be sure, the EU is perhaps less inclined to do that after Georgia and after the Ukrainian gas problems, but it is certain that Moscow has already prepared a list of desiderata that the EU will be inclined to grant to ensure that Russian opposition does not torpedo the Eastern Partnership.

All of that means that the Eastern Partnership, while not yet fully formed and certainly not the tight and fast-acting geopolitical policy some prefer, is likely to survive and prove both less and more than the establishment of a new European sphere of influence in the East, a sphere that will not be exclusive but will certainly be influential in the policies of the countries most directly involved as well as in those of the EU and the Russian Federation.

**TURKISH-ARMENIAN RAPPROCHEMENT AND
THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT:
THE ROLE OF COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND IDENTITY**

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The recent rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia and Turkey's agreement to open the borders with Armenia has generated serious concerns in Azerbaijan. For many in Baku, these events have raised the question as to how the improvement in Turkish-Armenian relations will affect the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Given that Armenian forces occupy 20 percent of the territory of Azerbaijan and significant progress toward their withdrawal has not been achieved, many in Azerbaijan have decided that this Turkish action will reduce the chances for a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, all the more so because the talks between Ankara and Yerevan were conducted in an atmosphere of secrecy.

Baku's negative reaction at first glance would seem completely justified. Indeed, how could one view the improvement of relations between Azerbaijan's closest ally and its opponent not lead to a weakening of Azerbaijan's position in the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute? However, such a view of the situation, characteristic of those who view international affairs from the perspective of *Realpolitik*, is not entirely adequate for an understanding of the processes taking place here. Still worse, it can lead to premature or even mistaken conclusions.

In order to answer the question about how the improvement of Turkish-Armenian relations will affect the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, one should, I suggest, focus on the factors that have generated the negative views Turks and Armenians have of each other. As is nearly universally understood, the basic cause of the poor relations between Armenians and Turks arise from the historic memory of

these peoples, from their different understanding and interpretation of events which took place in the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 20th century.

As a result of this, as certain political scientists have stressed, the relations between these two people cannot be understood only from the point of view of political realism but require a different approach, such as for example, constructivism which allows for the consideration of additional dimensions of the situation, including collective memory and identity (Bulent and Karakas-Keles 2002). One should add that the factor of collective memory which gives birth to negative inter-national stereotypes, antagonistic views and competing historical interpretations is an important cause of the existence of negative relations not only between Armenians and Turks but also between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. To a well known degree, the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh is the fruit of these ethnic stereotypes and fears (Garagozov 2006).

As our investigations have shown (Garagozov 2005), the pattern that could be designated as "a people surrounded and persecuted by enemies but remaining true to itself," plays a major role for Armenian collective memory and identity. It consists of the following components:

1. An initial situation: the Armenian people exists in a glorious and wonderful time which is violated by the interventions of enemies, as a result of which
2. Antagonistic forces attack the Armenians;
3. The Armenians experience as a result enormous persecution and suffering;
4. If they remain true to their faith, then they overcome their enemies, but if they depart from their faith, then they suffer defeat.

These qualities of collective memory and identity make the Armenians especially susceptible to fears and concerns about their fate, to what in the conception of Lake and Rothchild (2000) are called "ethnic fears."

Thus, if we consider the question posed above from a constructivism perspective, which considers the dimensions of collective memory and identity, then it is completely possible to come to conclusions which are very different from those reached on the basis of the position of political realism.

In that sense, the very things which seem the most effective means from the point of view of political realism, namely positions of strength and pressure, can not only not help resolve conflicts like the one over Nagorno-Karabakh but on the contrary, such actions, by increasing fears, distrust and the antagonism of the sides, contribute to the still greater mobilization of Armenians for the continuation of the conflict. In any case, such are the particular features of Armenian collective memory and identity which must be considered in the course of an analysis of international relations. And drawing on this perspective, one can see that the improvement of Turkish-Armenian relations, which can ultimately lead to positive movements in how the sides view each other and without which it will be impossible to develop trust among the conflicting sides, can make a positive contribution to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Considering how powerful and conservative collective memory is in its impact on group concepts, thinking and behavior, it is only possible to guess about those large number of obstacles which can arise and are already arising on the path leading to the improvement of Turkish-Armenian and Armenian-Azerbaijani relations. This is in

no way a surprise because any attempts toward the normalization of relations between the sides requires a definite transformation of one's identity, one's view of oneself and of "the other."

