



Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy

School of International Affairs

AZERBAIJAN IN THE WORLD ADA Biweekly Newsletter

Vol. 1, No. 20
November 15, 2008

adabiweekly@ada.edu.az

In this issue:

- Azerbaijani Students Abroad: Preparing a National Leadership For the Next Generation
- Turgut Mustafayev, "Integrating Azerbaijan's Higher Educational System Into European Higher Education Area: Accomplishments, Challenges and Future Prospects"
- Rastislav Havaj, "Reforming Higher Education in Azerbaijan: Foreign Models and Domestic Imperatives"
- Paul Goble, "Military Planning In CIS Countries After Georgia: The Challenges Of Change"
- A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy
- Note to Readers

AZERBAIJANI STUDENTS ABROAD: PREPARING A NATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

As part of its effort to train a new generation of leaders, the Azerbaijani government supports many young Azerbaijanis who want to study abroad. Azerbaijan in the World talked to four students about their experiences abroad. Portions of some of their answers to seven questions as given below provide a portrait of this remarkable group of people.

Azerbaijan in the World: Describe some significant differences between the life of a student in Azerbaijan and one in the country where you studied.

Anar Rahimov [MA in Theory and Practice of Human Rights, University of Essex, UK]: While the life of a truly committed student in Azerbaijan is rather boring and too

academic, studying abroad means a combination of theory and practice, science and worldview, discovering a new culture and opening up your own country to others. These are the challenges and opportunities one does not face when studying in his/her home country.

Narmin Hashimova [Certificate of Proficiency in Chinese, Beijing Language and Culture University, China]: Students in China both work in libraries more often than do students in Azerbaijan, and they engage in more university-based extra-curricular activities, including sports.

Tabib Huseynov [MA in International Relations and European Studies, Central European University, Hungary]: Life in foreign universities is often more dynamic and fast-paced than that in Azerbaijani schools. There is a greater cultural diversity of students, and all are encouraged to a richer study environment. The faculty is highly trained, there is no corruption, and students are encouraged to, and learn to, be more independent and self-reliant.

Ruslan Mustafayev [MA in Business Administration and Finance, Hokkaido State University, Japan]: Students in Japan are committed to studying far more than many students in Azerbaijani universities. I may not be able to say much about public life of a student in Azerbaijan, but in Japan, students feel compelled to become a member of one or several of university clubs which helps them socialize with their peers and gain self-confidence.

AIW: Which elements of the teaching and learning process in the country where you studied do you think could bring positive changes to the educational system of Azerbaijan?

Rahimov: Teachers in foreign universities are committed to dialogue with students and encourage people to think for themselves rather than simply giving back whatever the professors have said. European universities practice free attendance which should be applied in our schools as well. Their teaching methodology is also very diverse involving, in addition to standard lectures, power point presentations, movies, and simulations; something that makes a learning process more dynamic and effective.

Hashimova: My language classes were shorter which ensured that students kept concentrated over the course of the entire class. More technology was used in teaching, and professors seemed more committed to teaching rather than seeing it as a burden keeping them from their own research.

Huseynov: Students in foreign universities are encouraged or even required to take a broader range of courses. Students are taught to think, rather than memorize. They are also taught that learning how to ask the right questions is just as important if not more so than having the answers. Students have a certain level of flexibility in choosing the courses they wish to cover over the period of their study. And professors provide extensive feedback throughout the courses.

Mustafayev: Japan's highly disciplined universities are certainly not perfect, but they have much to teach Azerbaijani institutions. They promote attention to the individual, discussions and debate.

AIW: What are your mid- and longer-term goals, and how does your study abroad contribute (or has already contributed) to attaining these goals?

Rahimov: My training in the UK gave me the perfect foundation for working in Europa House and the European Community delegation to Azerbaijan.

Hashimova: Having gained a good grounding in Chinese, I want to develop that skill further and thus be in a position to provide analysis for my country.

Huseynov: My goal is to excel in my work of policy analyst. I would not be able to develop the skills necessary to achieve this goal without foreign study.

