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Analysis

Will Armenia use the 'window of opportunity' for democratization

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Digest of Armenian Media for April 15- 30, 2011

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15.04.2011 Tert.am Armenia's Prosecutor General turns to Russian counterpart over the death of Manvel Saribekyan [ARM] The article says that Armenia's Prosecutor General Aghvan Vardanyan sent a letter to his Russian counterpart Yuri Chaika in an attempt to receive information from Azerbaijan over the circumstances of death of Manvel Saribekyan. In the letter Hovsepyan said that he turned to his Azerbaijani counterpart but received no answer, and is therefore asking Russia to help over the issue... **Read more on Page 9**

Azerbaijani domestic politics and the Diaspora: (Mis)use of the "Armenian Factor" and its implications for conflict resolution

By [Jale sultanli](#)

The conflict with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh, being the largest external problem for Azerbaijan, plays a significant role in shaping domestic and foreign policies ranging from allocation of resources for persons displaced during the conflict to its energy policy. The conflict is also an important issue for the Azerbaijani public- a factor used to justify unpopular policies and to distract from social discontent with domestic issues. In the Azerbaijani Diaspora as well, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is a priority issue and has influenced if not shaped the agenda of the organized Diaspora... **Read more on Page 5**

Digest of Azerbaijani Media for April 15-30, 2011

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18.04.2011 DAY.az Levon Ter- Petrosyan: "There was a possibility to resolve Karabakh problem by giving some territories to Azerbaijan" [RUS] In his interview with BBC, Armenia's first president Ter- Petrosyan spoke of the possibility to resolve conflict eleven years ago. The deal never went through and the question why it didn't work, ex- president said there were other people on his team too who weren't happy with the deal, who thought that it was possible to get more from Azerbaijan... **Read more on Page 18**

The Neutral Zone

He divorced me because I was sick
By *Armenian and Azerbaijani Women's Narratives*

Whether in conflict, in peace or in the current state of no-peace, no-war, women's voices on both sides of the Armenia-Azerbaijan border are rarely heard in mainstream discourse. Women often feel like they don't have a voice whether it be in their personal and family lives, in their community or in the affairs of their country. Over the past few months, two teams of journalists, writers and bloggers in both Armenia and Azerbaijan interviewed a handful of women of different ages and backgrounds, both in the capitals of Yerevan and Baku and in the regions as part of the Armenian and Azerbaijani Women's Narratives Project (sponsored by the Eurasia Partnership Foundation as part of its "Unbiased E-Media Coverage in Armenia and Azerbaijan" program). We asked them about their lives, their hopes and wishes for themselves, their families and their countries. Here is one interview from the project, with 31-year-old Sadagat Hajiyeva from Baku, Azerbaijan... **To read more please proceed to the site.**

People my age don't receive benefits or a pension and we don't have work. How can you live?
By *Armenian and Azerbaijani Women's Narratives*

I was born in here in Stepanavan. My granddad arrived as a migrant; my grandmother was from an orphanage. They had three boys and a girl. I have one sister; we are the children of the oldest son. I graduated from the pedagogical institute in Kirovakan [currently Vanadzor]. I had five girls, who are all in Yerevan. Two are working, one is married, and the two others are studying. My husband works in a gold mine. I lost one child in the earthquake [of December 7, 1988]. A five-floor building collapsed. My mother got out. Another of my girls also got out, but my young one didn't. I was pregnant [at that time] and evacuated to Ukraine. I gave birth there. We stayed in Ukraine for three months... **To read more please proceed to the site.**

Utopian? Nope! In Mirzoevka its all about human relations
By *Sasun Khachatryan*

A recent article I prepared for The Neutral Zone about a Georgian village called Mirzoevka (Marneuli region) where Armenians and Azeris live in an enviable peaceful setting together for decades now shed some more light on the varying attitudes when it comes to Armenian-Azeri relations.

The piece prompted several questions, comments – some even very unpleasant and misleading, while some were to the point. It's hard to say what the article revealed other than the fact of a successful co-existence. But one thing it did clarify: the reaction by all the Armenia-based Armenians was positive... **To read more please proceed to the site.**

ANALYSIS

Will Armenia use the 'window of opportunity' for democratization?

By Armen Grigoryan

The possibility of large-scale fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh seems to be a real threat. A number of experts, including those from the International Crisis Group, recently voiced their concerns. The conflicting sides do not seem ready for a compromise solution, and do not even wish to limit their militaristic rhetoric. After the presidential meeting in Sochi on March 5, it took less than two days for some Azerbaijani officials to announce that the joint declaration signed in Sochi does not exclude the possibility of a military solution.

However, Azerbaijan is not likely to launch a war in the near future. The instability in the Arab world somehow reduces the risk of war in the South Caucasus, as the revolutions in some Arab countries and the civil war in Libya have already caused a sharp rise in oil prices. Apparently, a price decrease is hardly conceivable in the short-term perspective. Since large-scale fighting would threaten the export of hydrocarbons and cause even higher prices, Azerbaijan's government should now be under strong pressure from the West and is unlikely to start a war. Besides, neither the West nor Azerbaijan are interested in letting Russia and Iran grow stronger economically and geopolitically because of the oil price spike.

So, on one side, events in the Arab countries and the growing price of oil have reduced the threat of war and created more favorable conditions for more radical moves made by the Armenian opposition. On the other side, it seems that the Armenian government and its main patron – Russia – may be interested in short-time fighting. That could be the reason why there have recently been some hints about the possibility of a preemptive strike by Armenia as finding a peaceful solution remains unlikely, and renewed war is possible.

Russia would be the main winner of a short war, as she would gain more from expensive oil (presently profits from hydrocarbons constitute for more than half of Russia's budget revenues) and would have an opportunity to deploy "peacekeepers" (that would mean de facto occupation of Armenia and the overall impossibility of a resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and regional cooperation in the South Caucasus). Certainly, the international image of Russia would suffer, but the experience of 2004-2008 shows that if a barrel of oil costs around \$150 or even \$200, Vladimir Putin will not bother about international image. The Armenian authorities, in their turn, may consider that a "preemptive" war would prevent opposition activity or even hope that a war might lead to recognition of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. As fallacious as such hope may be, the possibility of its existence should not be excluded.

