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School of International Affairs

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SHUSHA – AN AZERBAIJANI TRAGEDY

Vagif Huseynov
Rayon Administrator for Shusha city

Wars are usually discussed in terms of the decisions of politicians and generals and the movements of armies, but the tragedies of war occur at the level of individuals and places which seldom attract as much attention. My city of Shusha, occupied in May 1992 through the combined efforts of the Armenian forces and the 366th Russian Motorized Rifle Regiment, has been full of individual human tragedies ever since. And they deserve to be remembered alongside all the other horrors of that conflict.

When Shusha was occupied on May 8th sixteen years ago, this was not the first time when our nation faced Armenian invasion in the modern period. Consequently, it was not something that was either new or unexpected, but those aspects of this event in no way lessened the horror for the local people or their willingness to fight for their city then or in the future.

When Armenians launched their first attacks in the war, at Khankendi on February 13, 1988, many Azerbaijanis fled to Shusha in the hopes of salvation. The people of Shusha did what they could and also sought help from Baku and Moscow. And we sent appeals to both capitals describing the problem and outlining what we believed needed to be done. I was directly involved in the preparation and dispatch of these messages. I wrote the appeal which was discussed by the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan about the illegal and

unconstitutional efforts of the Armenians to liquidate the autonomous status of Nagorno-Karabakh. And I prepared the telegrams on the same subject that we sent to the USSR Council of Ministers, to Mikhail Gorbachev, and to Mutallibov, as conditions in our city deteriorated even in advance of the Armenian and Russian attack.

As early as June 1989, we in Shusha hosted a session of members of the USSR Supreme Council to familiarize them with what was going on, pointing out that Armenian actions were pushing the Soviet Union toward the brink of disintegration. And in December 1989, I and others in Shusha sent a telegram of protest to the radio and television committee of the USSR concerning the way in which Armenians were using the Khankendi television station to stir up hatred and passions against Azerbaijanis.

And then on December 16, 1990, I sent on behalf of Shusha's council of elders an appeal to the leaders of Azerbaijan and the Soviet Union. Because this document says so much about the situation at that time, I reproduce it in full below:

An Appeal of the Residents of Shusha

Dear Compatriots. We again turn to you. The situation in Nagorno-Karabakh has deteriorated to the point of no return. With the support of the center and the Armenian leadership, Armenians, armed to the teeth, every day torture, kill, take hostage defenseless and innocent Azerbaijanis.


To keep our own people from rising up in response, the leadership of our republic has erected an information blockade and limited its response to the Nagorno-Karabakh problem to cosmetic measures. And they are doing so even as Armenians strengthen their positions every day and prepare for new offensive actions. The status of our army and the internal troops is a cause of serious worry. The December 15 massacre in the village of three sons of Azerbaijan – Senior Lieutenant Mikayil Jabrayilov, militia sergeant Arzu Aliyev and local resident Ahmed Javadov – and the wounding of many others shows that the time has come for stepped-up action against the invader.

The situation cries out for immediate and comprehensive measures. Please know that the cruelty of our enemies has reached unimaginable levels. At its very first session, the new parliament of the Republic must take decisive action.

Residents of Shusha and all the Azerbaijani population of Nagorno-Karabakh call on you for help. It is a matter of honor.

[54 signatures of the aksakkals of Shusha]

But despite the hopes of the people of Shusha that someone would intervene to save us from the horrors of an Armenian occupation, we soon had to deal with it. And both the events leading up to it and the occupation itself were even more horrible than we had feared. In order to crush the resistance of the population, the Armenians used all possible means. They destroyed the gas and water lines of the city, they took over the airwaves and broadcast anti-Turkish and anti-Azerbaijani programs, which besides denouncing all Azerbaijanis called on the local Armenian population to rise up and take revenge. And to intimidate us, they reported that the unification of Nagorno Karabakh to Armenia was already a *fait accompli*.

On December 12, 1991, the Armenians murdered M. Gyozalov, the head of the rayon's executive, something that spread terror through the population and made it more difficult for Shusha's Azerbaijanis to continue the struggle. After his killing, the Armenians increased the shelling of the city. The number of dead and wounded rose each day. And on December 25, after Gorbachev handed power over to Yeltsin, the Armenians in our area were given all the Soviet military equipment and ammunition that had been held in Khankendi. Two days later, Kyardzhidzhakhan, an Azerbaijani settlement near that place, was seized by the Armenians.  Many of the people there were killed. Those who survived

fled, or were brought to, Shusha. The population was terrified, not least because they were left with only one way out, through Lachin, to escape. And that 300 km long route, through Gubadly, Zangilan, Beylagan, and Agdzhabedi, was far from secure.