Mustafayev: My main goal is to succeed in what I am doing, continuously working on improving myself. Education abroad is the beginning not the end of the process. And I look forward to working and learning more as I assume various positions.

AIW: How do you evaluate the compatibility of Azerbaijani values with the ones of the culture you lived in when studying abroad?

Rahimov: As a human rights specialist, I believe there are no distinctly national values but rather common human ones. Nonetheless, there are variations: Hospitality is not nearly as highly valued in the UK as it is in Azerbaijan. But politeness is far more spread there than here.

Hashimova: Azerbaijani values are very different from Chinese values overall, but those of elderly people are close to ours.

Huseynov: Azerbaijani values are fundamentally compatible with the values of a civilized world and vice versa. Most of the values are universal, applying throughout the world to all humans, and include first and foremost respect for human dignity and freedom. On a separate but closely related matter, studying abroad makes students more patriotic and attached to their country, its history and culture. Through the exposure to a wide diversity of cultural influences, students learn to respect others' viewpoints and culture while developing a more acute sense of belonging to their own culture.

Mustafayev: Japanese and Azerbaijani cultures are indeed very close. Notions of family and friends, for example, carry a similar meaning for the Japanese as they do in Azerbaijan.

AIW: Briefly describe things that impressed / surprised you most in the country where you studied.

Rahimov: The British are unbelievably committed to the queue. If there are two people anywhere, they will form a line. Moreover, you seldom see any police. But the downside is that it is hard to find shops open on weekends; bus services also become rare, and to get a proper medical service may become problematic on those days.

Hashimova: The rector of my university came to work on a bike, an affirmation that he did not see himself as superior to others. At the same time, the Chinese respect foreign visitors enormously and do everything they can to please.

Huseynov: Faculty members were in almost every case outstanding, and university facilities were great, from libraries to student lounges. Only having studied abroad can one realize how much we lose in terms of the quality of education in Azerbaijan.

Mustafayev: Japanese universities are very concerned about promoting values and not just knowledge.

AIW: Were you involved in Azerbaijani diaspora activities in the country where you studied? If yes, what was the nature of your involvement?

Rahimov: Few Azerbaijanis took part in such activities, often because no one provided them with the information they would need to do so. In recent years, thanks to the formation of the AUKAA (Azerbaijan-UK Alumni Association) with support of the British Embassy, British Council and BP, that situation is improving as regards to the Azerbaijani students in UK.

Hashimova: While there are few Azerbaijanis in China, I did many things on my own, providing an Azerbaijani dimension to many student functions. I have also attended events organized by our embassy there, as well as those arranged by the Shusha Cultural Center in Beijing.

Huseynov: During my stay in Hungary, I published a number of articles on Azerbaijan, participated at various conferences focusing on Azerbaijan and/or the Caucasus.

Mustafayev: There were only two Azerbaijanis in Sapporo, but we were quite active, frequently giving talks about Azerbaijan and its neighbors to schools and public organizations.

AIW: What were the general impressions and opinions of Azerbaijan among your peers in the country where you studied?

Rahimov: Most students and faculty knew a great deal about Azerbaijan, but some exchange students from other parts of the world did not. I did what I could to "enlighten" them.

Hashimova: Few people knew about Azerbaijan unless they had contacts with the oil sector.

Huseynov: Most Hungarians with whom I spoke did not know much about Azerbaijan. Those who knew associated Azerbaijan with Russia or oil.

Mustafayev: Many Japanese knew about Azerbaijan, about its Soviet legacy and its oil wealth.

**INTEGRATING AZERBAIJAN'S HIGHER EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM INTO
EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA:
ACCOMPLISHMENTS, CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS**

Turgut Mustafayev*
Education Consultant
World Bank

The European Union has launched a process to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. This is to be achieved through international cooperation and academic exchange in the context of the so-called Bologna Declaration. The EHEA entails, among other key changes, the establishment of a three-level degree system - bachelor, master and doctorate, the introduction of standard quality assurance mechanisms, and the definition of a common system of qualifications and academic credits. The Bologna Declaration was signed by the ministers of education from 29 European countries in that Italian city in June 1999. Currently, 46 countries are signatories to the EHEA, Montenegro being the last state to join the process in May 2007 in London.