Concerning the political situation in Armenia, it may be noted that the threat of a new war has been one of the factors supporting Serzh Sargsyan's regime. The opposition has abstained from radical actions for years in order not to risk military defeat because of internal instability. From this point of view, the Armenian government has been the main beneficiary of Azerbaijan's militaristic rhetoric. Thanks to the fortress-under-siege mindset, it has been possible to shape Armenia's economic model for maximum benefit of those in power. The need to maintain a large army (one of the largest in the world in proportion to the country's population) creates enormous opportunities for corruption; absence of a perspective of development induces emigration; incessant emigration increases the amount of money transfers from abroad; an over-appreciated national currency permits collection of hard currency from the people; emigration also reduces the number of people willing to unite against the government; at the same time, emigration makes ballot stuffing during the elections easier; and finally, dependence on Russia grows, since Russia remains the main destination for the emigrants.

Will the developments in the Middle East trigger a new wave of democratization in the South Caucasus? There may now be a "window of opportunity" for the Armenian opposition, as Azerbaijan is less likely to begin large-scale fighting and, at the same time, the internal economic and social situation has brought the country on the verge of mass protests. Assuming snap elections were held, if there was to be no overwhelming election fraud like in 2008, Armenian voters would certainly get rid of the present regime.

But in addition to mass mobilization, the Armenian opposition needs to break the image of a pro-Russian force and show readiness to solve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to obtain the much-needed support from the West. Such support has been virtually absent, as the West should not be deeply interested in replacing Sargsyan's regime with even a democratically elected, yet another pro-Russian one that would also procrastinate and avoid conflict resolution. There is no use in discussing whether the lack of support for democratization from the West is due to the latter's realpolitik approach or is perhaps just moral relativism. Instead, a proactive attitude should be adopted and readiness to perform much-needed reforms, solve the conflict, and engage in regional cooperation should be demonstrated. It remains to be seen whether the "window of opportunity" will be used, or disappointed hopes will continue stimulating emigration and depriving the country of human capital – the indispensable factor of development.

Azerbaijani domestic politics and the Diaspora: (mis)use of the “Armenian Factor” and its implications for conflict resolution

By Jale Sultanli

“The best way of preserving a state, and guaranteeing it against sedition, rebellion and civil war, is to keep the subject with amity with one another, and to this end, to find an enemy against whom they can make a common cause”

Jean Bodin (1955, 188)

The conflict with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh, being the largest external problem for Azerbaijan, plays a significant role in shaping domestic and foreign policies ranging from allocation of resources for persons displaced during the conflict to its energy policy. The conflict is also an important issue for the Azerbaijani public ----- a factor used to justify unpopular policies and to distract from social discontent with domestic issues. In the Azerbaijani Diaspora as well, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is a priority issue and has influenced if not shaped the agenda of the organized Diaspora.

What I call the “Armenian factor” in this article can be overall characterized as the influence of the conflict with Armenia on Azerbaijan’s domestic political life, foreign policy, Diaspora activities as well as its influence on all levels of society, from politicians to regular citizens (and Diaspora members). The conflict impacts people and the political processes differently in Azerbaijan and throughout the Diaspora, so I discuss it separately outlining unique specifications for each. Despite the differences, one thing is common: not only does the conflict have impact on most if not all processes, but its importance and existence of the “external enemy” is used to manipulate public attitudes and justify unpopular policies domestically and to create a homogenous message and agenda in the Diaspora. This in turn has negative side effects, not just for the development of an internal debate on key issues but also from the conflict resolution’s point of view.

‘Armenian Factor’ in Domestic Politics

The Armenian factor in Azerbaijani society and politics plays out in two ways: one is the public’s shared attitudes and beliefs that the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and the continued threat of Armenia is the biggest unresolved challenge to the Azerbaijani nation. The second is how the existence of the conflict is used by politicians to manipulate public attitudes and delegitimize their competitors and enemies. On the attitudes level, many including political activists are divided over the approach to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict vis-à-vis Azerbaijan’s domestic problems. Most oppositional groups and activists consider the current status quo and Azerbaijan’s inability to change the situation to its advantage a direct result of the current and preceding administration’s policies. According to this thinking, Azerbaijan’s ability to emerge as a winner in the conflict is tied to overall democratic reforms and development, which are not currently happening. Those in the opposite camp view internal challenges to the current government as destabilizing and weakening Azerbaijan’s position, distracting from its main problem of conflict with Armenia. This background of divergent views, combined with the public frustration with the dead end in the negotiation process, and prevailing adverse attitudes towards Armenia create a fertile ground for the use of the external enemy to manipulate public attitudes, silence criticism on human rights violations, and distract from internal problems. Given that collaboration with Armenian individuals and organizations is equated with compromising Azerbaijan’s interest, it has also become a popular tool for public smearing, discrediting of one’s internal political enemies, and in some rare cases, prosecution. The actual prosecution of individuals as a result of “collaboration” with Armenians is highly disputable, and aside from reported cases of questionings by officials, no single case of imprisonment or even charges exist making this more of a perception rather than a reality. The only case that comes close is that of Eynulla Fatullayev, who was sentenced to eight and a half years on charges of terrorism and incitement of ethnic hatred, among others.[1] But even in Fatullayev’s case, the charges are widely believed to be a justification but not the real reason for his imprisonment. The dropping of these charges by Azerbaijan’s Supreme Court in November 2010 showed just how these types of accusations can be used or dropped, depending on the circumstances. Whether a reality or not, even a perception that one can be questioned or detained by authorities creates a cautious environment regarding contacts, connections, or associations with Armenian

organizations and individuals. This environment, combined with overall unfavorable public opinion on cooperation with anything and anyone Armenian, makes association with the enemy a convenient and effective tool for intimidating and discrediting individuals in the eyes of the larger public.

