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The Neutral Zone

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Analysis

Sadakhlo neutral zone for Armenian-Azerbaijani contacts: use of trade as a tool for conflict transformation

By [Anna Poghosyan](#)

The collapse of the Soviet empire and the ensuing flare-up of many of its inherent ethnic and political conflicts radically changed the traditional economic ties and geopolitical map of the post-Soviet world. Today, some researchers have pointed out that the best way of solving regional conflicts is trying to link conflicting sides through economic relations and creating an economically integrated area that will benefit all sides in conflict (Champain, 2004, pp. 18–26). The proposed energy supply projects, which are gaining support among Caucasian experts, emphasize the economic priorities of regional cooperation, requiring a new, more pragmatic approach by conflicting political elites to the issues of stability and economic development in the region (Nelson, 2000)... **Read more on Page 3**

News Digest

Digest of Armenian Media for March 15- 31 2011

By [News Digest](#)

15.03.2011 Tert.am [Azerbaijan has become a 'terrorist' state in South Caucasus \[ENG\]](#) Vahram Atanesyan, a senior official of the unrecognized Republic of Nagorno Karabakh, said that Azerbaijan has become a terrorist state in the South Caucasus, though it is not currently any considering large-scale military operations. "Today, Azerbaijan has become a terrorist state in the South Caucasus. It is declaring that if the conflict is not solved as it wants it to, then it will unleash a war," said Atanesyan. "This is the same display as terrorism."... **Read more on Page 9**

A new look at old principles: making the Madrid document work

By [Mark Dietzen](#)

The Minsk Group has encouraged Presidents Ilham Aliev and Serzh Sargsyan to agree on the Madrid Principles for almost four years. To date, the leaders have only managed to agree on the preamble. This article assesses why the Madrid document remains unsigned, and challenges the conventional wisdom that the most divisive issues should be left for last. Instead, this analysis suggests a modified plan for peace that confronts the most divisive issue first: Nagorno-Karabakh's status. Since 1992, the Minsk Group of the OSCE has tried and largely failed to facilitate a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, yet official statements say that negotiations are moving forward... **Read more on Page 5**

Digest of Azerbaijani Media for March 16- 30, 2011

By [News Digest](#)

16.03.2011 Radio Free Europe Local Service [An interesting comment from Azerbaijan's official \[AZ\]](#) In his interview with Turkey's CNN Turk, Azerbaijan's Foreign Affairs Deputy Araz Azimov said Turkey complicated the resolution of the Karabakh conflict by signing Zurich protocols. Deputy also believes there is no point in expecting any major developments in Karabakh process prior to April 24th or after, given Armenia's attempts in pulling Karabakh away from Azerbaijan while Azerbaijan wanting re-integration of Karabkh to Azerbaijan... **Read more on Page 21**

The Neutral Zone

How much is the grade?

By Olga Bregvadze

Despite its wealth generated by rich natural resources, mild climate and even favourable conditions for tourism, Azerbaijan, is still on the list of countries with a transition economy. While there could be a myriad of other reasons for this, one of the main problems in transitioning from its current status towards more sustainable development is high level of corruption that exists on all levels of the society. According to [Transparency International reports](#), despite well-crafted legislation in both judiciary and public sector, these laws are not implemented properly... **To read more please proceed to the site.**

Bribery in education

By Shushanik Karapetyan

Life is full of problems. Everything about it has its own issues that need to be dealt with. Health, education, social assistance, democracy, freedom of expression- are only some of the very few elements of our lives that if not perfected could cause a myriad of problems for many generations. Perhaps, if we were to choose, education could constitute the backbone of above listed elements. Without well- established, modernized, educational system, countries are doomed for failure and Armenia is no different. Today, Armenia's biggest problem with the education system is BRIBERY. It is a known fact, everybody is well aware of... **To read more place proceed to the site.**

Democratization experiences and obstacles in the South Caucasus: possibilities for change

By Anush Hayrapetyan

Democratization refers to the process of making the state "democratic." It is the process, not the state, of a democratic society. This process applies to states in the process of transition, and in particular to the states of the South Caucasus— Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia in this context. The process of democratization in these states can be described by the cyclic model of democratic transition, which is mostly typical of developing countries in which authorities display a positive attitude towards democracy... **To read more please proceed to the site.**

ANALYSIS

Sadakhlo Neutral Zone for Armenian- Azerbaijani Contacts: Use of Trade as a Tool for Conflict Transformation

By Anna Poghosyan

The collapse of the Soviet empire and the ensuing flare-up of many of its inherent ethnic and political conflicts radically changed the traditional economic ties and geopolitical map of the post-Soviet world. Today, some researchers have pointed out that the best way of solving regional conflicts is trying to link conflicting sides through economic relations and creating an economically integrated area that will benefit all sides in conflict (Champain, 2004, pp. 18–26). The proposed energy supply projects, which are gaining support among Caucasian experts, emphasize the economic priorities of regional cooperation, requiring a new, more pragmatic approach by conflicting political elites to the issues of stability and economic development in the region (Nelson, 2000).