In this sense, the fact that the Turkish side initiated this process can show not its 'weakness' and the impact of foreign pressure (from the US, the European Union, the Armenian lobby, and so on), as *Realpolitik* might suggest, but rather and above all the growing confidence of Turkish political elites in the ability of their own society to change without being stopped by fears that any change could threaten the fundamental components of national identity.

Considering the role which the theme of "genocide" plays in Armenian consciousness, collective memory and identity, the Armenian side faces a still more complicated and dramatic process of intellectual revision and transformation of its identity. The noble theme of "victimization" is so strongly intertwined with Armenian collective memory and identity and so profitably exploited by various external forces that enormous efforts from many sides will be required in order to push this transformation forward and allow the Armenians overcome their fears concerning the possible loss of their identity.

In fact, the Armenians and Turks must go an enormous distance in order to achieve a real rapprochement and begin a genuine dialogue. In this process, however strange it may seem, the Azerbaijani experience can be helpful. That is because Azerbaijani-Armenian relations, despite the latest attempts to revise their treatment, during a significant part of Soviet history not to speak about the more distant past have been almost an example of a "symbiotic" coexistence of two peoples one of whom is conceived by the Armenians as "Turks." There are Armenians and Azerbaijanis still alive who had a positive experience of living together and of the mutual enrichment of their cultures. This factor, if used with skill, can become an important instrument for helping to overcome conservative aspects of the memory of these peoples. In this connection, the Azerbaijani side could conduct a more active and even intermediary role in the rapprochement of Turkey and Armenia just starting out.

Of course, Azerbaijan will find it more difficult to begin such a dialogue with Armenia when part of its territory remains under the control of Armenian armed forces. In this situation, any attempts at resolving these identity issues may be conceived as a manifestation of "weakness" and a concession to the aggressor. That is why for Baku the demand for the return of its territory is so important as a first step toward this process.

And so, summing up, if we are agreed that for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the principles of political realism at the very least must be supplemented by the principles of constructivism, then it becomes clear that any efforts directed at removing "the cursed past" between these peoples is one of the important and possibly the most important element of policies directed at the resolution of this dispute.

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**ANARCHY, HIERARCHY OR NEITHER:
AN INDIGENOUS AZERBAIJANI CONCEPT
OF NATIONAL SECURITY**

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The Republic of Azerbaijan is a country that is often said to occupy a precarious position in the international system. First, surrounded by three former imperial cores and major contemporary powers – Turkey, Iran and the Russian Federation – it is commonly viewed as being subject to multiple pressures of competition for strategic influence. Secondly, it experienced a seven-year civil and international conflict involving the neighboring Republic of Armenia, constituting an internal (1988-1991) and an interstate (1992-1994) phase resulting in approximately 30,000 deaths and 50,000 internally displaced – a level of violence matched in the former Soviet space only by the case of Tajikistan. Thirdly, the war resulted in the continued occupation of one-fifth of the national territory by the forces of Armenia and an unrecognized government that receive both overt and illicit military support from Moscow.

And yet, apart from its central emphasis on Armenian occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh, the National Security Concept promulgated in May 2007 is distinctive for its emphasis on linked domestic and external, non-traditional and transnational, rather than state-centric or conventional threats. First, despite popular rhetoric of support for the U.S. Global War on Terror, it does not specifically name Washington as an ally, instead presenting participation in post-9/11 security operations as a necessary aspect of responsible support for international counter-terrorism and peacekeeping initiatives (National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2007, pp. 9-10). At the same time, unlike Georgia, whose doctrine directly intends membership in NATO and the European Union, Azerbaijan's partnership with these institutions constitutes cooperation for mutual benefit rather than full integration (National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2007, pp. 8-9). In line with this definition, regional militarization and armament policies, rather than bilateral tensions with historic imperial powers (and Armenian patrons) such as Iran and

Russia are identified as collective sources of potential insecurity (National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2007, pp. 6-7).