The Armenian factor came into play in the days leading up to March 11, 2011 — a day of protest against violations of freedoms in Azerbaijan named “Great People’s Day,” organized by youth activists on Facebook. What seemed to be an organized effort to bring ‘Armenian factor’ into the picture involved a number of interviews and publicly made comments by members of ruling political groups and media that linked the organizers of the Facebook protest to “external forces”, enemies and specifically ‘Armenian forces’ which seek destruction of Azerbaijan. On March 3, the pro-government Web site, Qaynar.info, published an article and posted pictures of well-known journalists, political activists, and academics that have Armenian friends on Facebook stating that the mentioned individuals are befriending enemies on Facebook[i]. Only a few days prior, the Executive Director of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan party (New Azerbaijan party) said in an interview with Associated Press that there were a lot of Armenians signed up on Facebook to participate in the events and that “...the radical opposition is ready to work with Armenians against Azerbaijan.” Abel Maharramov, Rector of Baku State University, also said during the televised interview that those participating in the protest were lured into it by the Armenians via the Internet. Another affiliate of the ruling party, chairman of the Youth Union of New Azerbaijan Seymur Orujov, said in an interview to his party’s Web site that the campaigns on social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter are being backed by foreign-based forces that dislike Azerbaijan, which include first and foremost Armenians.

In reality, these accusations had little to do with the actual situation. For example, the number of Armenians who showed as “attending” on the Facebook page of “Great People’s Day” was insignificant among the 4,800 who signed up.[ii] Most of these individuals were most likely sympathizers with the human rights cause (also a problem in Armenia) that ‘liked’ the page to show support for the cause. Most youth movements in Azerbaijan and activists who speak up against violations of human rights have minimal contact with Armenian organizations and groups. The linkages made to Armenia, aimed to get the message across that those expressing discontent with the internal situation and challenging the current order, are those of the external enemy trying to weaken Azerbaijan and are not genuinely dissatisfied citizens of Azerbaijan. The accusations also aimed to discredit activists in the eyes of the public as well as to intimidate the youth who started the Facebook campaign and those planning to participate in street protests.

Thus, in internal politics, the Armenian factor, or in other words the external enemy, is used as a manipulative tool to suppress the voices that speak up or challenge the current government and order of things. Such misuse of this factor also has implications for conflict itself as it discourages emergence of new peace building initiatives.

Azerbaijani Diaspora and the ‘Armenian factor’ in the United States

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been one of the most influential factors driving Azerbaijan’s foreign policy and organized Diaspora activities in Europe and the United States. In the last decade or so, Azerbaijan has made an effort to catch up with well-organized, strong Armenian Diaspora and lobby groups by improving its diplomatic corps and encouraging organized Diaspora-based activities. The passing of Section 907 — legislation that banned foreign aid to the Azerbaijani government in the early 1990s and desire to balance out the abundance of information on the conflict coming from Armenian diaspora organizations in the United States — made the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict a top priority issue in the Diaspora’s agenda to generate favor of the international community on Armenia. At a grassroots level, as many Azerbaijanis immigrated abroad for work and education since the early 1990s, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict also became one of the motivators for the communities to organize and promote the Azerbaijani perspective on the conflict in the United States. Consequently, the goals and thinking of formal Diaspora-based groups and regular Azerbaijanis living abroad coincided when it came to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Armenia. The commemoration events for Khojali; presentations; talks: discussions at universities, with international organizations, and on Capitol Hill; and petitions on various issues concerning Azerbaijan and Armenia, have been part of the routine Diaspora-based organizations’ activities in the United States.

In the environment where the majority of organized Diaspora-based activities are focused on legislative and information wars with the external enemy, the Armenian factor played out in two ways: First, up until the last few years, it led to a shortage or lack of outspoken criticism by Diaspora-based communities and victims of domestic problems, such as human rights and democracy violations in Azerbaijan. Second, the nature of the work discouraged Diaspora-based members in engaging in confidence building measures and conflict resolution oriented activities with Armenians. It should also be noted that the goals of Armenian Diaspora organizations, which are on the opposite end, equally contribute to the difficulties of initiating and organizing confidence-building measures in Diaspora-based communities.

Similar to views inside Azerbaijan and given the Diaspora's more important role in the "information wars" with Armenia abroad, the predominant view has been that publicizing Azerbaijan's internal problems, such as human rights violations, would undermine the agenda of generating support for Azerbaijan on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. Yet so long as the Nagorno-Karabakh issue was not solved, the Diaspora could not afford to concern itself with internal problems. Recently, this picture has been changing. Although smaller in numbers, alternative voices have emerged from Azerbaijanis abroad that aim to bring attention to violations of human rights and lack of freedom in Azerbaijan. The referendum that lifted the limits on presidential terms and later the arrests of bloggers Emin Milli and Adnan Hajizada resulted in waves of protests by Diaspora members in Washington, DC, New York, and several cities in Western Europe, as well as organized petitions to politicians and international human rights organizations. These individuals and groups in the Diaspora place responsibility for lost territories and a stalemate in the conflict with the current government and see democratization as the path toward strengthening Azerbaijan, which will then put it in a better position to solve the conflict to its benefit. According to them, silence about lack of democratic progress and freedoms hurts Azerbaijan and its development in the long-run.