The market in Sadakhlo, a village whose population is predominantly Azerbaijani and is situated on the Georgian-Armenian border, was long known as one of the constant economic hubs in the South Caucasus. Among infrequent ruminations on its character and functional role, it displayed an Armenian-Azeri composition of the trading community, which was a special attraction for many years. This market had existed since the early 1990s and had been actively operating since 1993. Right from the beginning it attracted the unemployed in Armenia and Georgia with its opportunities (Huseynova, 2009, p. 37). Armenians, Azerbaijanis and Georgians went there to trade or to engage in different types of work, whether it be in the form of paid work for someone else or their own business to survive. “Trade relations” were conducted mainly between the Georgian Azerbaijanis and Armenians. The Azerbaijanis were selling, the Armenians were buying and the Georgians, as “landlords,” were “controlling” (Juvarly & Shabanov, 2004, pp. 216–217). The market was closed in 2007. Unexpectedly for the local inhabitants, the closure of the market actualized the idea of a return to agriculture. However, the lengthy history of the market’s existence changed practically all of the routine practices of the inhabitants of Sadakhlo, who had become so used to the profits from the market that today they have little enthusiasm about returning to the previously common everyday work on the soil.

Economic relations between the conflicting sides, the Armenians and Azerbaijanis at Sadakhlo market, are interesting for a number of reasons. Such relations were an indication of the spontaneous processes resulting from economic transition, accompanied by impoverishment of the population. Real living conditions created incentives for people on either side of the frontline to engage in trade — often counter to the politics of the enduring conflict — as is the case with Sadakhlo market on the boarder between the Azeri-populated part of Georgia and Armenia. But large economic interests were tied to, and in many cases would even lead to, these developments. By saying large economic interests, I mean that in the case of trade enlargement the market would lead to the potential economical growth of the region and development of living conditions close to Sadakhlo villages.

Sadakhlo market could be a model for further cooperation between groups whose “mother countries” are in a conflicting situation (Juvarly & Shabanov, pp. 227–238). On one hand, the market is viewed as a model for satisfying the material needs of the Armenians, Azerbaijanis, and Georgians that live on the periphery of Georgia and Armenia, and whose economies are unable to fulfill expectations of the population living there. On the other hand, we see that Sadakhlo demonstrates that relations between the two nations can be different under different conditions and within a certain social, political, and economic framework. From the anthropological point of view, people hold different behaviors in their “mother countries” and abroad. It’s explained in the way that people feel a collective national identity in their “mother countries” that is stronger than when they are in a neutral zone. The strong, collective identity is a problem in the current situation, which hinders communication and needs to be dealt with.

The example of Armenian-Azerbaijani constant coexistence in Sadakhlo market represents an impressive demonstration of compromise. It can also be a demonstration of the experience of successfully realized collective civic contacts in a situation when the so-called nation state does not obstruct the

realization of these contacts. Trade and business contacts between Armenians and Azerbaijanis were in most cases perceived as something usual, and even after the closure of the market, the links between traders remain intact, which can be viewed as a positive sign.

The one infallible benefit the Sadakhlo market exhibited is the need for an atmosphere of permanent communication, and it could be of great importance in the future. In times of conflict, such trading areas also serve as locations potentially useful for dialogues. In the event of a peaceful settlement of the conflict, it is precisely these economic “contact points” that will help overcome syndromes of mutual hate in as short time as possible.

To evaluate the role of this trade zone properly, we need to examine the advantages it brings to those living beyond the confines of Sadakhlo. The role and significance of the market and its trade are controversial and open to dispute. But its existence means that it needs to be taken into account, and it is reasonable to explore whether the market can bring some broader overall benefit.

In any case, the Sadakhlo market example has demonstrated that no matter how tense relations are, trade can bring conflicting nations closer together and enrich both sides.

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A New Look at Old Principles: Making the Madrid Document Work

By Mark Dietzen

The Minsk Group has encouraged Presidents Ilham Aliiev and Serzh Sargsyan to agree on the Madrid Principles for almost four years. To date, the leaders have only managed to agree on the preamble. This article assesses why the Madrid document remains unsigned, and challenges the conventional wisdom that the most divisive issues should be left for last. Instead, this analysis suggests a modified plan for peace that confronts the most divisive issue first: Nagorno-Karabakh's status.

The Minsk Group's Mirage of Progress

Since 1992, the Minsk Group of the OSCE has tried and largely failed to facilitate a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, yet official statements say that negotiations are moving forward. The co-chairs often express hope that a peaceful resolution is just beyond the horizon, but those familiar with the issue have grown weary of this mantra.

Initially proposed by the Minsk Group to the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2007 and revised in 2009, the Madrid Principles include the following six points:

1. Return of the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijani control
2. An interim status for Nagorno-Karabakh providing guarantees for security and self-governance
3. A corridor linking Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh
4. Future determination of the final legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh through a legally binding expression of will
5. The right of all internally displaced persons and refugees to return to their former places of residence
6. International security guarantees that would include a peacekeeping operation

The parties disagree about the sequence, however. Azerbaijan prefers the order shown above, considering special modalities for the withdrawal of Armenian military forces from the regions of Kelbajar and Lachin. Armenia views this order as unfair, arguing that it would be giving up land but only receiving a promise in return about Nagorno-Karabakh's final legal status in the future. Given that Nagorno-Karabakh has had de facto independence from Baku for almost 20 years, let us examine what addressing the status of Karabakh would imply.

