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TURKEY'S AMBASSADOR GIVES FAREWELL INTERVIEW

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Well, we could mention the Cyprus issue in this regard. But we are realistic that we can only ask as much on certain issues. The Karabakh issue is of course a thorn in our hearts as well as it is in Azerbaijan's. The Minsk Group process continues without much progress and efficiency. Personally, I have my doubts about whether

the three co-chairs have the will to resolve the conflict. And that bothers me and Turkey: We are very upset that Armenia continues its occupation in violation of international law. Armenia should be aware that it can't continue to be enemies with all its neighbors. We want peace, prosperity and stability for everyone in the region, including Armenia, of course, if Armenia abides by the norms of international law. We have no objections to Armenian people – they are not our enemies; we have no animosity towards anyone living in our neighborhood. And consequently, everyone should be aware that if this occupation is over, it's going to be a very prosperous and stable region, one in which all the countries in the South Caucasus will benefit.

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

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

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

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

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

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

AIW: Based on your diplomatic experience, what would you recommend to young Azerbaijani diplomats as they prepare to promote Azerbaijan's interests abroad?

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

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

WILL MEDVEDEV CHANGE MOSCOW'S APPROACH TO BAKU?

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Few diplomats or analysts who have discussed the issue in public believe that the election of Dmitry Medvedev as Russian Federation president will lead to any immediate or dramatic shifts in his country's approach to Azerbaijan, but many have suggested that Moscow's interest in expanding economic ties with Baku over the longer term may lead the new Russian president to tilt toward Azerbaijan on other issues, including the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

In an interview published by Baku's Day.az agency February 19, Vasily Istratov, the Russian ambassador in Baku, set the tone for official comment. Arguing that Moscow's relationship with Azerbaijan has "a long-term, strategic character," he suggested that Medvedev's election would not fundamentally change the ties that Vladimir Putin had established first with Heydar Aliyev and then with current Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev.

But at the same time, Istratov noted that "for Medvedev, Azerbaijan is not some unknown place on a map" – he came to Baku in 2005 for a working visit and knows its leaders – and consequently, his familiarity with Azerbaijan will "have an impact to a remarkable degree on our relations because they will not begin from zero but rather from a much more advanced starting point."

Other Russian commentators, not constrained by their positions, were prepared to discuss the possibility of change in the relationship between Moscow and Baku after Medvedev's election. The most thoughtful of these, Aleksandr Karavayev,

an expert at Moscow State University's Information-Analytic Center for the Study of Social-Political Questions on the Post-Soviet Space, argues that both current trends and Medvedev's own interests will have a significant impact on the relationship. [1]

On the one hand, Karavayev argues, both Medvedev's earlier contacts with Aliyev and his proposals at the informal summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States suggest that the new Russian president will seek to expand both economic and political ties to Baku from his first day in office.

But on the other, the Moscow analyst suggests, the political consequences of such an expansion in economic ties, including an expanded Russian push for the resolution of the Karabakh conflict in a way acceptable to Azerbaijan, will likely have to wait until after the American presidential elections in November of this year. Until that time, he suggested, no major shifts in the policies of the players in the South Caucasus are likely to occur.

Indeed, "until the spring of 2009," Karavayev argues, "Russia will not seek to advance any counter-initiatives" on this issue, such as a repetition or expansion of Moscow's earlier proposal for joint Russian and American operation of the Gabala radar station.

But the foundations for a major push after that time will continue to be laid in the course of developing economic ties. While Russia and Azerbaijan do not have the kind of "major joint projects" that link Moscow and Central Asian countries, Karavayev points out, Moscow has an interest in promoting such projects and in ensuring that Russian trade and economic investment in Azerbaijan will continue to expand. President Medvedev will do nothing to change that.

Russia is already Azerbaijan's second largest trading partner, Karavayev notes, with the two countries expected to do up to two billion dollars in business this year, a figure that their rapidly growing economies could push to more than four billion by 2010. Moreover, there are currently 160 Russian firms operating in Azerbaijan, and 148 others in which Russian capital plays a major role. According to Karavayev, the total number of such firms will rise to 400 before the end of this year. Indeed, he notes that Russia's trade representative in Baku, Yury Shchedrin, told him that the Russian embassy "is considering [numerous] serious proposals for [additional] projects" but that "information about them is still confidential."