While the emergence of these alternative views has created a livelier debate on the internal issues vis-à-vis the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict among the Diaspora, critics of the government's domestic policy still shy away from engaging in debate and/or activities about the conflict, resulting in limited or no confidence-building measures among Diaspora-based groups. The reasons for this are complex — among them are a lack of faith in the usefulness of confidence-building measures and harsh rhetoric from Armenian Diaspora-based groups. The environment itself is not conducive for collaborative efforts: joint events involving both communities are confrontational and full of positional harsh rhetoric from both sides. The events organized by one side usually come under the attack of numerous representatives from the other, which try to delegitimize the event and the presented information. Recent examples include the book presentation organized by the Washington Center for Azerbaijani Studies at George Washington University where German scholar Heiko Krueger, whose book "The Nagorno Karabakh Conflict: A Legal Analysis" book on the legal analysis of the conflict was not liked by Armenians, came under severe personal attack by Armenians in the audience. A few days later, Robert Avetisyan, a representative of the Armenian community of Nagorno-Karabakh was harshly questioned by a group of Azerbaijanis while presenting at George Mason University. Such an environment reinforced by both sides sets an exclusively confrontational tone and hinders emergence of a more civil debate that could be happening parallel to more traditional Diaspora activities with engagement of those members who are in academic and scholarly settings. But similar to the internal situation, a stigma of associating with the enemy is also present among Azerbaijanis abroad. This is reinforced by categorical, black and white views and attitudes as well as harsh language prevalent in a number of listservs by which Azerbaijanis abroad communicate. In a number of situations, those voicing alternative opinions have been ruthlessly attacked and silenced and any peace-building initiatives were renounced as compromising Azerbaijan's interests.

The above-mentioned elements of the Armenian factor have a twofold impact: they discourage those with moderate views or alternative approaches from engaging in internal dialogue within the Diaspora on domestic issues and on Nagorno Karabakh conflict. It also stifles much needed internal debate preventing the emergence of new ideas and thinking on both of those issues

Implications for Conflict Resolution

Much can be said about the value of diverse opinions and internal debate on domestic issues and on the conflict with Armenia. The protracted conflict and external enemy, amid other factors, create a

dynamic that hurdles such debate on the issue and creates pressure to have a united front that has negative implications for Azerbaijan.

From a conflict resolution perspective as well, the existence and misuse of ‘Armenian factor’ has negative implications. While one might argue about possible risk versus perception of risk in getting involved and maintaining contacts with Armenian individuals and organizations, the government’s use of the Armenian factor to discredit and intimidate activists and intellectuals also inadvertently affects cross-border processes, reducing the potential impact greater involvement of such youth might have on conflict transformation.

First, it suffocates the debate on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict internally and between two societies and their Diaspora communities – a process that can contribute to improved analysis and understanding nuances of the conflict by the public in and outside Azerbaijan. Second, it undermines the emergence of larger scale and higher quality public diplomacy and Track II diplomatic efforts, which many experts have repeatedly said Armenia and Azerbaijan need in order to move towards a peaceful resolution.

Domestically, misuse of the Armenian factor steers away most talented and well-educated youth and intellectuals (though not all) from engagement in peacebuilding initiatives and projects. For example, most if not all youth movements in Azerbaijan (AN, Nida, OL, Dalga, etc.) do not have Nagorno Karabakh issue on their organizations’ agenda and stay away from the topic. While part of the reason is the lack of attention by the youth leaders to the issue, another reason is also the additional liability such involvement creates for those operating in already difficult environments. As a result, most youth movements outspoken and critical of government in other issues avoided opinions and criticism on domestic and foreign policies on Nagorno Karabakh conflict. In addition to human rights and youth political activists, amongst larger public, young people shy away from engaging in such programs as they fear consequences for future potential employment with the government or that it may impact family members.

There are negative implications in Diaspora as well – members are by large discouraged from participating in collaborative conflict resolution projects and initiatives that would involve civil discussions and joint problem solving among the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities. Changing the current discourse and allowing for a more tolerant environment to emerge that would accept and engage individuals and groups with agendas of engagement rather than confrontation could contribute to the conflict transformation process much needed between societies. While the agendas and activities of government-funded lobby groups or Diaspora-based organizations on either side are not likely to change, such an environment would allow for more civil debate between the two communities in neutral academic settings. Such initiatives and collaboration could greatly benefit both sides as more scholarship, research and thinking could emerge on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

References

[1]Amnesty USA, Background information on Eynulla Fatullayev: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/individuals-at-risk/priority-cases/background-information-on-eynulla-fatullayev/page.do?id=1181070>

[i] <http://qaynar.info/?p=4970>

[ii] Author reviewed the page of March 11 – Great People’s Day on Facebook. Number of attendees was at the shown number on April 28, 2011.

NEWS DIGEST

Digest of Armenian Media for April 15- 30, 2011

By News Digest

15.04.2011

Tert.am

[Armenia's Prosecutor General turns to Russian counterpart over the death of Manvel Saribekyan \[ARM\]](#)

The article says that Armenia's Prosecutor General Aghvan Vardanyan sent a letter to his Russian counterpart Yuri Chaika in an attempt to receive information from Azerbaijan over the circumstances of death of Manvel Saribekyan. In the letter Hovsepyan said that he turned to his Azerbaijani counterpart but received no answer, and is therefore asking Russia to help over the issue.

[Opening or closing Artsakh airport is out of co-chairs competencies – Galust Sahakyan \[ARM\]](#)

According to the article MP of the ruling Republican Party of Armenia, Galust Sahakyan said that the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs are not competent to discuss the issue of opening or closing down the airport in Karabakh. "The Stepanakert Airport is being build and it will operate," said Sahakyan, adding that there was no breakthrough in the co-chairs April 14 statement.

[Co-chairs' statement over Stepanakert Airport was addressed to Azerbaijan – ARF-D \[ARM\]](#)

Senior Dashnaktsutyun official Artiusha Shahbazyan said, according to this news item, that the section about the airport in Karabakh mentioned in the April 14 statement by the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs was addressed to Azerbaijan. According to him "Azerbaijani and side is in such a situation that its constant threats have begun to be ridiculous". Further, he expressed concern over the fact that when the threats eventually become senseless, Azerbaijan's leadership may feel obliged to resort to some bigger threats, even military actions.

15.04.2011

RFEL

[Stepanakert Airport operation delayed \[ARM\]](#)

The article says that the Karabakh airport will not start operation on May 9 as it had been scheduled initially. The Spokesperson for the presidential office of Nagorno Karabakh David Babayan told RFEL that there is no specific date as to when the airport will start operation. He also said that the issue has no political motives, but is rather technical. Further, he said that currently the works are underway to make the runway in line with international standards.