In their current form, the Madrid Principles avoid the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict's thorniest point of contention by pushing the issue of status into the vague realm of "future determination." Such ambiguity makes the Madrid document vulnerable to manipulation and misunderstanding. More important, it prevents a credible and peaceful resolution.

The Madrid document fails to define the entity of "Nagorno-Karabakh." During the Soviet period, the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic included both the Nakhichevan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (Nakhichevan ASSR) and the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (Nagorno-Karabakh AO). ASSRs enjoyed a greater degree of autonomy within the Soviet system than AOs.

Whereas Nakhichevan ASSR's autonomous status was carried over to the Republic of Azerbaijan's 1995 constitution as the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic, the constitution makes no mention of Nagorno-Karabakh. The autonomous status of the Nagorno-Karabakh AO was, in fact, dissolved on

November 26, 1991, shortly after Azerbaijan's Supreme Council adopted the country's independence from the Soviet Union on October 18, 1991 (De Waal, 2003, p. 162).

Nagorno-Karabakh's absence in Azerbaijan's constitution ties directly into the question of its final legal status. When it comes time for the determination of final status, to what version of "Nagorno-Karabakh" will that status be applied? The Madrid Principles offer no answer to this question: they contain no definition of what territory is considered to be included in Nagorno-Karabakh. And, as noted, Azerbaijan's constitution also neglects to mention, let alone define, Nagorno-Karabakh. Because of this omission, Azerbaijan could later impose its own territorial definition of Nagorno-Karabakh, without being restrained by a previously stated definition.

If the Madrid Principles are followed to their logical conclusions in the order listed above, then the Armenian-controlled territories surrounding the former Nagorno-Karabakh AO would be returned to Azerbaijan, followed by the repatriation of hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced persons. At that point, Armenians fear, Azerbaijan would institute the "future determination of the final legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh through a legally binding expression of will," by calling for a referendum.

Rather than being a referendum on the independence of what was the majority-Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh AO of Soviet Azerbaijan, Armenia is very concerned that the future referendum would include the votes of the newly repatriated Azerbaijani majority in the territories surrounding the former Nagorno-Karabakh AO. The Armenians would be the minority in such a broad territorial definition of Nagorno-Karabakh, forfeiting their ability to achieve de jure independence from Azerbaijan through the referendum. This is a legitimate grievance, and it makes the Madrid Principles in their current form a non-starter.

A Pragmatic Plan for Peace: Clarifying and Ordering the Madrid Principles

Clarifying and ordering the present version of the Madrid Principles offers a more viable alternative road map for Presidents Aliiev and Sargsyan. The leaders must first reach a political compromise on the following two points:

- An agreement on the territorial boundaries of Nagorno-Karabakh (not mentioned in the Madrid Principles).

(Envisioned compromise: The borders of the former Soviet Nagorno-Karabakh AO, plus the Lachin Corridor with an agreed-upon width.)

- An agreement on the participants of a referendum on secession which would serve as "a legally binding expression of will" for the determination of the final legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh, and the logistics of the voting process (clarification to D).

Second, the Minsk Group must encourage Presidents Aliiev and Sargsyan to agree to the following order of the updated Madrid Principles, which would include the clarifications outlined above:

1. An agreement on the territorial boundaries of Nagorno-Karabakh, including a corridor linking Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh (new principle; C)
2. An interim status for Nagorno-Karabakh providing guarantees for security and self-governance (B)
3. A referendum on secession, facilitated by the OSCE, which would serve as a legally binding expression of will for the determination of the final legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh (D, revised)

4. International security guarantees that would include a peacekeeping operation (F)
5. Return of the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijani control (A)
6. The right of all internally displaced persons and refugees to return to their former places of residence (E)

A Win-Win Situation

The Minsk Group co-chairs stated that the Madrid document “was not an ultimatum, and its provisions were not the Ten Commandments” (Merzlyakov, 2008). Incorporating the aforementioned changes to the document would result in a win-win situation that balances self-determination and territorial integrity, in which both the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis have much to gain.

What the Armenians Gain:

According to the Soviet Union’s final census of 1989, the Nagorno-Karabakh AO had a majority-Armenian population of 76.9% and an Azerbaijani minority of 21.5% (International Crisis Group, 2005, p. 4). The referendum would allow for the de jure secession of Nagorno-Karabakh, with the necessary addition of the Lachin Corridor. This would satisfy the Armenians’ right to self-determination.

What the Azerbaijanis Gain:

Of the seven regions outside of the former Soviet Nagorno-Karabakh AO that are fully or partially controlled by Armenian forces, six would be returned to Azerbaijan in their entirety, as well as the region of Lachin outside of the Lachin Corridor, amounting to about half of the territory now under Armenian control (International Crisis Group, 2005, p. 1). [1] This would satisfy the Azerbaijanis’ right to territorial integrity.

Conclusion

Nagorno-Karabakh is a tinderbox that is dangerously close to igniting. The South Caucasus has the unfortunate reputation of garnering diplomatic attention only *after* bullets start flying. There is still time, albeit less and less, to find a diplomatic solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Noting the urgency of this matter, the alternative plan for peace outlined above seeks to work within the Madrid document to create a viable and peaceful resolution that should interest both parties. I hope that the Armenian and Azerbaijani leadership will consider this plan and its potential for solving differences with the pen rather than the sword.