As such, more prominent challenges are located in the “uncontrolled” territories and conflict zones comprising the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR) and by implication, the Caucasian de facto states of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The longstanding priority of Azerbaijani leaderships to preserve territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders (Brown 2004) is well represented. Yet here, rather than the subversion of internal sovereignty by governments and armed forces which are unrecognized in international law and supported by foreign diplomatic and military intervention (as literally exemplified by the Russian counter-offensives in Georgia during August 2008), primary threats are said to emanate from havens for trans-border organized crime and illicit trade (National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2007, pp. 5-6). The serious political instability of the early post-independence period, characterized by foreign-sponsored antigovernment actions and secessionist movements, also remains a major contingency (National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2007, p. 5). Finally, the definition of threats is extended to explicitly non-military concerns: extremism, lack of human capital, overdependence on external aid, destabilization of the economy and environmental damage constitute as much of a danger to Azerbaijan’s national security as do opposing armies or terrorist groups (National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2007, pp. 6-7).

Yet, the completion of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) pipelines from 2005-2007 has virtually revolutionized international policy discourse on security issues in the Caucasus region. This has prioritized the classical tri-polar narrative of competing Russian, Iranian and Turkish interests, along with continual speculations regarding energy markets and great power (U.S./Russia/EU) access to oil and gas reserves and transshipment routes – the Caucasian counterpart of the Central Asian “New Great Game”. As a result, much public discussion of the foreign and national security policies of post-Soviet Azerbaijan is at worst atheoretical, or at best, dominated by realist geopolitical assumptions. One leading American analyst of small state foreign policies suggests that the pursuit of Caspian oil has turned “otherwise weak nations such as Azerbaijan into international ‘players’” (Hudson 2006, p. 145). Thus, the emphasis is always on the reactions of Azerbaijani policymakers to external forces, rather than how they perceive the nature of the international environment in which they are situated.

Given the focus on imperial ambitions toward small states, it is curious that prevailing views of the region would assume anarchy (power seeking) rather than hierarchy (status seeking) as an explanatory framework. It has been suggested that the preoccupation of observers with the role of hegemonic influences in the Caucasus region is a byproduct of the varying reactions of regional and global powers to demands for external support by local leaderships in the post-Soviet period (e.g., Russia to Tar-Petrosian and Kocharian in Armenia, the United States to Shevardnadze and Saakashvili in Georgia, and Turkey to Elçhibey in Azerbaijan) (Jafalian 2004, p. 7). Yet, it is arguable that Azerbaijan’s origins as a modern nation-state are rooted in reaction to imposed hierarchy. The establishment of the two *gubernias* of Baku and Elizavetpol by the Russian Empire during the mid-19th century both established a defined Azerbaijani territory, and aided the founding of a bureaucratic elite united by a common language and religion (Çağla 2003, p. 119; Ismailov and Papava 2006, pp. 22-24). This provided a basis for a unified Azerbaijani bourgeoisie to seek to build a polity that could compete with other

nations, advocate for the autonomy of the Transcaucasus, and pursue independence vis-à-vis Russia and Armenia (Çağla 2003, pp. 122-123).