15.04.2011

News.am

[International mediators' statement straitjacket for Azerbaijan – Armenian MP \[ENG\]](#)

The Vice-Speaker of Armenia' National Assembly Samvel Nikoyan said that the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs' statement will "put Azerbaijan into a straitjacket" holding it back from war rhetoric. According to him, the co-chairs' statement must prove a guideline for the parties, and that the co-chairs have until recently

“confined themselves” to statements on incident on the line of contact. “Their latest statement, however, is a practical step showing a way of conducting a transparent investigation with both conflicting parties’ involvement,” Nikoyan said.

15.04.2011

1in.am

[With ‘tactful’ wording the mediators seek to avoid tensions \[ARM\]](#)

According to this article, political analyst Yervand Bozoyan said that the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs are trying to avoid any tension over the Karabakh conflict through “tactful” wording in their statements. “At this stage it’s not clear yet which problems have been discussed and which will be solved,” said he. Bozoyan also said that the reason the mediators are careful about their statements, is that they take into accounts the positions of all the parties. “I think the mediators have taken this circumstance into consideration and have tried to find a common average compromised version,” he explained.

16.04.2011

Tert.am

[Returning to the past is impossible – Karabakh president \[ENG\]](#)

According to this article, the de facto President of Nagorno Karabakh Bako Sahakyan said when it comes to the settlement of the Karabakh conflict, “returning to the past is impossible and it is necessary only to think of the future.” Sahakyan also said that the settlement of the Karabakh conflict within the frameworks of international and legal guarantees first of all predetermines a peaceful solution.

16.04.2011

News.am

[Turkish minister sets Karabakh conflict settlement as precondition to Armenia-Turkey rapprochement \[ENG\]](#)

The article says that Turkish Foreign Trade Minister Zafer Caglayan linked the Armenia-Turkey normalization to the settlement of the Karabakh conflict. “Turkey will never approve any rapprochement with Armenia – which currently occupies 20% of Azerbaijan’s territories, including Nagorno-Karabakh — before the ongoing issue between Azerbaijan and Armenia is resolved,” he said.

18.04.2011

Lragir.am

[Russia’s policy on Karabakh \[ARM\]](#)

In this article Armenian political analyst Igor Muradyan says that Russia has positioned itself as the only defender of Armenia’s interest when it comes to the settlement of the Karabakh conflict. According to him, for a long time Russia was implementing “a policy of waiting” over the Karabakh issue and would prefer the preservation of the status quo. However, it would from time to time come up with initiatives in the decision-making process mainly as a counterweight to the United States.

[Sub-committee on Karabakh didn’t convene session \[ARM\]](#)

The article says that the Sub-committee on Karabakh at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe did not convene a session during its spring session. The head of the Armenian delegation to PACE, David Harutyunyan, said that the Armenian delegation has not changed its position over the subcommittee and will not participate in its activities.

“We are not going to take part in a process that is irresponsible and fraught with unpredictable consequences, including new tensions,” said Harutyunyan.

18.04.2011

RFEL

[Alexander Krilov: “The point is not who will become the main peacekeeper” \[ARM\]](#)

According to this article, Alexander Margarov, a Russian political analyst said that the meetings among Armenian, Azerbaijani and Russian presidents that have recently become more frequent are aimed at moving the process of the settlement of the Karabakh conflict forward. “Moscow wants to somehow move the peaceful settlement forward so that both Armenia and Azerbaijan will make some concessions and find a mutually-acceptable solution to the problem,” said he. According to him, the point is not which of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs will be the first to leave the other two behind and become the main peace builder: there is a tripartite format, consisting of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan that does not raise questions neither in US, nor in France.

18.04.2011

News.am

[1997 best year for resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict – opposition leader \[ENG\]](#)

The article says that former Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan said in an interview with the BBC Russian that a settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was the most realistic in 1997, when the problem could be resolved by conceding some territories to Azerbaijan, concluding a truce, and creating an interim status for Nagorno-Karabakh to determine final status in the future. As to the reasons why it failed, he said that the Karabakh people considered it was not enough. “They showed a radical approach. They thought they could press even more and get more,” he added.

[All conflicts in South Caucasus should be resolved peacefully-Georgian Defense Minister \[ENG\]](#)

According to this news item Georgian Defense Minister Bacho Akhalaia at a meeting with his Armenian counterpart Seyran Ohanyan that the main task the countries face is to establish peace and security in the South Caucasus. It also says that the minister evaded a direct answer about Georgia’s position on Karabakh issue in case of resumption of military actions. “Our desire and hope is to maintain peace and stability in the region. All conflicts should be resolved peacefully,” he said.

19.04.2011

Tert.am

[It’s good that Karabakh conflict wasn’t settled in 1997 – MP \[ENG\]](#)

Speaking about former Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan’s interview with the BBC Russian in which he said that the most probable time for the settlement of the Karabakh conflict was 1997, Republican MP Hovhannes Sahakyan that it is good that the conflict was not resolved then. “When you are listening to Levon Ter-Petrosyan’s interview, you rejoice for a moment that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was not

resolved in 1997,” Hovhannes Sahakyan said, that the fact that the Karabakhi people rejected the solution proposed in 1997 proves that there was something wrong with it.

19.04.2011

Epress.am

[Ter-Petrosyan's opinion on Karabakh no Different than Madrid Principles: Heritage party MP \[ENG\]](#)

According to this article, MP of the opposition Heritage Party Stepan Safaryan said that the statement on Karabakh peace process made by first president Levon Ter-Petrosyan in his interview with BBC Russian is no different than that which comprises the Madrid Principles which are being discussed today. “I think, in 1997. To hand over some territories to Azerbaijan, to define a ceasefire, to create an intermediate state for Nagorno-Karabakh and then resolve the question of Nagorno-Karabakh’s status,” he said.