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[1] This estimate is based on the following figures provided by the International Crisis Group's September 2005 report, *Nagorno-Karabakh: Viewing the Conflict from the Ground*: the area of the former Soviet Nagorno-Karabakh AO and the seven regions outside of it that are now fully or partially controlled by Armenian forces is about 11,722 sq. km; the area of the seven regions outside of the former Nagorno-Karabakh AO that are fully or partially controlled by Armenian forces is about 7,409 sq. km.; the area of the parts of the Mardakert and Martuni regions which were in the former Soviet Nagorno-Karabakh AO but are now controlled by Azerbaijani forces is 327 sq. km; the area of the former Soviet Nagorno-Karabakh AO was 4,388 sq. km.; and the area of the former Soviet region of Lachin was 1,835 sq. km. Without calculating the former Soviet region of Lachin, if the win-win situation described above were to be followed, Azerbaijan would receive a net gain of about 5,247 sq. km. (+7,409-1,835-327), or 44.76% (5,247/11,722) of the territory currently controlled by the de-facto Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh. If, for example, one-third of the region of Lachin was to be designated as the Lachin Corridor (611.67 sq. km.), then Azerbaijan would receive a net gain of about 6,470.33 sq. km. (+7,409-611.67-327), or 55.20% (6,470.33/11,722) of the territory currently controlled by the de-facto Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh.

NEWS DIGEST

Digest of Armenian Media for March 15- 31, 2011

By News Digest

15.03.2011

Tert.am

[Azerbaijan has become a 'terrorist' state in South Caucasus \[ENG\]](#)

Vahram Atanesyan, a senior official of the unrecognized Republic of Nagorno Karabakh, said that Azerbaijan has become a terrorist state in the South Caucasus, though it is not currently any considering large-scale military operations.

"Today, Azerbaijan has become a terrorist state in the South Caucasus. It is declaring that if the conflict is not solved as it wants it to, then it will unleash a war," said Atanesyan. "This is the same display as terrorism."

[It is more than 2 years since co-chairs are telling Armenia and Azerbaijan to remove snipers from Line of Contact \[ARM\]](#)

According to the article, the OSCE French co-chair Bernard Fassier said in Baku that it is two years since they are telling Armenia and Azerbaijan to pull out the snipers from the Line of Contact. He also said that they were in Vilnius when they learned about the "killing of a 9-year-old Azerbaijani boy on the Line of Contact" and immediately released a statement.

"Had [the parties] listened to us, no such incidents would happen," Fassier was quoted as saying.

[NKR demands international probe into the death of Azerbaijani boy \[ARM\]](#)

Vahram Atanesyan, a senior official of the unrecognized Republic of Nagorno Karabakh said that the OSCE Minsk Group should urge on Azerbaijan and make it open a probe – involving international experts – into the circumstances of the recent killing of an 8-year-old Azerbaijan boy on the Line of Contact between Karabakh and Azerbaijan. He also said that the boy has become the victim of an incident and that neither Armenia nor Karabakh are to blame for that.

[Co-chairs avoid listening to Stepanakert's view: Vahram Atanesyan \[ARM\]](#)

According to this article, the head of the Standing Committee of the parliament of the unrecognized Republic of Nagorno Karabakh, Vahan Atanesyan, said that the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs are avoiding visiting Karabakh as they "don't have anything to tell Stepanakert."

"We all understand that weather conditions can make them not to visit Stepanakert only once, but always," said he.

[Articles by Armenian scholars seriously offset Azerbaijani propaganda – young scholar \[ENG\]](#)

Artak Maghalyan, a young Armenian scholar, said that the articles by scholars in international scholarly publications can serve as a "counterbalance to the Azerbaijani propaganda". He also said that in 2008 alone Armenian scientists had a total of 540 scientific articles in international publications, while the scientists from Georgia and Azerbaijan had 328 and 292 articles, respectively.

“Besides, if an Armenian scientist manages to have a publication in international journals, voicing the pro-Armenian position, that brings a lot to the country, as well as the scientist,” the young scholar said.

[Armenian side ready to return Azerbaijani POWs via Red Cross \[ENG\]](#)

The article says that the Armenian side is willing to return the Azerbaijani prisoners of war via the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC).

“Pursuant to the Armenian and Azerbaijani Presidents’ March 5 agreement signed in Sochi with the mediation of the Russian leader, the Armenian side’s commitment to return the Azerbaijani prisoners of war via the ICRC was conveyed to the head of the ICRC Office in Yerevan on March 14,” reads the statement.

News.am

[Third countries should not interfere in Karabakh peace process – NKR MP \[ENG\]](#)

Draft resolution of Lithuania’s parliament on Nagorno-Karabakh will negatively affect the peace process, as biased opinion of a third country hinders resolution of the conflict within the OSCE Minsk Group, said Vahram Atanesyan, a Karabakhi MP. He also said he is hopeful that the draft bill would not be adopted by Lithuania’s parliament or would be approved after relevant amendments are made. He also called for Lithuania’s unbiased stance on Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

[Austria for peace in Nagorno-Karabakh \[ENG\]](#)

According to the article, Austrian Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger said that Austria calls on Armenia and Azerbaijan to redouble efforts to seek a solution to the Karabakh conflict through negotiations and is ready to offer its support. He also stressed that the conflicting parties should step up efforts within the OSCE Minsk Group and continues confidence-building measures.