Evidence can be also found within precedents of Azerbaijani national histories for a linkage between hierarchical perceptions of global power structures and national security. During the years from 1450 to 1600 AD, the Azeri proto-states established by the White Sheep Turkmen (*Ağqoyunlu*) and the Safavid dynasty pursued diplomatic relations with the kingdoms of Western Europe in response to the military and economic threat posed by the growing preponderance of Ottoman Turkey (Mahmudov 2006). Similarly, between 1918 and 1920, the leadership of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (*Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyəti*) sought unsuccessfully to secure recognition of independence and military support from the United States in response to the territorial and ideological expansion of Soviet Russia (Hassanov 1993). Finally, reversing the policies of previous post-Soviet leaders, in September 1993 President Heydar Aliyev extended a resolution for the reentry of Azerbaijan into the CIS to retain access to the security benefits of the status quo maintained by the Russian Federation, while simultaneously expelling Russian troops from the national soil (Library of Congress 1994; Alieva 2006, pp. 23-24).

Given this background, it is possible that the scholarly understanding of Azerbaijan's security policies would be advanced by the application of alternative theoretical frameworks which interrogate the conventional wisdom in Caucasus studies. In opposition to the anarchic condition assumed in realism, the theory of power preponderance suggests that the organizing principle of world politics is a multi-level hierarchy composed of great, lesser and minor powers (Tammen, et al. 2000). The relative positions of states within the hierarchy are defined by the domestic components of national development. The economic productivity, political capacity and population characteristics of the most powerful states enable them to project their political preferences throughout the international realm, thus minimizing their incentives to engage in conflict. This therefore assumes that the state system is led by a single power and its coalition of satisfied states, unified by acceptance of the status quo and highly integrated by fixed military alliances, trade, communications, currency exchange and technology transfers. The United States, NATO and EU at the global level, and the Russian Federation, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in their respective sphere of influence presently exemplify this condition.

At the same time, the lower levels of each respective hierarchy are "conditionally anarchic", in that they are occupied by a certain number of dissatisfied states that abstain from or reject the conventions promoted by the leading power and its coalition. These actors are still concerned with the dangers posed by "relative gains", therefore often pursuing alternative diplomatic or military strategies (e.g., nonalignment, development of nuclear capability, support for insurgencies or terrorism) to oppose the status quo, although they do not possess the resources to directly challenge the preponderant power. These premises are also logically compatible with propositions regarding the international relations of small developing or formerly socialist states. The "subaltern realism" perspective posits that contrary to the assumptions of the Western realist tradition, the leaderships of developing nations often perceive the international system as a hierarchy presided over by great powers, while at the same time the domestic political environment is regarded as a struggle to maintain control of the state against anarchic popular forces (Ayooob 1998; 2002). This places significant constraints on their ability to pursue autonomous national interests (Gleason et al. 2008). A similar condition has been

identified as being prevalent in post-communist states, as the Soviet dissolution initially left governments in many former Republics with a weak tradition of national sovereignty and a lack of capable administrative structures, including competent and technically sufficient foreign ministries and diplomatic services (Skak 1996, pp. 7-9, 21-30).

Thus, political leaders in these settings are often preoccupied with suppressing internal instability and maintaining control, while also pursuing those external policies that enhance their ability to manage tensions and remain in office. Azerbaijan has faced severe local insecurity since independence, experiencing a revolution, an internationalized civil war, ethnic secession and successful and attempted military coups (Fearon and Laitin 2006, pp. 12-16). Therefore, the foreign policy and security strategies of such states are designed in order to maintain autonomy and gain leverage against dominant powers within the international hierarchy, as well as through "omnibalancing," or the selective use of external support (i.e., foreign or military aid, alliances or direct security assistance) by stronger states to defend themselves against domestic threats (David 1991).

The concept of a "multi-vector" foreign policy, in which states pursue a form of multi-polar balancing in order to preserve strategic independence while retaining the benefits of cooperation with more powerful states, has become common parlance in journalistic and academic discussions of post-Soviet international relations. It might be suggested that multi-vectorism constitutes a form of post-Cold War nonalignment that avoids formal alliance commitments, while deriving benefits from economic and military affiliations or partnerships with both the great powers and their strategic competitors. Within the past decade, it has been utilized in order to describe, as well as prescribe the diplomatic agendas and behavior of various countries, most prominently Kazakhstan (to which its origins are attributed), Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Belarus, and by extension, Putin-era Russia. However, it has at the same time rarely been articulated as a theoretical construct, having been applied for varying and inconsistent purposes (Kirbassov 2008). Recent efforts to provide an analytical useful definition have identified the pursuit of multiple vectors as a pragmatic and non-ideological strategic activity engaged in by rational, self-interested actors (Hanks 2008, p. 7).