Azerbaijan committed itself to the goals of this process in May 2005 in Bergen, Norway, and is now hard at work bringing its higher educational institutions into line with Bologna requirements. After Azerbaijan signed on to the Bologna process, the country's education ministry developed a comprehensive action plan, calling for the modernizing of the higher education system, a transfer to the credit system, the elaboration of new diploma supplements in compliance with the UNESCO recommendations, and the recognition of international documents on higher education in Azerbaijan. Under the action plan, a number of working groups composed of vice-rectors, deans and other qualified teaching staff have been set up in the pilot institutions where various components of the Bologna process such as transition to the credit system are carried out. The Ministry of Education has also helped organize various awareness training programs and national seminars to ensure that the Bologna principles are adopted and adapted to local conditions.

At the present time, there are 49 higher education institutions in Azerbaijan, 34 of which are public and 15 private. Twenty-one of the public universities have adopted the new credit system, while several of the private ones such as Khazar and Qafqaz universities have also followed suit. The Ministry aims at a complete transfer to the credit system by all universities over the next two years. And Bologna's call for international cooperation has already had a major impact in Azerbaijan. The State Oil Academy now has a joint MBA program with Georgia State University and is involved in an international collaboration project with Germany's University of Siegen. Azerbaijan Technical University is cooperating with Cologne Technical University on a joint program. And several other institutions, among which are Azerbaijan University of Architecture and Construction, Azerbaijan University of Languages, Azerbaijan State Economic University, Baku State University, have joint programs with tertiary institutions in France, Italy, Russia, Turkey, and other countries. All this is promoting the exchange of students internationally, again a major goal of the Bologna process.

Student mobility is one of the priority areas of higher education policy in Azerbaijan. At present, around one thousand students supported through various joint programs with foreign governments study abroad. Most of them study in Turkey and Russia. In addition, nearly 2,000 students study in different countries on the basis of scholarships or independently. The President approved a State Program on Study Abroad in April of 2007, which envisages sending some 5,000 students to foreign universities by 2015. The government has recently approved the list of foreign universities that candidate students can apply for, and the priority areas that will be given preference to during the selection process. Under the study abroad program, 80 students received scholarships last year, and the Ministry plans to send around 200 scholars this year.

In 2007, the Bologna Follow-up Group prepared a report for the London Ministerial meeting about the progress made by signatory countries. It noted that Azerbaijan has made progress in many areas but has not yet begun work on developing a national qualifications framework even though the bodies awarding bachelor and masters degree programs are operating. The report added that Azerbaijan has not yet involved international experts and organizations to the extent that the Bologna process requires. According to the report, Azerbaijan needs to increase its efforts to modernize the tertiary educational system; give additional financial support to improve learning and teaching and renovate the existing curricula; develop democratic principles in institutional management while ensuring quality control; expand the introduction of the new credit system; upgrade the recognition of degrees awarded outside Azerbaijan; and increase staff and student mobility.

To meet these challenges, President Ilham Aliyev signed in early 2008 a decree directing the education ministry to come up with a four-year state program to reform higher education. That program is set to promote the creation of an economically and socially effective higher education system as well as to integrate the country to the global education system. As drafted by the Ministry, this program details more than 100 different activities which fall under the following eight rubrics: upgrading standards and the legal framework of higher education; upgrading teaching; modernizing the structure and the management of higher education institutions; promoting quality assurance; developing staff; fostering scientific research in higher education institutions; creating the infrastructure and technical foundation of higher education; and instituting new funding mechanisms.

Azerbaijan has therefore made a major commitment to integrating its higher educational institutions into the international community, but if it is to be successful, it must make an even greater effort over the next few years. It must both significantly increase the size of the student population and dramatically modify the shape of the tertiary education system. And it must do so with a viable financial plan that will support not only the expansion but also the diversification of higher education.