16.03.2011

Tert.am

[EU supports peaceful resolution of Karabakh conflict – Jose Manuel Barroso \[ENG\]](#)

President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso said that the EU supports a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the basis of the principles of non-use of force, territorial integrity and the self-determination of peoples. He also said that the EU lends its full support to the OSCE Minsk Group and will continue to promote regional cooperation and good neighborly relations through the multilateral track of the Eastern Partnership.

“We remain seriously concerned about continuing armed incidents at the Line of Contact in Nagorno-Karabakh and the ongoing militarization in the region ... The persistence of this conflict remains a major impediment to development in the region,” he said.

Epress.am

[Armenian president deems Azerbaijan’s accusations to be defamatory \[ENG\]](#)

The articles said that at a meeting with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs in Yerevan Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan reaffirmed Armenia’s readiness to continue negotiations within the framework of agreements reached during the last meeting of the presidents of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in Sochi. It was noted that Armenia has taken steps following the meeting toward informing the public and creating an environment of mutual trust between the parties. In addition, attention was paid to Azerbaijan’s continuing

threats following the Sochi meeting, as well as disseminating misinformation that a nine-year-old child was killed by an Armenian sniper.□

[Armenians, Azeris and Jews Unite in Russia, Establish Single NGO \[ENG\]](#)□

This news item says that Armenian, Azeri and Jewish communities of Lipetsk, Russia, decided to come together and form a single NGO. According to Vladimir Malkhasyan, the head of the Lipetsk branch of the Union of Armenians of Russia, inter-ethnic communication and the idea of establishing a non-governmental organization was born about three years ago.

“We are all well aware of the current turbulent times, when more and more disagreements arise on national grounds; thus, the need to learn more about each other, to become familiar with national traditions and culture arises,” he said.

News.am□

[Azerbaijan threatens to annihilate aircrafts flying to Stepanakert's airport \[ENG\]](#)

According to this article, Azerbaijan threatens to annihilate aircrafts flying to Nagorno-Karabakh's airport, if Karabakh authorities reopen the Stepanakert airport, Director of Azerbaijan's Civil Aviation Administration Arif Mammadov said. “Our airspace is closed over Karabakh. According to law on aviation, it is considered to annihilate those aircrafts which fly even to there,” Mammadov said.

[Erdogan says resolution of Karabakh conflict to help normalize Armenia-Turkey relations \[ENG\]](#)□

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said at a speech in Moscow that the resolution of the Karabakh conflict will play a certain role in normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey. Speaking about the Sochi meeting of Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders held through Russian president's mediation, Erdogan called Dmitry Medvedev's initiative to hold negotiations an important one.

17.03.2011□

Tert.am□

[Armenia, Azerbaijan swap captives \[ENG\]](#)

According to the article, under the agreement reached between the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents in Sochi on March 5, sergeant of the Azerbaijani army Anar Hajiyev, held in captivity in Nagorno Karabakh was handed over to the Azerbaijani authorities in a border village between Karabakh and Azerbaijan. Simultaneously, resident of the Armenian village of Haghartsin (Tavush region) Arthur Badalyan (born 1978) was handed over to the Armenian side.

[Azerbaijan threatens to hit Karabakh planes \[ENG\]](#)□

The article says that Azerbaijan is threatening to shoot down planes flying to the unrecognized Republic of Nagorno Karabakh Republic if its authorities re-open the airport constructed near the capital town of Stepanakert. The Azerbaijani government warned the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) last October that it does not authorize any flights to Karabakh.□“We notified that the airspace over Karabakh is closed. The law on aviation envisages the physical destruction of airplanes landing in that territory,” Arif Mammadov, the director of Azerbaijan's Civil Aviation had told Azerbaijani news agency APA.

[News.am□OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs issue statement \[ENG\]](#)

The article says that the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs issued a statement in which they said that they urge the parties to take advantage of the positive momentum created at the Sochi Summit and to focus on the

priority issues in order to make progress in reaching an agreement on the Basic Principles for Resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict. They also stressed that recent events along the Line of Contact, before and after the Sochi Summit, had demonstrated the urgent need for such a mechanism and called upon all the parties to respect the ceasefire.

[Azerbaijani POW refuses to return to his country \[ENG\]](#)

The article says that Spokesman for Armenian Defense Ministry David Karapetyan said that Azerbaijani prisoner of war Roman Huseynov refuses to return to Azerbaijan. It also says that the Armenian side will transfer the Azeri POW as soon as he is psychologically ready to return to his country. For this reason, at the moment no repatriation is being organized, Karapetyan said.

[Armenian PM proposes to settle Karabakh conflict with help of “European values” \[ENG\]](#)

According to this article the Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan said that the parties should negotiate to come to an agreement over the Nagorno-Karabakh, adding that a key principal in the Karabakh peace process is that there is no alternative to the peaceful resolution.

“If the sides have different notions of conflict settlement, their perception of justice greatly differs. Perception of justice is a value system,” he said adding that the best assistance in peace process is formation of a common platform of values in the region.