Then on January 23, 1992, Azerbaijan's defense minister at that time T. Mekhtiyev arrived in Shusha and launched his attempt to retain the nearby village of Dashalty, which the Armenians were using as a fortified position. When Mekhtiyev and his forces failed, spirits in Shusha fell rapidly because everyone felt that Shusha itself could not hold out many more days.

A few days later, on January 28, the Armenians shot down a plane over the village of Khyalfyali, which was carrying more than 40 women, children and the elderly. The pilot heroically guided the stricken plane down away from the populated points, but he couldn't save any of the passengers or himself and his crew. None of them remained alive. Shusha went into deep mourning. But no reaction to this tragedy came from the republic authorities.

On February 11, the Armenians occupied the village of Malybeyli near Shusha. They burned it down. I distinctly remember how the seizure of that village was reported by Moscow TV's Irina Mishina: "Today the Armenians occupied the village of Malybeyli of Shusha district; consequently, the path to Shusha is open." But still the leadership of the republic did not take any actions, a lack that intensified the fears of those of us in Shusha. Inspired by their "victory" in Malybeyli, the Armenians closed the single remaining "way out" that I mentioned above. That road was first shelled more or less constantly and then closed. And then panic began to spread.

On February 25-26, the Armenians went on a rampage in Khodzhal, which paved the way for the occupation of Shusha on May 8. And thus the city, of which the late Heydar Aliyev once said, "Azerbaijan without Shusha is not Azerbaijan," passed under the control of our enemies, where tragically it remains to this day.

Now, more than 16 long years later, the residents of Shusha live dispersed in 55 districts of Azerbaijan, eking out the miserable existence of internally dispersed persons. We do not have much, but we do have one thing: Each of us, regardless of his age or social status, lives with the hope that we will live to return to our native place. Sometimes foreign visitors ask us questions as to whether we would in fact return. Whether from ignorance or something else, those are terrible questions. Of course, we will return and we will settle up with the Armenians who took away so many of the lives of our families, so much of our time, and our native places.

To honor the dead and our country, we must do no less. The land must be returned to its real owners.

AZERBAIJANIS AND THE ALLIED VICTORY OVER FASCISM IN WORLD WAR II

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Although most of the focus on Victory Day this year as in earlier times has been elsewhere, Azerbaijan played an important role during World War II not only as an object of interest by Germany's high command but also as a source of oil and personnel for the Red Army that ultimately drove German forces out of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and defeated the Third Reich, as well as an important participant in Moscow's occupation of Azerbaijani territories in northern Iran.

When Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, Hitler hoped to seize Azerbaijan and its immense oil resources, the possession of which would then allow him to occupy Central Asia and create a German client state to be known as Greater Turkestan of which Azerbaijan itself was to be a part. That German plan, code named Edelweiss, called for the occupation of Baku by September 25, 1941, after which Azerbaijan's oil reserves were to be controlled by Germany's Continental Oil Society.

During the course of the war, Azerbaijan provided both oil and personnel for the Soviet Union. In many respects, the outcome of the war was entirely dependent on fuel supplies for the army. Over four years, Azerbaijan produced 75 million tons of oil, 75 percent of all Soviet output, and refined 85 to 90 percent of all the gasoline the Red Army used.

At the same time, more than 700,000 Azerbaijanis joined the Soviet military during the war. Of these, more than 10,000 were women. Many Azerbaijani soldiers and officers were decorated for their contribution to the defense of the Soviet Union and then the liberation of Eastern Europe. But tragically, more than half of the total – 420,000 – perished in the fighting. In addition, hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis at home made various contributions to the war effort, manning defense factories, organizing hospitals, and the like.

But Azerbaijan's contribution to the war effort was not limited to oil and manpower. The republic produced 130 different weapons systems and their components, including the Katyusha rocket and the YAK-3 fighter aircraft. And it supplied the front with 15 kilograms of gold, 952 kilograms of silver, and 125 train loads of warm clothes.

During the course of the conflict, Moscow dispatched Azerbaijani officials to various parts of the USSR to fill in for those who had left for the front. Aziz Aliyev, for example, came from Azerbaijan and helped organize Daghestan and other regions of the North Caucasus. In large part because of his work, the nations of the eastern portion of that region were not deported to Central Asia as so many others in the western part of the North Caucasus were at the end of the war.