Moscow would like to see a unification of the electric energy grids, the expansion of the North-South transport corridor through Azerbaijan, "the return of Gazprom to Azerbaijan but as a purchaser of Azerbaijani gas," a greater role for RusAl in the Azerbaijan aluminum industry, the possible construction of an atomic energy plant in Azerbaijan, joint development of nano-technology – an issue Karavayev suggests is especially close to Medvedev's heart – and the involvement of Baku in the reconstruction and expansion of the Volga-Don canal system.

In order to set the stage for these projects, Karavayev continues, Medvedev will likely push in the next few months for the signing of a bilateral accord on property rights, something Moscow and Baku lack and that has limited investment in both directions.

Given the centrality of economic calculations and concerns in Russia's relationships with its neighbors, these economic factors will inevitably lead to a push

by Moscow for closer ties in other areas as well. Among the sectors where this push is likely to expand most rapidly in the immediate future, the Moscow researcher says, are expanded cooperation among security agencies in the struggle against terrorism and the control of borders.

In fact, Medvedev during the CIS summit proposed that its member countries, including Azerbaijan, create new arrangements to allow for rapid joint response to accidents and natural disasters. And at the same session, Medvedev called for the creation of digital libraries in CIS countries and the expansion of translation efforts, two areas where Azerbaijan has taken the lead and is more than prepared to cooperate with Moscow in the future.

In discussing Medvedev's ideas on this point, Karavayev makes the following observation which may prove especially important in Moscow's evolving relationship with Baku. Noting the "remarkable activity in this direction" of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, which is headed by the first lady of Azerbaijan, the Moscow analyst suggests that its work fits together with that of the Russian World Foundation, whose activities are supported actively by Lyudmila Putina, the wife of the outgoing Russian president. These two foundations, the Moscow analyst says, could certainly expand their cooperation under President Medvedev with conferences and other efforts that would help both countries in the future.

But Baku is especially interested in the way in which the new Russian leader is likely to proceed on two other issues: relationships with nearly three million Azerbaijani diaspora in the Russian Federation and the ultimate resolution of the Karabakh dispute.

With respect to the first, Medvedev has a clear track record, Karavayev says. He served as the sponsor of the Year of Azerbaijan in Russia and spoke at the official celebration of that event at the Bolshoy Theater. And he has had extensive "informal contacts" with the leaders of that community, something which "certainly will develop further in the future." Consequently, Medvedev may be more sensitive to and willing to act in defense of the interests of the Azerbaijanis now living and working in the Russian Federation than Vladimir Putin was.

To the extent that Medvedev does, Karavayev continues, he may be able to lessen both the number and impact of "ethnically motivated attacks" on Azerbaijanis by "fascist-like groups" against "citizens of Azerbaijan and Russian citizens of Azerbaijani nationality." At the very least, the Moscow analyst suggests, Moscow has a serious interest in "demonstrating success in the investigation and prevention of these incidents" which have a "negative" impact on the otherwise "positive trends" in the bilateral relationship.

With respect to the future of Karabakh, Medvedev will insist on the withdrawal of Armenian forces from Azerbaijani territory and on the protection of the rights of ethnic Armenians who may remain there. Indeed, Karavayev argues, "the participation of the Russian side in this process certainly will be one of the new themes of cooperation between Moscow and Baku," especially in the wake of Kosovo's declaration of independence.

In a comment to "Azerbaidzhanskiye Izvestiya," Karavayev together with another Russian analyst Aleksey Potapov, expanded on this point. [2] Arguing, as have many, that "Karabakh is not Kosovo," the Moscow analyst suggests that Moscow

under Medvedev wants to see that region remain part of Azerbaijan with some international peacekeeping body to ensure stability. Indeed, he suggests, Moscow might even accept GUAM forces (which are still in the process of organization) as part of this group, a concession that would dramatically raise the importance of that group and represent a major shift in Russia's approach.