18.03.2011 □

Tert.am □

[Swedish parliament hosts discussion on Nagorno Karabakh conflict \[ENG\]](#)

The article says that upon the initiative of the Armenian-Swedish parliamentary group, the Swedish parliament organized a discussion, focusing on the chronology of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and human rights issues, the people’s right to self-determination and territorial integrity and the further prospects and possible developments in the conflict settlement process. It also says that present at the discussion were several outstanding scholars and experts.

[OSCE Chairman-in-Office urges for snipers’ withdrawal from contact line \[ENG\]](#)

This article said that the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and Lithuanian Foreign Minister Audronius Azubalis said at a meeting with Armenia’s Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandyan that the OSCE continues supporting the Minsk Group’s mediatory efforts in the Karabakh conflict settlement. At a news conference the two diplomats also reiterated support to the co-chairs’ activities and proposals, calling on the conflicting parties to withdraw snipers from the contact line.

[Azerbaijan’s threats to Stepanakert airport classical example of terror – NKR presidential spokesman \[ENG\] □](#)

This news item says that the spokesperson of the presidential administration of the unrecognized Republic of Nagorno Karabakh David Babayan said that Azerbaijan’s statements to shoot down civilian planes to Stepanakert are classic examples of terror.

“It is a statement that a normal person couldn’t have made,” he said, commenting on a recent statement by the director of Azerbaijan’s Civil Aviation Administration that Azerbaijan has warned that the airspace over Karabakh is closed and that “the law on aviation envisages the physical destruction of airplanes landing in that territory.”

[New starting point is needed over Karabakh – OSCE chairperson-in-office \[ENG\]](#)

The parties involved in the resolution of the Karabakh conflict should not stop and should continue the peace talks from a positive starting point, the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Audronius Azudalis said at a meeting with Armenia's President Serzh Sargsyan. He also considered the results of the meeting by Armenian, Azerbaijani and Russian presidents in Sochi on March 5 as positive.

Lragir.am

[Karabakh youth hold protested outside Foreign Ministry in Yerevan \[ARM\]](#)

The article says that representatives of Karabakh youth organized a protest outside the building of Armenia's Foreign Ministry where Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandyan was meeting with OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Audronius Azubalis. It also says that the demonstrators placed posters reading "No to Interim Status of Nagorno-Karabakh", "No to Madrid Principles", "Recognize NKR People's Right to Self-Determination".

News.am

[Armenia, Azerbaijan should remove snipers simultaneously, oppositionist says \[ENG\]](#)

Member of the opposition alliance Armenian National Congress, Vladimir Karapetyan, said that both Armenia and Azerbaijan must remove snipers from the line of contact simultaneously.

"Although OSCE Chairperson-in-Office's statement is a good wish, both sides should be called to remove snipers," said he, adding that numerous cases of ceasefire violation by the Azerbaijani side should be taken into account.

[NKR President considers Azerbaijan's behavior does not inspire confidence \[ENG\]](#)

President of the unrecognized Republic of Nagorno Karabakh Bako Sahakyan said that "Azerbaijan's behavior does not inspire confidence" that it is ready to resolve the Karabakh conflict. Commenting on the proposal by OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Andronious Azubalis to move the snipers from the Line of Contact, Sahakyan said that such a proposal is appropriate in case the "sides display constructive approach". He also stressed the necessity of making steps aimed at easing tension on the Line of Contact.

21.03.2011 □

Tert.am

[OSCE monitoring failed – Nagorno Karabakh Defense Ministry \[ENG\]](#)

The article says that the Foreign Ministry of the unrecognized Republic of Nagorno Karabakh Republic issued a statement, accusing the Azerbaijani authorities of preventing the OSCE mission to conduct a monitoring on the Line of Contact line between Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan. The monitoring, scheduled on March 17, did not take place because of the Azerbaijani authorities' refusal, the statement said.

RFEL

[Bryza condemns Azerbaijan's threat against Stepanakert Airport \[ARM\]](#)

The article says that US Ambassador to Azerbaijan Mathew Bryza said the use of threat of using force in the conflict zone, including against civilian aircrafts is "unacceptable". He also said that it will run counter the obligations assumed by Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents. "We are calling on the parties to solve the

security problems of the civilian aviation before the opening of a new airport in Nagorno Karabakh,” said Bryza.

News.am

[Parliamentary hearings on Karabakh conflict in Bern](#)

The article said that Switzerland-Armenia parliamentary group initiated parliamentary hearings on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in Bern. It also says that the speakers mainly touched upon the notions of territorial integrity and peoples' right to self-determination.

22.03.2011 □

Tert.am □

[Karabakh president excludes unilateral withdrawal of snipers \[ENG\] □](#)

Bako Sahakyan, the President of the unrecognized Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, said that at this stage, it would be hard for Karabakh to unilaterally withdraw snipers from the Line of Contact, “since Azerbaijan continues to violate ceasefire agreement, which was put in place a long time ago”.

“We believe that such suggestions may be taken into consideration only when all sides are demonstrating positive approach. Today, we have grounds to announce that during the past several years Azerbaijan has violated, on numerous occasions, previous agreements. Under such circumstances, we cannot unilaterally accept Mr. Azubalis' proposal,” said he.