The Azerbaijani variant of multi-vectorism, the "balanced foreign policy" (*balanslaşdırılmış xarici siyasət*) doctrine initially introduced by Heydar Aliyev, is identified as a cornerstone of the nation's diplomatic relations (National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2007, p.p. 3, 12). More significantly, it provides an observable example of how a strong, centralized leadership pursues an alternate (i.e., non-military) means of expressing dissatisfaction with the constraints imposed by hierarchical arrangements. Finally, its logic implies a fundamentally different view from that currently endorsed by Western policy advocates. This recognizes that rather than reinforcing independence and sovereignty, the strategy of using energy and transport assets (i.e., the East-West corridor) for complete integration into the U.S.-led political and security architecture via Turkey's NATO membership would involve surrendering national autonomy and self-reliance (Gaudio 2007, p.p. 4, 7). Through its promotion of multiple balancing, the present Azerbaijani leadership has in theory rejected the security policy formula of local "calls for empire" adopted by other Caucasus states – or, the linkage of national consolidation and survival to the aid and intervention of external powers (Jafalian 2004, p. 1).

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A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

President Ilham Aliyev receives Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan and says after their meeting that "the question of the opening of the [Turkish] border was closed after the clear declarations of senior officials of Turkey." For his part, Prime Minister Erdogan says that the border between Turkey and Armenia will not be opened "until the complete de-occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156947.html>).

Novruz Mammadov, the head of the department for foreign relations of the Administration of the President, in reaction to an interview that Matthew Bryza, the US deputy assistant secretary of state and co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, gave, says that "perhaps, Matthew Bryza is giving [US Secretary of State] Hillary Clinton and [US President] Barak Obama false information [about talks between Azerbaijan and Armenia] for the purposes of advancing his career." Mammadov adds that he is "surprised that the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group do not speak about the real situation," suggesting that Armenia was being cooperative when in fact Yerevan "did not want to undertake a single step in the direction of resolving the conflict and yet again demonstrated its territorial pretensions toward Azerbaijan." Mammadov stresses that "the President of Azerbaijan has more than once said that we recognize the right of peoples to self-determination but that this can be realized only in the framework of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156785.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group release a joint declaration on 11 May expressing the hope that the current leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia "will be able

to overcome the complicated causes and difficult consequences of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and create an atmosphere of security, trust, cooperation and fruitful exchange among the peoples of the region” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156736.html>).

Yury Merzlyakov, the Russian co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, says that “Russia is not planning to recognize Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent region.” The situation of Nagorno-Karabakh and that of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which Moscow did recognize, are “completely different,” he adds (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156412.html>).

Mohammed Baghir Bahrami, Iran’s incoming ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that the current state of relations between Tehran and Baku does not “satisfy” him as there is still much room for further development (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156811.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan’s Foreign Policy

15 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Bernard Fassier, the French co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/157296.html>).

The German parliament adopts, for the first time in its history, a resolution on the South Caucasus named ‘Security, Stability and Promoting Democracy in South Caucasus’ which calls for the observance of the principle of territorial integrity in the resolution of regional conflicts (<http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/76970/%22http://news.trend.az%22>; <http://www.day.az/news/politics/157379.html>).

Israeli Ambassador to Azerbaijan Arthur Lenk announces the name of his replacement, Mikhael Lavon-Lotem, who previously served as ambassador in Kazakhstan. Lavon-Lotem will take up his position in Baku in July (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/157342.html>).