In the near term, the Moscow analyst continued, Moscow is likely to devote particular attention to promoting efforts to de-mine regions affected by the fighting, more than 2600 square kilometers in all. After all, if nothing is done, the Azerbaijani Agency for Demining (ANAMA) has warned, removing the extraordinary number of mines could take "30 to 40 years," thus creating a serious problem even if political agreements are reached.

But the Russian analyst's comments about Moscow's view of the two immediate actors in this dispute are especially intriguing, if subject to a variety of interpretations. On the one hand, Karavayev says, "Azerbaijan's patience is not infinite," echoing a line regularly used by Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, and on the other, the fact that no progress has been made on the Karabakh issue up to now is "the fault of Armenia, which has not shown an interest in changing the situation or supporting a rapid establishment of a lasting peace in the region."

But Yerevan's position and the current stalemate "cannot continue forever," Karavayev says. "Armenia must come to terms with the necessity of returning the territories it has seized. Otherwise the potential for peaceful regulation will be completely exhausted and Azerbaijan will have not other choice besides beginning a war for the liberation of its historic territory."

Given the far greater economic benefits Moscow derives from its ties with Azerbaijan and the increasing importance of economic calculations in its foreign policy, that observation suggests that under Medvedev, Moscow may very well tilt in Baku's direction on Karabakh and actually seek to promote a final settlement, two steps that could change the geopolitics of the South Caucasus and other regions further afield in fundamental ways.

Notes

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[2] Потапов, Алексей и Александр Караваев. "20 лет в тупике", *Азербайджанские Известия*, available at: <http://www.azerizv.az/article.php?id=12569>, accessed 29 February 2008.

Kosovo's Independence and the Future of Nagorno-Karabakh

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

Recent Armenian statements suggest that Kosovo's declaration of independence and the international recognition it has received have the potential to change security dynamics in the region. The Karabakh de-facto leader Bako Sahakyanfoll stated that "If Kosovo's independence contributes to Karabakh's independence, we will only be happy." [1] Armenian Prime Minister Sarkisyan warned that Kosovo "will boost Karabakh recognition drive", a position he claimed was viewed favourably. [2] His views were echoed by Georgy Petrosyan, Nagorno-Karabakh's de-facto foreign minister, who argued that "We are confident that the recognition of Kosovo by the international community or by individual countries will strengthen our position in negotiations to resolve the conflict with Azerbaijan." [3] Armenia's foreign minister stated on February 24 that "granting independence to Kosovo, the international community violated the legal norms but forgot Karabakh. Unlike Kosovo, no one granted independence to Nagorno Karabakh." [4]

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

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

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

elsewhere, a view that senior American officials have welcomed and repeated in conversations with the Azerbaijani government. [6]

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

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

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

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

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

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

Third, and probably far more important, are the practical implications for Russia itself from such a stand. Moscow cannot afford taking any step that might create additional precedents for declarations of independence, or border redrawing, by non-Russian republics in its own North Caucasus.

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

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

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

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

Given all these reasons, it appears likely that Moscow will be satisfied by what it is packaging as a moral victory, even though Kosovo is likely to remain independent. After all, President Putin has argued that "Russia's position on [Kosovo] is now winning support among those politicians in Europe who, despite the political pressure of bloc discipline, particularly within NATO's structure, show political courage, demonstrate independence of judgment and, in the best traditions of European political culture, seek to extend the principles of democracy and justice to international affairs." [12]

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

Reference

Fawn, Rick (2008). "The Kosovo – and Montenegro – Effect", *International Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 2, March, pp. 269-94.

Notes

[1] Sahakyan, Bako. "If Kosovo's Independence Contributes to Karabakh's Independence, We Will Only Be Happy", 26 February 2008, available at: <http://www.panorama.am/en/politics/2008/02/26/lx/>, accessed 27 February 2008.

[2] Antidze, Margarita and Hasmik Mkrtchyan. "Kosovo 'will boost Karabakh recognition drive'", *Reuters*, 16 February 2008.

[3] Ohanyan, Karine. "Karabakh Ponders Kosovo's Independence", *The Moscow Times*, 18 February 2008.