Azerbaijan also played a key role as a republic during the war. On the one hand, when German forces approached the North Caucasus, Moscow organized a defensive region centered on Baku. Azerbaijani units made a major contribution to the liberation of the North Caucasus. And on the other, Azerbaijan was the jumping off point for the Soviet Union's occupation of Northern Azerbaijan, a step intended to deny the Germans Iranian oil and one that led both to the creation of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan and in 1946 triggered the beginning of the Cold War. [1]

Azerbaijanis also took part in the partisan and anti-fascist resistance movements throughout Europe. In the spring of 1942, for example, Hadi Giyasbayov and Mirzakhan Mammadov escaped from a Nazi camp and joined the underground. Vilayat Guseynov was among the partisans who arrested Mussolini. And Akhmadiyya Dzhabrayilov participated in the French resistance and was subsequently given that country's highest military medal.

But far and away the most famous Azerbaijani partisan was Mekhdi Guseynzade, who used the *nom de guerre* Mikhailo. He joined the Yugoslav partisans in 1942 and in the course of the fighting killed more than 1,000 German officers. In an effort to capture him, the Nazis put an enormous price on his head. In 1957, he was posthumously named a Hero of the Soviet Union.

Like other peoples who defeated fascism in World War II, Azerbaijanis every year recall that conflict and the sacrifices they and others made for victory. And more than many, Azerbaijanis know that they made an incalculable contribution to that victory, something that all of them are now and always will be extremely proud of.

Reference

Гасанлы, Джамиль (2006). *СССР-Иран. Азербайджанский кризис и начало холодной войны, 1941-1946*, Москва: Герои Отечества.

Note

[1] On this complicated issue, see what is now the definitive work on the subject by Azerbaijani historian Gasanly (2006).

THE AZERBAIJANI-TURKMEN RAPPROCHEMENT AND ITS CONSEQUENCES*

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One of the most interesting but also most unnoticed trends in the international relations of CIS governments is taking place between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. Specifically, the growing rapprochement and increasing cooperation between these two states could have significant geo-economic and thus political consequences. It will be remembered that until the death of Turkmen President Saparmurat Niyazov in late 2006 these relations were almost nonexistent due to differences over energy fields in the Caspian, more precisely over the revenues to be obtained from these prospective fields. Since Niyazov's death and the accession of his successor Gurbanguly Berdimukhammedov the drive for a rapprochement, which to be fair was first bruited about at the end of Niyazov's tenure, has accelerated.

In June 2007, both states announced accords to explore the possibility of joint exploration of what Baku calls the Kapaz field and Ashgabat calls the Serdar field in the Caspian. In March 2008, Baku agreed to pay Ashgabat a \$44.8 million debt for gas supplies delivered over a decade ago. One month later, both states launched a program of military and military technical cooperation. Berdimukhammedov has visited Baku blessing these initiatives and Ashgabat has announced its intention to supply Europe with 10 million BCM of gas. By doing so he rekindled hopes for the Nabucco pipeline planned by the EU to bypass Russia or alternatively for the US-European sponsored Trans-Caspian pipeline (TCP) that would connect Central Asian producers of energy like Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan with Azerbaijan and the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline. Azerbaijan is already a member and the prospect of Turkmen membership, and more importantly, of a real pipeline connecting them, would considerably alter the current energy situation in and around the Caspian.

If this rapprochement continues and become consolidated, particularly around energy (obviously both sides are marginal military actors) it will have significant consequences for both players. Obviously, Turkmenistan will take another huge stride towards greater energy independence from Russia and greatly enhance its ability to supply other consumers directly, eliminating the need for a middleman who can impose its price preferences upon Turkmenistan and other Central Asian producers. Thus, its enhanced freedom of action will redound as well to the other Central Asian states' comparable drive for direct access to their customers in both Europe and Asia. This would be at Russia's and to a lesser degree Iran's expense, as Moscow has sought to maintain a neo-colonial price policy on Central Asian states.

For Azerbaijan this rapprochement also offers an opportunity to bypass the sterile and unending debates over the delimitation of the Caspian since a pipeline or at least generate pressure to do so because the projected Turkmen-Azeri pipeline that might now

become a possibility could go through what is accepted by all of the littoral states except Iran as the part of the sea that is not claimed as anyone's territorial waters. This does not mean Russia will not try to frustrate this project for the reason mentioned above and to maintain its ability to pressure the other littoral states and Central Asian producers.