Bulgarian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Vasil Kalinov announces that the Azerbaijani and Bulgarian ministries for extraordinary situations will cooperate within the Eastern Partnership Program (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/157299.html>).

14 May

Russian foreign ministry spokesman Andrey Nesterenko says that “the area of disagreements of the sides of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is being significantly reduced and the level of mutual understanding is growing” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/157225.html>).

13 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan and says after their meeting that “the question of the opening of the [Turkish] border was closed after the clear declarations of senior officials of Turkey.” For his part, Prime Minister Erdogan says that the border between Turkey and Armenia will not be

opened "until the complete de-occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh"
(<http://www.day.az/print/news/politics/156947.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov receives Miltiadis Varvitsiotis, the deputy foreign minister of Greece (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/157002.html>).

Ali Hasanov, the head of the department for social-political questions of the Administration of the President, meets in Moscow with Sergey Naryshkin, the head of the Administration of the President of the Russian Federation, to discuss the development of the strategic partnership of the two countries. He also meets with Sergey Lebedev, the chief of the executive committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156989.html>).

12 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives the chairman of the Supreme Court of Turkey Hasan Gerçeker, who is in Baku for the occasion of the opening of the Azerbaijan Supreme Court's new building (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156945.html>). At the opening, President Aliyev gives a major speech on the domestic development of Azerbaijan over the last 15 years (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156952.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Stefan Harabi, the deputy prime minister of Slovakia (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156936.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives members of the US Council on Foreign Relations. He tells them among other things that after 17 years of work, the OSCE Minsk Group has not succeeded in changing the situation (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/157251.html>).

Today marks the 15th anniversary from the declaration of a ceasefire between Azerbaijani and Armenian forces (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156771.html>).

Azerbaijan Defense Minister Col. Gen. Safar Abiyev tells representatives of the US Council on Foreign Affairs that bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and the United States is making "a major contribution to the realization of a number of important international economic projects" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156905.html>).

The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Questions releases a statement calling on the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia to move toward a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute at their June meeting in St. Petersburg (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156908.html>).

11 May

Matthew Bryza, US deputy assistant secretary of state and American co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, says on *Ekho Moskvy* that "Karabakh and the other territories will be returned to Azerbaijan, step by step." The final resolution of the dispute, he says, will be "a balance among the principles of self-determination, territorial integrity and a ban on the use of force" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156749.html>). He adds that "a turning point in the negotiations on the Karabakh problem possibly will come during the meeting of

the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia in St. Petersburg (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156748.html>).

Dora Bakoyannis, the foreign minister of Greece and OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, greets the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan and welcomes the "constructive discussions" between the presidents of those countries (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156750.html>).

9 May

President Ilham Aliyev leads the Azerbaijani nation in marking Victory Day (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156640.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that no breakthroughs were achieved at the Prague meeting between the Azerbaijani and Armenian presidents. "Alas," he continues, "the Armenians this time as well did not demonstrate a constructive approach" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156648.html>).

Fuad Akhundov, the head of a sector of the Administration of the President says that "Baku is satisfied by the results of the inaugural summit of Eastern Partnership" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156665.html>).

Peter Semneby, the special representative of the European Union for the South Caucasus, says that the EU "expects serious moves forward in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156663.html>).

Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan says that if the Armenians "free the occupied Azerbaijani territories, then we will open the border with Armenia" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156639.html>).

Rose Gottemoeller, the US deputy secretary of state for arms control, says that proposals for possible American use of the Gabala radar station in Azerbaijan "deserve further consideration" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156630.html>).

8 May

Javier Solana, the EU commissar for foreign policy, says that "the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will be achieved" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156444.html>).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says that "Moscow is optimistic about the chances for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156451.html>).

Ali Hasanov, the head of the social-political department of the Administration of the President, says that "without a resolution of the Karabakh conflict there cannot be a lasting peace in the South Caucasus." He says that Baku "recognizes the right of Armenians to live in Nagorno-Karabakh, but [it] considers unacceptable the separation of this territory from Azerbaijan and the formation here of a separatist government." Commenting on the recent rapprochement between Armenia and Turkey, he notes that Baku "is not protesting against the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border. But the opening of a border without conditions will

not promote the establishment of peace in the region”
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156575.html>).