[4] "Armenia not going to recognize Kosovo independence", available at: <http://www.panarmenian.net/news/eng/?nid=25057>, accessed 28 February 2008.

[5] See for example "Интервью Day.az с депутатом Милли Меджлиса, членом постоянной парламентской комиссии по вопросам обороны и безопасности Захидом Оруджом", available at: <http://www.day.az/news/politics/109663.html>, accessed 28 February 2008; "Комментарии политиков и политологов по поводу возможного отзыва азербайджанских миротворцев из Косово", available at: <http://www.day.az/news/politics/109580.html>, accessed 28 February 2008.

[6] Cited in "US Senator Sam Brownback Visits Azerbaijan", posted on the United States-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce website, at <http://www.usacc.org/content.php?id=3298&type=news>, accessed 28 February 2008.

[7] Jeremic, Vuk. "One Nation, Indivisible", *The New York Times*, 27 February 2008.

[8] Holbrooke, Richard. "Russia's Test in Kosovo", *Washington Post*, 13 March 2007.

[9] See for example Whitmore, Brian. "East: In Post-Soviet Breakaway Regions, Eyes Look Longingly To Kosovo", *RFE/RL*, 18 February 2008, available at: <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2008/02/8584e778-66f8-4238-bf36-3ce4aa65c685.html>, accessed 28 February 2008.

[10] "Abkhazia, Transdnistria and South Ossetia prepare joint recognition appeal", 27 February 2008, available at: <http://www.tiraspoltimes.com/node/1611>, accessed 28 February 2008.

[11] "Kosovo 'will boost Karabakh recognition drive'", *Reuters*, 16 February 2008.

[12] Quoted in "Russia Cashes in on its Political Support for Serbia," *RFE/RL Newslines*, Vol. 12, No. 18, Part I, 28 January 2008.

A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

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

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

The Azerbaijan Foreign Ministry and the Heydar Aliyev Foundation have released an English-language book, entitled "War Against Azerbaijan: Targeting Cultural

Heritage" describing the way in which Armenian occupation forces have sought to eradicate Azerbaijani monuments. The book, which features satellite photography as well as detailed maps, is also available online at <http://www.war-culture.az>.

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

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

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

The U.S. Embassy in Baku issues a statement saying that American recognition of Kosovo does not affect Washington's stance on the future status of Nagorno-Karabakh (<http://www.525.az/rus/2008/02/20/get=13906>).

Vasily Istratov, Russia's ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that incoming Russian President Dmitry Medvedev will continue to promote good relations between Moscow and Baku (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/108621.html>).

Kestutis Kudzamanas, Lithuania's ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that Vilnius stands ready to be an advocate for Baku in Europe (<http://www.azerizv.az/article.php?id=12705>).

Svante Cornell of the Swedish Institute of Security and Political Development says Baku should ask for more international assistance to support internally displaced persons (http://mosaz.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2330&Itemid=26).

Gordon Bardos, assistant director at Columbia's Harriman Institute, says in Moscow that the "Dayton accords" on the former Yugoslavia could serve as a model for the resolution of the Karabakh conflict (http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_02/1755/politica01.shtml).

On the 20th anniversary of the Sumgait events, Azerbaijan releases a book entitled "The Sumgait Events – an Armenian Provocation." The book, published in English, German, French and Russian, is to be distributed free to international media outlets (http://www.1news.az/articles.php?item_id=20080227020634562&sec_id=1).

Thomas De Waal, "Separation Anxiety [on the Karabakh war]," *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, 20 February 2008 (<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB120345823890778045.html>).

Leyla Shamchiyeva (Humboldt University, Berlin), "The Development of Relations Between the U.S. and Azerbaijan Since the 1990s" (<http://atc.az/index.php?newsid=170>).

Gabriel Lerner, "Azeri Jews: Centuries of coexistence in Azerbaijan," *Jewish Journal* (Los Angeles) (<http://www.jewishjournal.com/home/preview.php?id=18754>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

29 February

President Ilham Aliyev sends congratulations to Raul Castro on his election as chief of State of Cuba.