This rapprochement also enhances Azerbaijan's ability to play a role as a central energy player as both provider and transmitter of energy to Europe and thus increases its importance to Europe, regarding European energy security. This is a key goal of President Ilham Aliyev stated in the May 2007 energy summit in Cracow. Of course this rapprochement is also a response to Russia's 2007-08 efforts to lock up Turkmen energy supplies.

But apart from the benefits of weakening Russia's hold over Central Asian energy, enhancing its energy independence, opening up possibilities for breaking the logjam over Caspian delimitation, and strengthening Azerbaijan's position vis-a-vis European energy agendas, there is another key gain to be registered from this rapprochement, especially if it does become consolidated. In the history of the CIS Russia has consistently tried to block regional cooperation either of a bilateral or multilateral nature from which it was excluded. It naturally prefers to deal directly with individual states whereby it can maximize its leverage vis-a-vis smaller, and weaker, states. Yet this example of bilateral cooperation if it can develop and become an enduring cooperation offers both Baku and Ashgabat major opportunities for providing both an example for others and an increment in their strength vis-à-vis Moscow.

In general many experts and even some political leaders like President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan have advocated enhanced regional cooperation among CIS members. But for such cooperation to succeed and be seen as viable, it may be necessary for some group of states to show the others how it can be done and how it can succeed in gaining benefits for both or all sides. The increased possibilities for both sides here to benefit from this rapprochement and strengthen their position vis-à-vis both Russia and Europe, thereby restraining Moscow's ability to interfere with their goals, can become an example for other states to pursue more open cooperation among themselves. In turn, the success of such cooperation can open the way to new opportunities for these states to enlarge their room for maneuver both individually and collectively. For these reasons the lack of notice of the Azerbaijani-Turkmen rapprochement is undeserved. What happens here may not stay here and can have noteworthy spillover effects across the CIS.

** The views expressed in this article do not in any way represent those of the US Army, Defense Department, or the US Government.*

GEORGIA'S AZERBAIJANIS: PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES

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Ethnic Azerbaijanis in the Republic of Georgia are playing an ever more active role in the social and political life of that country, a development that is creating both problems and opportunities for the bilateral relations between Tbilisi and Baku, according to Azerbaijan's ambassador to Georgia Namig Aliyev.

In an interview with Day.Az published in Baku on May 1, Ambassador Aliyev pointed to a number of problems the ethnic Azerbaijanis now face in Georgia as they become increasingly active and organized but said that he was confident that the Georgian

authorities "recognize that Georgia's Azerbaijanis are a valuable resource" for Tbilisi's domestic development and its relations with Azerbaijan.

Among the developments affecting the Azerbaijani community in Georgia this year are the following. First and most important, many ethnic Azerbaijanis have lost control of the land they have worked for years because they do not know Georgian and thus have lost out to Georgian entrepreneurs, something that has prompted the community to organize.

Second, they have been angered by Tbilisi's policy of appointing Georgians without knowledge of Azerbaijani to head schools in Azerbaijani-majority areas, a policy that Ambassador Aliyev says has now been reversed. And many Azerbaijanis who do know Georgian remain unemployed, leading some to assume that Tbilisi wants to create a Georgia for the Georgians.

Third, Georgian officials in Azerbaijani regions have harassed Azerbaijani candidates running for office, arresting at least one and sparking worries, as mentioned, that Tbilisi wants to create a Georgia for the Georgians rather than a multi-national community in which all ethnic groups feel a common loyalty to the country.

Fourth, while Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili has provided some resources for ethnic Azerbaijanis seeking higher education, Baku's Heydar Aliyev Foundation has provided much aid, including textbooks to help Azerbaijanis learn Georgian and English and computers for Azerbaijani schools.

And fifth, Tbilisi has dragged its feet in responding to Baku's repeated requests to open a consulate in Marneuli, the center of ethnic Azerbaijani life in the Republic of Georgia, perhaps fearful that such an institution would lead more ethnic Azerbaijanis to identify not with the republic in which they live but in the one with which they share a common titular nationality.