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu says that the Prague meeting of the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia was “an important step toward Nagorno-Karabakh resolution” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156528.html>).

Oktay Asadov, the speaker of the Milli Mejlis, says that the Armenian diaspora played a role in what US President Barak Obama said about 1915 but that its efforts should lead Azerbaijanis to become more active in presenting their case to the American people and its president
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156507.html>).

Members of the Milli Majlis say that the United States has “unjustly applied double standards” in its reporting about the status of media freedom in Azerbaijan. They are reacting to US President Barak Obama’s placement of Azerbaijan in one rank with Zimbabwe in terms of the persecution of journalists
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156487.html>).

While in Prague, President Ilham Aliyev meets with Czech President Vaclav Klaus and tells him that “the aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan is creating serious obstacles for peace and stability in the region”
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156285.html>).

Matthew Bryza, US deputy assistant secretary of state and co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, says that “Concerning proposals on the resolution of the conflict, [Armenian] President Serzh Sargsyan reported that in [his country] are taking places negotiations with the political parties. In his turn,” Bryza continues, Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev two weeks ago also made an important declaration. For the first time, he began to speak about a security corridor, about the need in the framework of this corridor to guarantee the security of the population of Karabakh. This is a constructive step for development. These are attempts to influence the negotiating process”
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156476.html>).

7 May

President Ilham Aliyev meets with Turkish President Abdulla Gul during his visit to Prague. Gul for his part rates as extremely important the meeting of President Aliyev and his Armenian counterpart
(<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156449.html>,
www.day.az/news/politics/156583.html).

President Ilham Aliyev meets with Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan in the Embassy of the United States in Prague. Also in attendance are the four co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156364.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev tells the summit of the European Union devoted to the signing of the accords on the Eastern Partnership that Azerbaijan “plays an important role in guaranteeing the energy security of Europe” (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156452.html>).

During his visit to Prague, President Ilham Aliyev meets with French Prime Minister Francois Fillon and British Foreign Minister David Miliband who extends an invitation to the Azerbaijani leader to visit the United Kingdom, an invitation President Aliyev accepts (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156459.html>).

Andrey Denisov, first deputy minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation, says that his ministry "does not consider that the European Union is attempting to exclude [Moscow] from the search for a resolution of the Karabakh conflict." He is reacting to media reports that the EU may seek to become the only mediator in talks about that dispute (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156393.html>).

Elkhan Polukhov, spokesman for the Azerbaijani foreign ministry, says that Yerevan's declarations about "the right of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to self-determination contradict all norms of international law, and such a formulation is by itself untrue since there is no people of Nagorno-Karabakh. Instead, there are two major communities, the Azerbaijani and the Armenian, "and against the Azerbaijani community was carried out ethnic cleansing." Only after that community is able to return and exist in peace there, can there be created conditions for the beginning of a discussion of the legal definition of Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156316.html>).

Bernard Fassier, the French co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, says that in discussions about Nagorno-Karabakh, "we are preparing for a breakthrough but we have not yet achieved it" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156437.html>).

Matthew Bryza, US deputy assistant secretary of state and US co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, says that at their meeting in Prague at the American embassy "the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia achieved agreement on the basic principles of resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict." He says that he expects the two presidents to meet again in St. Petersburg in the next several weeks (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156405.html>).

Samed Seyidov, the Milli Majlis deputy who heads the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, says that Azerbaijan is fated to "bring together" important countries of the world by virtue of its energy supplied and transit routes (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156349.html>).

6 May

President Ilham Aliyev meets with Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman in Prague on the sidelines of the EU Eastern Partnership meeting (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156284.html>).