Lragir.am

[What does Karabakh want? \[ARM\]](#)

The article says that once again the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs held a meeting, while Karabakh stressed that the peace talks cannot be effective without its participation. Further, it says that this has happened for several times and that no one is tired of repeating things because it is beneficial for everyone. According to the article it would be better that not only new people would participate in the peace talks over the Karabakh conflict, but also new ideas would be brought around.

News.am

[Minsk Group must give concrete response to Azerbaijan's non-constructive behavior, Armenian MP says \[ENG\]](#)

According to the article, Republican Party of Armenia MP Artak Zakaryan said that the OSCE Minsk Group should give a “concrete response to Azerbaijan's non-constructive behavior,” as it continues to “violate the ceasefire regime and its uncompromising stance hinders the conduct of international monitoring in the line of contact between Armenian and Azerbaijani armed forces. “If Azerbaijan implements its military threats, the third Armenian state will be established,” said he.

23.03.2011 □

Tert.am □

[OSCE should work with Azerbaijan, not Karabakh and Armenia – Nalbandyan \[ENG\] □](#)

Armenia's Foreign Minister said that first the OSCE should talk to Azerbaijan, rather than with Armenia, so to remove snipers, as "Azerbaijan is persistently rejecting all the proposals of the international community". "Such proposals have been made also by the [UN Secretary General] Ban Ki-Moon. Such proposals have been made by the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs ... but up to day Azerbaijan is persistently rejecting these proposals. This is the reality," Nalbandyan explained.

[US Ambassador criticizes Azerbaijan's threat to bomb Stepanakert airport \[ENG\]](#)

According to this news item, US Ambassador to Armenia Marie Yovanovitch said that Azerbaijan's threats to bomb the newly constructed airport in Stepanakert are absolutely unacceptable. She also said that such threats do not stem from the principles Azerbaijan was expected to follow to achieve a peaceful settlement to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Yovanovitch also stressed that the US has a serious approach to all those principles, focusing particularly on the non-use of force. "It is necessary to fix progress to avoid incidents," she said.

News.am

[U.S. Ambassador says no military solution to Karabakh conflict](#)

The article says that US Ambassador to Armenia Marie Yovanovitch rules out the resolution of the Karabakh conflict by military means. Yovanovitch also said that the US is closely cooperating with the OSCE Minsk Group partners, noting the mediators repeatedly stated the conflict should be solved through talks. She also said that the Co-Chairs have recently held meeting with the conflicting parties to maintain the momentum created in Sochi. She also stressed importance of progress in the peace process and avoiding new incidents in the line of contact.

24.03.2011

Tert.am

[Status quo is unacceptable – OSCE MG co-chairs \[ENG\]](#)

According to the article, the OSCE co-chairs released a statement in which they said that status quo in the territories around Nagorno Karabakh is unacceptable. They also said "only a peaceful, negotiated settlement can bring the prospect of a more certain future to the people who are living in the territories around Nagorno Karabakh and those who used to live there".

"Noting the continuing importance of restraint by the sides both on the ground and in public statements, the Co-Chairs consider unacceptable any use or threat of force, including against civil aircraft. In that respect, they strongly condemn the senseless cycle of killings and retaliations along the front lines ...," read the statement.

[OSCE urges to avoid any activities in territories surrounding Karabakh \[ENG\]](#)

The article says that the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs urged on Armenia and Karabakh to avoid any activities in the territories surrounding Nagorno Karabakh. In a report of a Field Assessment Mission the OSCE co-chairs conducted to the seven regions surrounding Nagorno Karabakh (NK) from October 7-12, 2010, they said any activities there or other disputed areas would prejudice a final settlement or change the character of these areas.

"In traveling more than 1,000 kilometers throughout the territories, the co-Chairs saw stark evidence of the disastrous consequences of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the failure to reach a peaceful settlement," read the summary report of the Field Assessment Mission.

Further, it said that the towns and villages that existed before the conflict are now abandoned and almost entirely in ruins.

[Karabakh conflict not likely to be settled through peace talks – Manoyan \[ENG\]](#)

Senior official of the Dashnaktsutyun party Giro Manoyan said that the peace talks over Nagorno Karabakh are highly unlikely to settle the conflict. According to him, “the negotiations should be held in parallel with a campaign aimed at achieving the international recognition of Karabakh”. Speaking of Azerbaijan’s recent threats to bomb the Stepanakert airport, Manoyan said it might unleash a new war. “That will not be just a violation of ceasefire; it will mark the beginning of a new war,” he said.

News.am

[Azerbaijan tries to attribute any fatal incident to Karabakh side, NKR Defense Army \[ENG\]](#)

According to this news piece, the Defense Army of the unrecognized Republic of Nagorno Karabakh said in a statement that “Azerbaijan heightens tension in the line of contact, spreading misinformation about the death of an Azerbaijani soldier last week.”

“By force of habit Azerbaijan is trying to attribute to the Karabakh side any fatal incident in their armed forces caused by interpersonal relations, including cases of March 21 and 23. Doing so Azerbaijan is pursuing two goals: firstly to hide real situation in demoralized army from local citizens, and secondly – to present Defense Army as an aggressive side.