All these problems should be solved and solved quickly, Ambassador Aliyev said, because "any multi-national state should want to have a second nation like the Azerbaijanis which always has and always will support [its] statehood," not only by opposing Armenian pretensions to portions of southern Georgia but also Russian support for Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

But however that may be, the Azerbaijanis of Georgia are not waiting either for the Georgian government to come to their aid or for Baku to intervene to solve all their problems. Since the start of this year, 12 ethnic Azerbaijani non-governmental organizations created the Congress of Azerbaijanis of Georgia (February). Activists set up a new Azerbaijani newspaper (March). They very publicly celebrated the Day of the Genocide Against Azerbaijanis (April). And they created a public movement "Georgia is My Motherland" to promote the integration of that community into Georgian life (April).

These developments and the likelihood that this community will play a larger role in the life of Georgia and Azerbaijan in the future call out for closer attention to a community than it has received in the past. Azerbaijanis have been living in the Kvemo, Kartveli, Kakhetia, and Shida Kartli regions of what is now the Republic of Georgia for centuries, but now because of the collapse of the Soviet Union, their own demographic growth, and the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline that passes through their territory, they have acquired new importance. [2]

The formation of nation states in the South Caucasus after 1991 has raised questions about the present and future status of ethnic minorities, especially in Georgia where some leaders have openly called for a Georgian-first approach. That has generated suspicions among both the titular nationality and the minority and has led many members of minorities to look abroad to places where their nationality has its own statehood. Azerbaijanis in Georgia have been less inclined to do so than the Ossetins, but they have not been immune to this process.

Second, Azerbaijanis have increased their share of the Georgian population despite the fact that their number has actually declined since 1989. In the last Soviet census, there were 307,000 ethnic Azerbaijanis in Georgia, whereas in the first Georgian census in 2002, there were 284,761. But their percentage in the population increased from 5.7 percent in the first year to 6.5 percent in the latter because even more ethnic Georgians left Georgia than did ethnic Azerbaijanis.

At least equally important in the socio-political situation of the Azerbaijanis of Georgia and particularly their relationship with the Georgian majority is the difference in birthrates among the two nationalities. At the end of the Soviet period, Azerbaijanis there had 28.6 children per thousand population, compared to the Georgians who had only 16. Not surprisingly, that difference sparked concerns among some Georgians that they would be "swamped" by the Azerbaijanis at some point in the future. 🗺️

And third, the areas of Georgia in which Azerbaijanis predominate – the eastern and southeastern sections of the republic – are now vastly more important than they were not only to Tbilisi but to Azerbaijan. That is because the pipelines carrying Caspian Basin oil and gas to the West pass through them and because the rail lines that Azerbaijan hopes will link it directly to Europe via Turkey pass through them.

Not surprisingly, that last factor is something both Tbilisi and Baku are very much aware of, with the former fearful that the traditionally supportive Azerbaijanis on its territory might eventually shift their loyalties and with the latter aware that such a shift could prompt the kind of reprisals that would threaten the strategic partnership President Ilham Aliyev has pursued with the Georgian government.

Consequently, the Azerbaijanis of Georgia are going to play an increasing role in the lives of both countries whether they or either of the states involved really want to see that happen. And that in turn sets the stage for possibly dramatic and unexpected developments, making a community few have attended to in the past a candidate for greater attention in the future.

Reference

[1] Комахия, Мамука (2008). "Формирование этнической карты Грузии и современные миграционные процессы", *Центральная Азия и Кавказ*, №1 (55), с. 179-186.

Notes

[1] See www.day.az/news/politics/116533.html.

[2] For an introduction to this community, see Komakhiya (2008).

A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

1. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

President Ilham Aliyev talks about the role of his father, Heydar Aliyev, in developing Azerbaijan and promoting ties with other countries around the world during the commemoration of what would have been the latter's 85th birthday (http://www.president.az/articles.php?item_id=20080513102803886&sec_id=11s).

President Ilham Aliyev sends a message to the participants at the International Conference "In the Name of Democracy and Stability" in which he says that Azerbaijan is achieving "a unique model of social life, national unity, and highly dynamic development" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/117184.html>).

Araz Azimov details the provisions of Azerbaijan's position on the modalities regulating the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict in an interview given to Day.az (<http://www.day.az/print/news/politics/118039.html>).

Vilayat Guliyev, Azerbaijan's ambassador in Warsaw, publishes a book entitled "The Azerbaijan Republic at the Paris Peace Conference (May 1919 – April 1920)". It appears in Azerbaijani, English and French (<http://www.day.az/news/society/116745.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

King Hussein of Jordan says in an interview in advance of his visit to Baku that he and President Ilham Aliyev share common views on the most important issues of the day (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/116879.html>).