[Georgia won't cooperate with Armenia behind Azerbaijan's back: expert \[ENG\]](#)

According to this article, Georgian expert Dr. Giorgi Khutsishvili, speaking about Georgian Defense Minister Bacho Akhalaia’s visit to Armenia, said that Azerbaijan is Georgia’s strategic partner and therefore separate deals between Tbilisi and Yerevan behind Baku’s back are unlikely. “I think that simply an exchange of views took place during Bacho Akhalaia’s visit to Armenia. It’s unlikely that Georgia will assist with arms to Armenia in the event of renewed hostilities between Azerbaijan and Armenia,” he said.

20.04.2011

Tert.am

[BBC Russian prepares report on Karabakh \[ENG\]](#)

The article says that the BBC Russian has prepared a report on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. The authors of the report, which is available in both video and text formats, say that despite the 1994 ceasefire signed between Armenia and Azerbaijan, neither of the countries has achieved a full peace. “The border between Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan remains one of the world’s most fortified borders,” the report comments.

20.04.2011

RFEL

[Romania backs Azerbaijan over Karabakh issue \[ARM\]](#)

According to this article Romanian President Traian Basesku said in an interview that his country’s position over the Nagorno-Karabakh has not changed and that there is no factor that would make Romania change it. “Our position is that the territorial integrity of any country cannot be breached. Conflicts must be resolved within the norms of international law and UN resolutions. Any attempt to breach the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan or any other country must be regarded as a violation of the international law,” said he. The article further says that Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Shavarsh Kocharyan commented on this statement, saying that he “would not believe that a leader of a EU country could make such a biased and unconstructive statement.”

20.04.2011

News.am

[Azerbaijan committed to non-constrictive stance on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict-expert \[ENG\]](#)

The article says that political analyst Yervand Bozoyan said that Azerbaijan's recent military exercises with combat aircrafts and helicopters once again proved that Baku intends to use force. "This demonstration of force showed that Azerbaijan remains committed to its non-constructive stance on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict," he said. Commenting on the question whether there is a connection between the maneuvers and statements by the Azerbaijani side to shoot down aircrafts heading to Stepanakert airport, Bozoyan stressed that these two facts are not linked directly. "There is no direct connection, but it manifests Azerbaijan's non-constructive stance on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict," he said.

[Territorial concessions not key to resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict \[ENG\]](#)

Former Foreign Minister of the unrecognized Republic of Nagorno Karabakh Arman Melikyan said that territorial concessions are not a key to resolution of the Karabakh conflict. Melikyan comment on a statement by former Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan's who said that Karabakh conflict might have been settled in 1997 by means of some territorial concessions in exchange for interim and later final status of Nagorno-Karabakh. "Territorial concessions would have only ousted Russia from the negotiation process and changed the geopolitical situation in the region, which was not at all in the interests of landlocked Armenia," Melikyan said.

21.04.2011

Tert.am

[Why is British media interested in Karabakh? \[ENG\]](#)

According to this article, political analyst Hrant Melik Shahnazaryan said that the British media's recent interest in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict might be explained by the need to propose new plans and mechanisms for the settlement of the conflict. "The stalemate over Karabakh requires new solutions and approaches. Serious media outlets address such problems upon facing the need to propose a mechanism or a political plan," he said, speaking about the BBC's plans to shoot a film about the Karabakh conflict. He also noted that the foreign media might also pursue financial interests in their propaganda. "But that's more characteristic to the Russian media, rather than BBC," he said.

[Karabakh people should have the right to join negotiation process – Baroness Cox \[ENG\]](#)

According to this news item, UK MP Caroline Cox said the people of Nagorno Karabakh should have the right to take part in the current negotiation process over the conflict settlement. She also said the delegation of British MPs which was on a three-day visit to Armenia was also in Nagorno Karabakh and met with the country's president and National Assembly speaker. She told reporters that they are aware of the progress in the current talks over the Karabakh conflict settlement and had learned during their visit that the "Armenians made the most significant concessions in the framework of the Minsk Group process".

22.04.2011

Tert.am

[Situation over NK is very different from what Levon Ter-Petrosyan says – Kiro Manoyan \[ARM\]](#)

Speaking about the interview by former Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan in which he said that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict could have been resolved in 1997 were not the "maximalistic demands" by the Karabakhi people, senior Dashnaktsutyun party official Kiro Manoyan said that the situation today is different. Manoyan said that during that time an attempt was being made to settle the issue on a "phasal" basis, while today there are "packages" under discussion. "This is an important difference. The logic of today's talks is that if there is no agreement over the packages, there is no agreement at all," said Manoyan.

22.04.2011

Epress.am

[War is the most valid option for resolving Karabakh conflict, believes expert \[ENG\]](#)

According to this article, Russian expert on post-Soviet states Vitaly Tretyakov, said that the Karabakh conflict is well known in the world and is in the focus of interest for several regional and world powers which is why "Azerbaijan is not able to launch military operations if it doesn't receive approval and support. According to him, the most unpleasant but historically valid option to resolving this issue is war. "It's cynical, cruel, disgusting, but it is a solution, after which for a few years, if not forever, will cease to be as such. But even this cynical approach to date is unrealistic.

22.04.2011

News.am

[Neither NATO nor EU to replace OSCE in Karabakh peace process – European official \[ENG\]](#)

The head of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Petros Efthymiou said that neither NATO nor EU can replace OSCE while dealing with relations between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. According to him not a single institution has such "in-depth knowledge of the region and ties with people as OSCE does." He also stressed OSCE's possibilities while resolving international conflicts.

23.04.2011

Tert.am

[Karabakh settlement process discussed in Moscow \[ENG\]](#)

This article says that the Armenian, Russian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers Edward Nalbandyan, Sergey Lavrov and Elmar Mammadyarov held a working meeting in Moscow and discussed the current stage of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement. It also says that a press release issued by Armenia's Foreign Ministry did not elaborate as to what exactly the diplomats discussed.