In addition, Azerbaijan needs to adopt a new strategy to improve the quality and relevance of its education programs. One way to do that is to introduce a nation-wide system of quality assurance by means of an independent national agency for accreditation and quality assurance. Unfortunately, Azerbaijan is one of the very few EHEA signatories which have not developed a National Qualifications Framework yet.

Azerbaijan has increased the funds available to higher education in recent years, but it needs to develop more effective resource allocation mechanisms for distributing public funds. One option is the development of an output-based funding formula while continuing to increase funds for public higher education to ease student access and to promote research and teaching.

At the same time, Azerbaijan needs to increase the autonomy of universities by means of the creation of a buffer institution between the state and tertiary educational institutions. Among other policies that the government might consider adopting in order to improve governance and management are the setting up of Governing Boards with strong external representation in all higher education institutions; the granting of the right to all universities to fix their pay levels and working conditions and manage their own budgets; and the rationalization of higher education through improving quality assurance.

All these are enormous tasks, but Azerbaijan has achieved a lot so far and has the incentive of confidently looking into a future of full integration and convergence with the European higher education community.

References

Azerbaijan National Country Report (2007), submitted for the London Conference, May.

Bologna Process Stocktaking (2007). Report from a working group appointed by the Bologna Follow-up Group, London.

The official Bologna Process website, <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/>

World Bank (2008). *A Strategic Vision for the Future of Tertiary Education in Azerbaijan*, WB Education team, February.

** The views expressed in this article reflect the personal views of the author and in no way represent the views or policies of the World Bank.*

REFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION IN AZERBAIJAN: FOREIGN MODELS AND DOMESTIC IMPERATIVES

Rastislav Havaj
Tufts University

After recovering its independence in 1991, Azerbaijan faced many challenges but none more important to its future and to the future of its citizens than the reform of its higher educational institutions. Reforming a higher education system is enormously difficult, invariably expensive and political. Azerbaijan brings to the task both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, the rapid growth of the

country's economy and Azerbaijan's historical cosmopolitanism give it the resources and the willingness to explore new approaches. But on the other, the continuing impact of Soviet-era traditions of low pay for staff, the rigidity of rote learning, and widespread corruption mean that any reform must confront all these problems or face almost certain defeat.

It is not always a good idea to adopt or imitate educational initiatives from other countries, for they do not necessarily justify an objective for change. Each society is unique and therefore common approach may not satisfy the purpose of reform. Nevertheless, there are at least three existing models of educational systems currently widely used in many other countries that Azerbaijan could selectively draw upon in its efforts to reform the country's shattered education system. First is the Anglo-Saxon model which stresses academic flexibility, broad choice of teaching tasks and most of all the autonomy of administration. Besides, this model has a highest contribution to the quality and quantity of research output. The Continental model, which is largely used across Europe, shares much in common with the first but is more bureaucratic in that it promotes faculty largely on the basis of seniority rather than academic productivity, which may not be always beneficial for it reduces motivation for academic performance and creates relatively stagnating results. The third model, Scandinavian, is in many ways similar to the previous two models except that it is based on temporary faculty appointments and concentrated cooperation between public and private institutions. None of these systems can alone satisfy Azerbaijan's needs in the education field, but each of them has some elements that Azerbaijan could cautiously pick up to design its own – unique – system.

One of the most critical areas in the country where much reform is needed is the funding process. Even with the resources available, Azerbaijan faces a difficult task in transforming the funding process to ensure that universities are better staffed, that faculty are more productive and less corrupt, and that higher education will produce not only well-trained graduates but useful research. At present, the government has near total control over the way in which money is allocated and has shown little willingness to invest in the private sector. A far better distribution system would exist if Azerbaijan drew on the Scandinavian model where both public and private institutions greatly benefit from a proportioned allocation of public funds. It is also important to engage business and non-profit sector, which can provide significant contribution toward academic research. Reasonable and most of all transparent distribution of public resources should be the focus of Azerbaijan's educational reform.