Fuad Akhundov, a sector head of the Administration of the President says that "Azerbaijan considers the Eastern Partnership project as a new and important format directed at the strengthening of relations with the European Union" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156250.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says that US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton "has given her word that the US will even more seriously work on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" and notes that Clinton has reaffirmed US support for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan as a basic principle for the resolution of that dispute (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156146.html>).

The US State Department website posts Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's observation during her meeting with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov that "Azerbaijan has a very strategic location that is one that is important not only to their country, but really, regionally and globally" and that the US intends to seek ways to "expand and deepen" its interrelationships with Baku (<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/05/122702.htm>).

Bernard Fassier, the French co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, says that "the co-chairs expect progress from the Prague meeting of the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156125.html>).

A group of Greek parliamentarians visits Baku as part of the regular exchange of visits by the Greco-Azerbaijani inter-parliamentary contacts group (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156222.html>).

Matthew Bryza, US deputy assistant secretary of state and co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, says that the meetings between US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and her Azerbaijani and Armenian counterparts "laid the foundation for discussions between the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156149.html>).

5 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Mary Warlick, advisor to the US Secretary of Defense for European and NATO policy, on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of Azerbaijan-NATO cooperation and to discuss the Partnership for Peace Program (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156074.html>).

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to discuss bilateral ties, relations between Armenia and Turkey, the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, and other questions of security (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/155992.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov says after his meeting with the Turkish foreign minister that "Azerbaijan and Turkey must defend each other's national interests" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/155983.html>). He also says that the visits of the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia to Washington show that the new US administration is seeking to help the sides resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/155954.html>).

Maj. Gen. Etibar Mirzoyev, deputy minister for emergency situations, says that Azerbaijan would like NATO to conduct some of its exercises on emergency planning in Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156097.html>).

Novruz Mammadov, the head of the external affairs department of the Administration of the President of Azerbaijan, says that "the forces which were interested in complicating Azerbaijani-Turkish relations will not achieve their goal." Neither Turkey nor Azerbaijan was caught in the trap that these forces had set (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156045.html>).

Hikmet Cetin, the former foreign minister of Turkey, says that "Armenia is suffering most of all from the lack of a resolution to the Karabakh conflict." In

other comments, he says that the OSCE Minsk Group has not yet taken serious steps toward the resolution of the conflict and that the two countries directly involved will have to find a solution (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/156026.html>).

4 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives the head of the Baku office of the OSCE, Bilge Cankorel (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/155923.html>).

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov is received by new Turkish Foreign Minister Akhmed Davutoglu (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/155891.html>).

The Center for Research on the Heritage of Heydar Aliyev releases a book entitled "Azerbaijan-NATO: A Path which Begins with Cooperation" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/155879.html>).

3 May

Nasir Hamidi Zare, former Iranian ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that "it is impossible to harm relations between Baku and Teheran" and that they will continue to develop in the future as they have over the past five years (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/155769.html>).

2 May

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon releases a report stressing that the OSCE Minsk Group is committed to the principle of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/155729.html>).

Hulusi Kılıç, Turkey's ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that bilateral ties between Turkey and Azerbaijan throughout their history "have developed at the level of the intelligentsias" and will continue to do so (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/155727.html>).

Ramiz Mekhtiyev, the head of the Administration of the President of Azerbaijan, says that Azerbaijani scholars must devote more attention to developing a philosophical foundation for Azerbaijan's role as an important player among and a bridge between Europe, the CIS, and the Turkic language states (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/155741.html>).

1 May

Azerbaijan proposed a plan for defining the status of Nagorno-Karabakh to the United Nations and that plan reiterates the UNGA resolution passed last year reaffirming the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and calling on Armenia to withdraw from all Azerbaijani territory (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/155562.html>).

Eldar Sabiroglu, press spokesman for the defense ministry, says that cooperation between NATO and Azerbaijan has been successfully continuing for 15 years. "In 1994," he adds, "Azerbaijan joined NATO's Partnership for Peace program" and

since that time the country's armed forces have made "remarkable gains" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/155613.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.