25.04.2011

Tert.am

[Peace treaty alone won't solve Karabakh conflict – Azeri FM \[ENG\]](#)

According to this news item, Azerbaijani foreign minister Elmar Mammadyarov said in an interview with the Moscow News newspaper that a peace treaty for the Karabakh conflict will not be the end but rather "a light at the end of the tunnel". He also called for more efforts for the settlement of the conflict. "The efforts should be tripled rather than doubled. The decision on Karabakh is very complex. It is connected with many factors. Even if we prepare a peace treaty, this would not be the end yet. It will only be a light at the end of the tunnel," he explained.

25.04.2011

News.am

[Aliyev, Kaidanow discuss Karabakh peace process \[ENG\]](#)

According to this article, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev received US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Tina Kaidanow. The sides exchanged views on Azerbaijan-US bilateral relations, the current stage of Karabakh peace process and prospects for the conflict resolution, as well as regional affairs. It also says that earlier Tina Kaidanow discussed Karabakh conflict settlement with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov.

25.04.2011

1in.am

[No practice for unrecognized republic to operate airports \[ARM\]](#)

The head of the international agreements department at Armenia's Constitutional Court Vladimir Vardanyan said that Karabakh's airport can organize flights only to and fro Yerevan as it is an unrecognized republic. According to him, as soon as the Stepanakert Airport operates, Azerbaijan will submit a complaint to the International Civil Aviation and will demand to launch proceeds against Armenia. Vardanyan said that Georgia did the same when the Sukhumi Airport started to operate.

27.04.2011

News.am

[Military operations in Karabakh conflict zone unlikely, status quo to remain-Russian professor \[ENG\]](#)

According to this article, Valeri Achkasov, a professor at St. Petersburg State University said at a conference in Yerevan that the status quo in Nagorno-Karabakh will be preserved and the conflict will remain frozen for a long time. "Certain aggravation in Karabakh peace process is possible from time to time. However, large-scale military operations are unlikely to resume. The Karabakh conflict cannot be resolved by military means," he stated.

28.04.2011

Lragir.am

[Baku's hope is Medvedev \[ENG\]](#)

The article says that Armenian sociologist Aharon Adibekyan said that the fact that the Karabakh conflict is still unresolved negatively affects the whole region. He also said that "Azerbaijan's rhetoric adds more tension" to the current situation. Further, Adibekyan said that the states involved in the settlement of the conflict will not allow the conflict to be resolved based on the principle of territorial integrity. In this context, according to him, Azerbaijan's hope is Russia's President Dmitry Medvedev who may take Azerbaijan's strategic importance to Russia into account while making any decisions on Karabakh.

28.04.2011

News.am

[Armenian FM discusses current stage of Karabakh peace process with US official \[ENG\]](#)

According to this article, Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandyan received on Thursday U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs Tina Kaidanow and discussed a wide range of regional and international issues, including the current stage of Nagorno-Karabakh peace process. Kaidanow stressed that U.S. will continue cooperation with Armenia aimed at ensuring peace in the region, encouraging economic development, and implementation of reforms.

29.04.2011

Tert.am

[Armed confrontation not to resolve Karabakh conflict – EU commissioner \[ENG\]](#)

According to this article, EU Commissioner for Enlargements and Neighborhood Policy Stefan Fule said that “an armed confrontation cannot pave the way for settling the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh”. Speaking at a news conference in Yerevan Fule said that the neighborhood cannot be safe unless protracted conflicts find a peaceful solution under the principles of international law. He also said that the meetings between parties demonstrate a progress and stressed the importance of “reflecting them in rhetoric.”

29.04.2011

News.am

[Armenian FM hopes for OSCE’s assistance in reducing frontline incidents \[ENG\]](#)

The article says that Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandyan condemned “regular incidents in the contact line between armed forces of Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan” after an Armenian soldier was killed on the line of contact. Speaking at a press conference he said that “such provocations do not advance the peace process”. He also recalled that during Sochi meeting by Armenian, Azerbaijani and Russian presidents the sides agreed to investigate the incidents in the frontline with assistance of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and special representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office. Further, he said that creation of relevant mechanisms will become a key tool to prevent incidents and provocations and will positively affect the process which inspires hope for achieving peaceful resolution.

30.04.2011

Tert.am

[Karabakh talks see progress after Sochi meeting, Bryza \[ENG\]](#)

US Ambassador to Azerbaijan Mathew Bryza said that the settlement process of the Karabakh conflict is seeing progress since the trilateral meeting in Sochi this April. Speaking to journalists in Azerbaijan on Friday, Bryza said that Armenia’s and Azerbaijan’s foreign ministers are working on the issue. “The foreign ministers of the two conflicting parties are seriously working on the issue. And I think that the presidents will register shifts in the settlement of the conflict step by step,” Bryza added.

[Armenia to ‘take punitive actions’ on Line of Contact \[ENG\]](#)

The article says that according to some unconfirmed reports Armenia’s top military brass has decided to take measures across the Line of Contact with Azerbaijan to prevent “acts of sabotage”. Speaking to Tert.am on condition of anonymity, the source said Armenia’s Defense Ministry is planning “large-scale punitive” actions on the Line of Contact that are aimed at causing three times as much damage to Azerbaijani side” in an attempt to take revenge for the killing of three Armenian conscripts during the week.

30.04.2011

Hetq.am

[Statement by Armenia’s Foreign Minister over killing of conscripts \[ARM\]](#)

According to this news piece, Armenia’s Foreign Ministry released a statement over the killing of two Armenian conscripts – reportedly by Azeri snipers – and accused Azerbaijan by fueling tension into the

peace talks. “During the past two days three soldiers were killed by Azerbaijani snipers on the line of contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan. The situation created due to Azerbaijan’s adventurous behavior is sparking additional tension and affecting negatively the negotiation process. The statement also said that “Azerbaijan shows that it can ignore the calls by different international boards and countries on consolidation of ceasefire, withdrawal of snipers, strengthening of confidence and resolution of problems by peaceful means”.