Central planning is in almost every case detrimental to academic growth, the autonomy of educational institutions, the improvement of curricula, selection of faculty, and the mobility of both faculty members and students. And because each of these must be changed if Azerbaijan is to have a modern and internationally respected educational system, it is useful to start with the funding question but only if both the ministry and university administrators understand that this is a first step toward changing all the other parts of this equation. Here Azerbaijan could benefit from the Anglo-Saxon and Continental models where there is a firewall between the state and universities.

Universities should be self-governing, with elected rectors and with faculties choosing not only their own members but governing bodies within their institutions. In moving in that direction, Azerbaijan should avoid being as bureaucratic as the

continental system is and use the Anglo-Saxon model in which selection, retention and promotion are based on productivity and teaching rather than simple longevity.

If the government respects academic autonomy, it should also see the benefits that the country receives if the authorities provide universities with sufficient funds to keep tuition costs low, something that will not only allow more Azerbaijanis to take advantage of higher education but will attract more foreign students to Azerbaijan as well. Thus, Azerbaijan will want to follow more closely the Scandinavian and Continental models where costs for students are kept low, rather than the Anglo-Saxon one in which tuition costs are often prohibitive.

Attracting more foreign students must be part of a more general effort to integrate Azerbaijan's higher educational institutions into the world. Some foreign institutions are already involved in partnerships with those in Azerbaijan, but these networks must be dramatically expanded if Azerbaijan is truly going to become an important regional node of the international educational network. And Azerbaijan should enter this process with enthusiasm, unafraid because of its own enormous economic resources that doing so could cause a serious brain drain abroad.

Doing all this will be hard given that Azerbaijan must overcome the habits of highly bureaucratic central planning. But five steps are clear if Azerbaijan wants to improve the state of higher education, something that in today's world is a precondition for social, political and economic development:

First of all, Azerbaijan must commit itself to shifting decision making in this sphere from the government to the universities as all three foreign models do.

Second, it should ensure that resources in this area are spread proportionally and transparently among all higher schools, public and private as the Scandinavian model does.

Third, it must take steps to select and promote on the basis of achievement as the Anglo-Saxon model requires.

Fourth, it must democratize the internal workings of the universities as all three foreign models do.

And fifth, it must ensure the closest possible cooperation between the government and the universities as the Continental model specifies.

Making progress on each and every one of these will not be easy, especially as they all must be done together. But the stakes are high: If Azerbaijan does not make this transition, it will fall behind the rest of the world. If it does make it, then it will have the kind of brighter future that only greater integration with the rest of the advanced industrial world will make possible.

MILITARY PLANNING IN CIS COUNTRIES AFTER GEORGIA: THE CHALLENGES OF CHANGE

Paul Goble
Director of Research and Publications
Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy

Russia's use of armed force in Georgia has created a new situation for national security planners in the post-Soviet states and adjoining countries. Prior to Moscow's actions in August-September 2008, most governments in this region designed their militaries to serve as a symbol and integrator of statehood, to respond to internal challenges to their rule, or to be in a position to take part in peacekeeping operations for one or another international organization.

Those tasks continue to be important, and no government in this region is going to ignore them as it considers what kind of forces and weapons systems it needs in the future. But the Russian action in Georgia has broken a taboo on the use of force across an internationally recognized state border without authorization by the United Nations or other world body, and national security planners now must take that into account.

So far, no government has laid out its plans to redesign its country's military in response, but there have been hints about the direction some of them are thinking in. And because some of these new directions may soon prove destabilizing, it is worth considering five of the areas in which these governments may be thinking about making changes and the consequences these factors separately and together could have for relations between and among this region's states.

Staffing. Most governments in the region for reasons of cost have elected to have relatively small militaries, but now at least some of them may elect to have larger units either by increasing drafts so as to have more adult males in the population who have military experience and could be mobilized in the event of a conflict or by paying for more professionals so as to have a highly skilled, quick reaction force.