US President George W. Bush says that Azerbaijan is one of the five worst countries in the world in terms of the number of journalists the governments has arrested for engaging in journalism (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/116778.html>).

Former US President George H.W. Bush says that Heydar Aliyev laid the foundations for Azerbaijan's economic success (<http://www.day.az/news/society/117500.html>).

US Ambassador Ann Derse says that on issues like democracy and human rights, there is no room for double standards, disagrees with Baku that there are no problems with media freedom in Azerbaijan, and announces that the US is committing \$3 million to promote honest elections in Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/116587.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

15 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Israel's agricultural minister Shalom Simkhon.

14 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives UNESCO General Director Koishiro Matsuura.

President Ilham Aliyev receives incoming Ukrainian Ambassador Boris Klimchuk.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Grigoriy Karasin, Russia's deputy foreign minister. The latter says Moscow and Baku have reached agreement on transit of materials for Iranian nuclear power station, but an Azerbaijani foreign ministry spokesman says Azerbaijan will continue to check all goods crossing its territory.

German-Azerbaijan business forum holds meeting in Baku.

The US House of Representatives takes up a resolution urging the Bush Administration to expand ties with Azerbaijan, Turkey and other countries in the East-West corridor (<http://www.rus.azadinform.az/index.php?dn=news&to=art&id=4120>).

13 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives outgoing Cuban Ambassador to Azerbaijan Jorge Marti Martinez.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Boris Gryzlov, the speaker of the Russian State Duma.

12 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Pasquale Couchpen, the president of the Swiss Confederation.

President Ilham Aliyev receives Indonesian foreign minister Noer Hasan Viraudu.

Azerbaijan marks the 14th anniversary of the ceasefire with Armenia.

Azerbaijan and Austria sign an accord on expanding economic cooperation and exchange.

11 May

Azerbaijan acquires a building for its consulate general in Istanbul. Up to now, the consulate had been operating in rented facilities.

10 May

Azerbaijan marks the 85th birthday of former President Heydar Aliyev. President Ilham Aliyev visits his father's grave and opens a variety of projects in his honor.

9 May

President Ilham Aliyev marks Victory Day by visiting the memorial to Azi Aslanov, who was twice awarded the order of Hero of the Soviet Union.

8 May

President Ilham Aliyev invites incoming Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to visit Baku and sends a message to outgoing Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Azerbaijanis mark the 16th anniversary of the occupation of Shusha by Armenian forces (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/117322.html>). The Ecology Ministry notes that by its actions in the period since that time Armenia has despoiled the natural resources around that city (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/117358.html>).

7 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Jim Murphy, the British foreign ministry official responsible for Europe.

Ramiz Mekhtiyev, the head of the Administration of the President of Azerbaijan, says that "American-Azerbaijani relations are at a high level," thus ending the exchange of criticism over freedom of the press, election assistance and other issues.

6 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives King Abdullah of Jordan; the two issue a joint declaration reaffirming their common views.

Azerbaijani foreign minister Elmar Mammadyarov meets with his Armenian counterpart and the co-chairs of the Minsk Group in Paris.

5 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Maj. Gen. Hasym Rezai, the chief of the border guards of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Lt. Gen. Zakir Gasanov, commander of Azerbaijan's internal troops, begins a five-day official visit to Turkey.

4 May

Russia announces that it will no longer send nuclear power station equipment for Iran through Azerbaijan.

3 May

Ramiz Mekhtiyev, the head of the Administration of the President of Azerbaijan, rejects President Bush's criticism of the state of media freedom in Azerbaijan and says that Washington's commitment of \$3 million to promote open elections constitutes interference in Azerbaijan's internal affairs. He characterizes the statements of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as "unserious."

2 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Jean-Paul Costa, the chief justice of the European Court of Human Rights.

US President George W. Bush says that Azerbaijan is one of the five worst countries in the world in terms of the number of journalists the governments has arrested for engaging in journalism.

US Department of State praises Azerbaijan for its contribution to the anti-terrorist coalition.

1 May

President Ilham Aliyev receives Gen. Aydagon Babaoglu, the commander of the Turkish Air Force.

Azerbaijan allows the Russian train containing nuclear power station equipment to pass into Iran.

Azerbaijani Ambassador to Georgia Namig Aliyev says that Tbilisi recognizes that the Georgian Azerbaijanis are "the wealth of the country."

Saudi Arabia establishes a quota of 6,000 for Azerbaijan for this year's haj.

A parliamentary delegation from Bavaria arrives in Baku.

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.