Chingiz Aitmatov, during a visit to Azerbaijan on his 80th birthday, praises President Ilham Aliyev as an intellectual. The Azerbaijani Writers Union nominates Aitmatov for the Nobel Prize.

The Azerbaijani foreign ministry issues a statement saying that Kosovo cannot be a precedent for the resolution of the Karabakh dispute.

28 February

Azerbaijan's foreign minister tells the OSCE that upcoming presidential elections in his country will be democratic.

27 February

President Ilham Aliyev receives visiting Finnish Foreign Minister Illka Kanerva in the latter's capacity as OSCE president.

The city of Sumgait marks the 20th anniversary of violence there which played a major role in triggering the war over Karabakh.

26 February

President Ilham Aliyev leads Azerbaijanis in remembering the massacre of Azerbaijanis in Hojali. Governments, diaspora organizations, and human rights groups in more than 60 countries also mark the 16th anniversary of this tragedy.

President Ilham Aliyev goes to Poland for a two-day visit.

The Azerbaijan-Japanese inter-governmental economic commission meets in Tokyo.

Baku announces that more than 1.3 million foreign tourists visited Azerbaijan last year, up 11 percent from the year before.

25 February

President Ilham Aliyev receives U.S. energy coordinator Steven Mann.

Allahshukhur Pashazade, the sheikh ul islam, arrives in Turkey for a six-day visit.

Azerbaijani parliamentarians join their counterparts from other Turkic countries to set the stage for the creation of a Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic World.

The Azerbaijan foreign ministry calls on the United Nations to support the creation of democratic system in Karabakh within Azerbaijan.

22 February

President Ilham Aliyev rejects Kosovo's declaration of independence as illegitimate and says Baku will not recognize Prishtina.

21 February

President Ilham Aliyev arrives in Moscow for an informal summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States, meets Russian President Vladimir Putin and says that there are no fundamental problems in Azerbaijani-Russian relations.

A working-level meeting of GUAM Plus Poland takes place in Warsaw.

Azerbaijani and Austrian parliamentarians meet in Vienna.

The Azerbaijani foreign minister sends a note to the OSCE, PACE, and the European Parliament on the Armenian elections and the failure of Yerevan to end its occupation of Azerbaijani territory.

Iranian police fire upon and then arrest more than 100 ethnic Azerbaijanis who were taking part in demonstrations calling for more linguistic rights on International Native Language Day. More than 70 are still in detention at the end of the month.

20 February

President Ilham Aliyev receives visiting U.S. Senator Sam Brownback.

President Ilham Aliyev receives the visiting first deputy chief of the Russian FSB.

Azerbaijan's foreign minister visits Libya.

Azerbaijan's representatives at the winter session of PACE say that the Armenian-occupied portions of Azerbaijan are becoming "a seedbed of terrorism." Meanwhile, Baku officials suggest Yerevan is permitting up to 60,000 Kurds to resettle there.

19 February

Azerbaijan's MIA Commission expresses its displeasure with the international MIA Commission's failure to do more to find Azerbaijanis missing in the Karabakh conflict.

The Azerbaijan foreign ministry says that it is exploring how it might transfer control of the Gabala radar station to the United States and Turkey.

Baku news outlets report that skinhead violence in the Russian Federation was responsible for the deaths of 50 ethnic Azerbaijanis there during the past year.

Azerbaijan joins 15 other countries in calling on the UN General Assembly to call for greater transparency and a fight against corruption in extractive industries.

18 February

President Ilham Aliyev departs for a two-day official visit to Hungary.

Azerbaijan's defense minister meets with his opposite number in Tehran.

Azerbaijani officers take part in a NATO exercise in Ankara on preventing human trafficking.

Ayatollah Khamenei tells Azerbaijanis that they are "the bastion of the revolution" in Iran on the 30th anniversary of the Tabriz protests that led to the fall of the shah.

16 February

President Ilham Aliyev orders national commemorations of events surrounding the 90th anniversary of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan's foreign minister meets with France's foreign minister, who serves as a co-chair of the Minsk Process.

Azerbaijan's culture and tourism ministry says it will file suit against foreign companies that produce goods with "historically incorrect maps" of Azerbaijan.

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.