30.04.2011

News.am

[Time for OSCE to indicate responsible for ruining Karabakh peace process – MP \[ENG\]](#)

This article says that Aram Safaryan of Prosperous Armenia party said that “it is time for the OSCE Minsk Group to indicate those responsible for ruining the Karabakh peace process”. Safaryan stressed that “Azerbaijan used time given to the sides to review their positions after the OSCE summit in Astana to toughen its approaches”. “Non-constructive path chosen by Azerbaijan leads to nowhere – to breakdown of talks. The OSCE Minsk Group should indicate it clearly,” he said.

[World community should impose sanctions against Azerbaijan – Armenian MP \[ENG\]](#)

According to this article, Armenian MP Hrayr Karapetyan said that Armenia “should give an adequate response to Azerbaijani provocations on the contact line” as “only adequate response of the Armenian side can repress further provocations of Azerbaijan. He stressed that international community should toughen its stance on Azerbaijan up to imposing sanctions. “World community’s attitude has been limited to recommendations so far. However, time shows recommendations have no impact on Baku although are signed by Azerbaijani leadership,” he said.

Digest of Azerbaijani Media for April 15- 30, 2011

By News Digest

18.04.2011

DAY.az

[Levon Ter- Petrosyan: "There was a possibility to resolve Karabakh problem by giving some territories to Azerbaijan" \[RUS\]](#)

In his interview with BBC, Armenia's first president Ter- Petrosyan spoke of the possibility to resolve conflict eleven years ago. The deal never went through and the question why it didn't work, ex- president said there were other people on his team too who weren't happy with the deal, who thought that it was possible to get more from Azerbaijan.

19.04.2011

DAY.az

[Russian political scientist commented on the possibility of an outbreak of war for Karabakh \[RUS\]](#)

Maksim Minayev while responding to Day.az questions regarding current status of resolution process commented on the OSCE's Minsk Group and its ability to affect the process. According to Minayev, in essence Minsk Group can only evaluate the process while main decision makers are Russia and the conflicting parties. Minayev believes that Moscow in fact will do everything in its power to prevent the war, since its going to be among those directly affected by the war.

20.04.2011

DAY.az

[Russian political scientist says war over Karabakh can start anytime now \[RUS\]](#)

Day.az interviewed Konstantin Simyonov, an economist and political scientist from Russia. According to Simyonov, OSCE's Minsk Group role in the negotiation process is rather unproductive. In fact, Simyonov believes that some of the most recent statements made by the OSCE MG were simply to justify its existence and presence in the negotiation process. However, Russian expert does not dismiss US interests all together given Azerbaijan's energy related plans.

22.04.2011

DAY.az

[Russian expert spoke of the only possible solution to the Karabakh conflict \[RUS\]](#)

In an interview with Day.az, Russian expert and renowned journalist Vitaliy Tretyakov said he was afraid that unless there is some serious pressure applied to either sides of the conflict, Karabakh conflict might remain in a state of frozen conflict for the next 10 to 15 years if not more. He also said to believe that as long as international institutions like the EU will keep Karabakh conflict on their radars, Azerbaijan wont be able to simply start a war.

TREND.az

[Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia discussed the NK settlement in Moscow \[ENG\]](#)

On Friday, Foreign Affairs Ministers of three countries met in Moscow, where they discussed NK conflict. The sides further discussed an agreement adopted during March 5th meeting in Sochi upon which conflicting parties agree to resolve all disputed issues by peaceful means and to investigate possible incidents along the ceasefire line.

[Russian State Duma member: Russia wants peace in South Caucasus \[ENG\]](#)

Sergey Markov, member of the Russian State Duma said that Russia's active involvement in NK negotiation process is because of its close neighboring relations with the conflicting sides. Makrov noted Russia's interest in peaceful resolution of the conflict as well as trust Armenia and Azerbaijan vest in Russia.

25.04.2011

DAY.az

[Ilgar Velizade: "Armeian side is not up for any real agreement" \[RUS\]](#)

Political scientist, Ilgar Velizade, believes that if negotiations continue with their current intensity, then perhaps towards mid summer there could be some breakthrough. And yet, nothing more should be expected says Velizade. Political scientist mentioned recent statements made on behalf of official Yerevan and an attempt to open an airport in Karabakh as obstacles to further progress.

29.04.2011

DAY.az

[Russian political scientist: "Azerbaijan's might lose its temper in near future" \[RUS\]](#)

Day.az interviewed Russian political scientist Mikhail Delagin on his opinion on the future of Karabakh. According to Delagin, right now, there is no mechanism that suits both of the countries. In addition, attention of France and US, other two Minsk Group Co-chairs has been diverted towards the Middle East, thus, little attention is given to Karabakh conflict. Political scientist believes that Russia is trying in one way or another resolve the conflict especially because there is potentially a threat to the country itself given large Azerbaijani and Armenian population living in Russia. Delagin believes that if tomorrow, war in Karabakh re-ignites, that might echo in Russia too among, which is something Russia doesn't really want.

About The Journal of Conflict Transformation

The Journal of Conflict Transformation is an independent online publication that provides a forum for scholars, practitioners, policy analysts, starting researchers and bloggers to analyze as well as discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and issues related to it. The purpose of the publication is to contribute to sustainable resolution of the conflict by expanding scholarship on the subject and encouraging diverse perspectives and analysis.

The Journal welcomes contributions from established researchers and is also committed to include the voices of emerging analysts and writers within the peace process. This inter-disciplinary online publication accepts scholarly and analytical articles, as well as reflective writings, that contribute to the better understanding of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Armenian-Azerbaijani relations and suggestions for improvement of the peace process and positive transformation of inter-societal relations. The articles can analyze the conflict as a whole or any factor that potentially has implication for the conflict and/or its resolution from the perspective of political science, economy, sociology, anthropology, social psychology, collective memory studies, comparative history, ethnic conflict, identity-conflict, conflict resolution, peace studies, mediation and facilitation, conflict transformation and comparative case studies.

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Featured next on June 1:

'Facebook revolutions' and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

By Ian Cornell

Turkey's Karabakh Conundrum

By Nigar Goksel

Bi-weekly News Digest of Azerbaijan and Armenian media on Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenian-Azerbaijani relations

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