In making these decisions, the governments involved are going to have to take into consideration not only the costs involved, both direct (paying for a larger military) and indirect (not having these people in the economy), but also the likely response of neighbors. If any state increases the size and readiness of its forces, its neighbors are certain to view that as an unfriendly or at least potentially threatening act and respond, setting in train a military build up on both sides.

There is also the issue of using irregular forces either from within one's own country or from allies in another. Russian forces made use of South Ossetian irregulars, but these forces rapidly passed out of Moscow's control and engaged in actions that many have characterized as genocide. Any security planner thinking about using such groups thus must assess the risk that these militants will prove more trouble than they are worth.

Force Structure. The Russian-Georgian war had many lessons but one of the most significant that many post-Soviet states have already drawn is that unless you possess overwhelming numerical superiority, you should form small, highly mobile units, rather than rely on conventional Soviet or NATO operational arrangements. That would represent a very different force structure than many of the post-Soviet states have and could have domestic consequences as well: such units require that decision-making authority be passed down much further than when militaries are organized in a more conventional way.

That raises issues of command and control. On the one hand, if the civilian government is confident in the loyalty of its population and officer corps, it will get more force for less investment if it makes this shift. But on the other, if the regime is not confident of that, then it risks creating a structure to defend against a foreign threat that could become a threat to its own existence at some point in the future.

Basing. Most of the governments in the post-Soviet space still put most of their forces in bases built during Soviet times. But if they are threatened by their neighbors or if they want to threaten their neighbors, they will clearly want to base them in a different way, placing units in areas where an invasion might be most likely to take place or where they could launch their own strikes into other states.

Again, this leaves all the countries in the region in a security trap where actions by one side will generate actions by others that may leave the first group in a less secure position than they were earlier.

But there is a bigger issue involved as well. Few of the countries in the region have pre-positioned equipment in anticipation of conflicts, but that is likely to be an increasingly important part of national security calculations. Given how easy it is for airpower to prevent the deployment of equipment and personnel from existing bases to where they would be needed, moving equipment into arms dumps that could be used in the event of a crisis is likely to be an option that more and more of these states will consider.

As strategically and tactically useful such moves could be, however, they too have domestic consequences that some of the countries in the region will be sensitive to. Putting guns and ammunition in particular regions could encourage regional elites to try to seize them should they want to challenge the central government. Consequently, tracking the way in which these countries make these decisions will say a great deal about the mental national security maps of elites not only internationally but domestically as well.

Weaponry. Weapons are expensive, and it is thus critical that governments make the right decision as to which ones they will acquire. Another lesson of the Georgian war is that three types of weaponry are far more important than many had thought. First of all, helicopters play a greater role against a larger opponent than many had predicted. Second, both GPS and FOF systems can ensure that one's own units do not attack each other. That happened with the Russian military which lacked these identification systems; it did not with the Georgians who had them. And third, there is a compelling need to ensure the interoperability of weapons and ammunition. At present, many post-Soviet militaries have a mix of weapons which do not all use the same ammunition, something that undercuts their utility in time of a conflict and creates a logistical nightmare.

But perhaps the most important lessons of the Georgian conflict are what countries do not need, however much many political leaders assume otherwise. Tanks are an expensive but poor investment as they can be easily disabled but vastly less expensive anti-tank weapons. APCs need to be well-defended lest they become as they were for Russian officers and men death-traps in which they subsequently refused to ride. And grenades and mines, however unglamorous they may be, really do work against a stronger opponent.

Finally, there is the issue of illegal weapons. Both Russian and Georgian forces used cluster bombs. These can be effective but they are banned by the international community. Countries who choose to use them are taking a great risk of a propaganda disaster, something both Moscow and Tbilisi have undergone since the conflict ended. But the most compelling reason not to use them is that they are first and foremost anti-personnel weapons and inflict vicious wounds on the civilian population.

Intelligence. Given resource problems, all the countries in the region seem certain to step up their intelligence efforts. The Russian side is vastly ahead in this regard at least at the level of political penetration of other states, but Moscow is behind some of the countries in the region in terms of tactical intelligence. One of the reasons that Russian forces lost three jets was that the 58th army did not have pilotless drones to conduct intelligence photography deep behind enemy lines. The Georgians did and thus did not suffer as much from the lack of air power that many outside commentators had expected. Now Russia has announced that it will purchase drones, and other countries are likely to follow suit.

Such “national technical means” of gathering intelligence, however, are not without risks. The shooting down of drones can become a *casus belli*. At the very least, such events raise the temperature between the states involved. And such shootdowns are increasingly likely given that military commanders will want the information such drones can provide and will suggest to their civilian superiors that the risks are low. That is probably true as far as it goes, but if large numbers of countries have drones and if they feel compelled to use them, then there will be more shootdowns and that will create new tensions.

Obviously, these five factors are not independent of one another. Governments will choose a mix, but the key fact is that this mix will now be different than it was prior to the Georgian-Russian conflict. And anyone, analyst or government official or military officer, concerned about national security in the region needs to pay attention as small shifts in one of these areas may lead to tectonic shifts in a very short time.

A CHRONOLOGY OF AZERBAIJAN’S FOREIGN POLICY

I. Key Government Statements on Azerbaijan’s Foreign Policy

President Ilham Aliyev says after meeting with Turkish President Abdulla Gul in Ankara that the agreement he signed with the Russian and Armenian presidents in Moscow “opened a new path for the step by step resolution of the [Karabakh]

conflict... within the framework of international norms." He adds that in the Caucasus region "a new geopolitical situation has emerged. The serious involvement of Turkey, the increasingly active stance of Russia, the positive efforts of the US and Europe are creating conditions for the resolution of conflicts in the region, including the Armenian-Azerbaijan one" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135620.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev sends a congratulatory message to Barak Obama following his election as president. Aliyev says that Azerbaijanis "attach particular importance to relations between the United States and Azerbaijan" and look forward to "close cooperation in many areas" including energy security and the resolution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135722.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev tells the Turkish parliament that it is entirely natural that he should make his first foreign visit after re-election to Turkey, a fraternal country and one with which Azerbaijan enjoys model relations in all spheres of economic, political and international life (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135891.html>).

Azerbaijan Foreign Ministry spokesman Khazar Ibrahim says that Azerbaijan recognizes the right of national self-determination, but it must be realized, as the Helsinki Final Act specifies, "only in the framework of the observation of the principle of the territorial integrity" of states (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135389.html>).

II. Key Statements by Others about Azerbaijan

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev says following the signing of the declaration by himself and the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan that "the Caucasus crisis again showed that the application of force by one of the sides of a conflict cannot guarantee a lasting solution." And consequently, he continues, Moscow will seek to promote the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within the framework of the norms of international law (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135714.html>).

Chian Hanchou, China's ambassador to Azerbaijan, says that Beijing supports the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute only on the basis of the principle of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135271.html>).

Matthew Bryza, US deputy assistant secretary of state and co-chair of the Minsk Group, says that the chances for a resolution of the Karabakh dispute improved following the Georgian crisis because Moscow fulfilled nearly all of its commitments under the terms of the Sarkozy-Medvedev agreement and because many nations are working to prevent any other outbreak of violence. He says he "even hopes" that the conflict can be resolved in the course of the next year (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136800.html>).

Sergey Markov, a prominent Moscow analyst who works as an advisor to the Kremlin, says that the polar opposite views of Baku and Yerevan mean that "there will never be a final resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. All forms of a resolution [of that dispute] will be provisional only" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135724.html>).

Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus says that "the number of letters in the word GUAM should be increased" in order to promote the goals of that organization over a broader region (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136642.html>).

Aleksandr Dugin, the influential leader of the Eurasianist movement in Moscow, says that "it is now important for Russia to improve relations with Azerbaijan, all the more so because [President Ilham] Aliyev conducted himself very correctly during the conflict in South Ossetia (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135165.html>).

III. A Chronology of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy

15 November

Leaders from Turkey, Georgia, Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Estonia, Bulgaria and Hungary meet in Baku with Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev to discuss the diversification of energy routes between the Caspian basin and the outside world.

14 November

President Ilham Aliyev receives Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136751.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev confirms the declaration on friendship and strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation after its approval by the parliament (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136787.html>).

The Azerbaijan parliament approves the withdrawal of Azerbaijan peacekeepers from Iraq (http://www.istockanalyst.com/article/viewiStockNews+articleid_2801765.html).

Azerbaijan Prime Minister Arthur Rasi-zade visits Chisinau to attend the meeting of the Council of heads of government of the CIS countries (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136702.html>).

Romanian Foreign Minister Lazar Comanescu tells his Azerbaijani counterpart Elmar Mammadyarov that the Karabakh dispute must be resolved on the basis of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136821.html>).

Azerbaijan Defense Minister Safar Abiyev meets with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko to discuss defense cooperation between the two countries (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136766.html>).

13 November

Matthew Bryza, U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state and co-chair of the Minsk Group, says that "the status of Nagorno-Karabakh cannot be defined unilaterally and in this question the position of both sides must be considered." He adds that "the resolution of the conflict should begin with the guaranteeing of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, and only after this can other questions be discussed" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136572.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus, Turkish President Abdulla Gul, and Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136682.html>, <http://www.day.az/news/politics/136680.html>, and <http://www.day.az/news/politics/136675.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives the co-chairs of the Minsk Group (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136608.html>).

12 November

The Azerbaijani parliament ratifies all the accords signed earlier between President Ilham Aliyev and his Turkmenistan counterpart (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136530.html>).

11 November

President Ilham Aliyev receives visiting US Senator Bob Corker (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136373.html>).

10 November

President Ilham Aliyev asks the parliament to approve the withdrawal of Azerbaijani peacekeepers from Iraq (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136176.html>).

President Ilham Aliyev receives Estonian parliament vice speaker Kristina Ooland (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136208.html>).

The Israeli foreign minister says the question of why there is no Azerbaijani embassy in Israel should be addressed to the Azerbaijani government (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/136167.html>).

7 November

President Aliyev addresses the Turkish parliament during his first foreign visit after being re-elected as President of Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135891.html>).

A European Union delegation comes to Baku to underscore that organization's interest in the completion of the Nabucco gas pipeline project (http://www.echo-az.info/archive/2008_11/1928/politica05.shtml).

Turkish President Abdulla Gul proposes holding a summit with the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135932.html>).

The US State Department says it awaits an explanation for Baku's decision to take VOA and RFE/RL off the air in Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135994.html>).

5 November

President Ilham Aliyev arrives in Turkey for an extensive set of meetings, including with President Abdulla Gul (<http://day.az/news/politics/135620.html>).

Ann Derse, US ambassador in Baku, says that the election of Barak Obama will not lead to any fundamental change in Washington's relationship with Baku. At the same time, she expresses concern about Baku's decision to take VOA and RFE/RL off the air (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135616.html> and <http://www.day.az/news/politics/135621.html>).

Vasily Istratov, Russian ambassador in Baku, says that Moscow is ready to work with the incoming administration in Washington to solve problems in the Caucasus, including the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135619.html>).

The European Union's special representative for the South Caucasus Peter Semneby criticizes Baku's decision to shut down Western radio broadcasts in Azerbaijan (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135679.html>).

4 November

Lluís Maria de Puig, the president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, welcomes the signing of the Moscow declaration by the presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia and calls on the sides to continue talks in the spirit of that declaration (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135563.html>).

3 November

Khazar Ibrahim, the spokesman of the Azerbaijani foreign ministry, says that the Moscow declaration "reflects all basic aspects of the negotiations which were discussed during the negotiations between the Azerbaijani and Armenian sides" (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135386.html>).

2 November

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan, and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev sign after a Moscow meeting a declaration on the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135324.html>).

1 November

The US Broadcasting Board of Governors expresses its strong "dissatisfaction" with the plans of Azerbaijan to stop foreign broadcasters, including VOA and Radio Liberty, from being carried on Azerbaijani affiliates (<http://www.day.az/news/politics/135265.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.