[Armenian President promises to do everything for peaceful resolution of Karabakh conflict \[ENG\]](#)

At a meeting with a participant of the Karabakh was in Shirak region, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan said promised to do “his utmost for peaceful resolution of the Karabakh conflict.”

“As the president of Armenia I promise to do everything for the conflict to be resolved peacefully,” he said adding it will be the best tribute to the memory of killed soldiers. “They managed to protect Motherland at the expense of their lives, while we should manage to make peace,” he noted.

[Russia hopeful no incidents will happen in Karabakh conflict zone \[ENG\]](#)

Senior Russian Foreign Ministry official Alexander Lukashevich said that Russia is hopeful there will be no incidents in the line of contact between Azerbaijani and Nagorno-Karabakhi armed forces in the future. He also said that the parties are interested in continuing dialogue, preventing incidents, rejecting violence and drawing up a common formula for resolution of the conflict, said, Russia 24 television reports.

“We have recently intensified our work with Yerevan and Baku,” he said stressing importance of meetings between Russian, Armenian and Azerbaijani Presidents in Sochi. He noted that reached agreement will be basis for further acceleration in talks.

[OSCE Minsk Group most professional format to resolve Karabakh conflict \[ENG\]](#)

Hovhannes Sahakyan, MP of the ruling Armenian Republican Party said that the OSCE Minsk Group is the most professional format to resolve the Karabakh conflict. He also stressed that the Minsk Group, unlike other structures seeking for a mandate to resolve the Karabakh conflict, has studied thoroughly the background of the problem and will never make ungrounded or biased statements.

“Unlike other international structures, statements of the OSCE Minsk Group are balanced and unbiased, as the mediators pay regular visits to the region, visit the line of contact and are familiar with the real situation in the conflict zone.” he said.

25.03.2011

News.am

[MP says territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh should be populated \[ENG\]](#)

According to the article, MP of the Rule of Law party Hovhannes Margaryan said the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh are a security zone when it comes to the settlement of the

Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. "However, Azerbaijan's constant military rhetoric prevents from settling these territories, as people are afraid of living there," he said, commenting on the publication of the results of the recent Field Assessment Mission conducted by the OSCE.

[OSCE Co-Chairs' report contains unacceptable provisions for Armenian side, MP says \[ENG\]](#)

This news item says that MP from Prosperous Armenia Party Naira Zohrabyan said the report of OSCE assessment mission on situation in the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh contains many unacceptable provisions "It is time for the Co-Chairs to indicate precisely the addressee of their statements," she said.

[World community's stance on Nagorno-Karabakh borders differs from ours, ARFD says \[ENG\]](#)

The OSCE Co-Chairs' remarks about poor living conditions of residents of the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh is a disgrace to the Armenian side, Vahan Hovhannisyan, the head of Dashnaksutyun party said. He also said that if Armenian side had been engaged with settlement of the territories and creation of normal living conditions, the international community's position would be different, "whereas Baku's statements would be less impudent." "International community's notion on Nagorno-Karabakh's borders differs from ours. They consider borders of Nagorno-Karabakh coincide with those of former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO). For us it is the territory of former NKAO and surrounding regions," he said.

26.03.2011

Hetq.am

[Co-chairs are simply mediators or an attempt to resurrect Stalinism in the region if taken separately \[ENG\]](#)

The head of the Modus Vivendi centre Ara Papyan says in this article that the OSCE co-chairs obviously exceeded its authorities in the settlement of the Karabakh conflict by using the phrase "the seven occupied territories of Azerbaijan surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh" in the report on the Field Assessment Mission. He also says that the Minsk Group has not been authorized to decide on the status or on the future of any territory – something that is up to the conflicting parties to decide.

27.03.2011

News.am

[OSCE assessment mission's report biased, Karabakh MP says \[ENG\]](#)

MP of the unrecognized Republic of Nagorno Karabakh, Armen Sargsyan, said that the report of the OSCE Field Assessment Mission is biased. According to him, the mission's task to conduct research only inside Nagorno Karabakh and in the territories forming a security zone was initially wrong. "There was no task to conduct mission in the territories controlled by Azerbaijan [meaning Shahumyan region, part of Martakert

and Martuni regions],” he noted, adding that the mission’s goal to find way to establish peace and resolve Karabakh conflict, should not be one-sided.

[OSCE Field Assessment Mission report did not fulfill Azerbaijan’s expectations, Karabakh MP says](#)

According to this article, MP of the unrecognized Republic of Nagorno Karabakh, Vahram Atanesyan, said that Azerbaijan pinned great hopes to OSCE Field Assessment Mission’s report on territories surrounding Karabakh but those hope were not fulfilled. “It is clear to everybody that the mission was conducted on the initiative of the Azerbaijani side. I think, the Azerbaijani side, to put it mildly, was not encouraged by the report,” Atanesyan noted.

28.03.2011

Lragir.am

[Foreign Ministry Spokesperson’s comment on report by OSCE Field Assessment Mission \[ARM\]](#)

The article says that the Spokesperson of Armenia’s Foreign Ministry, Tigran Balayan, while commenting on report by OSCE Field Assessment Mission conducted in the territories around Nagorno Karabakh that are currently under Armenian rule, said that the report represents the co-chairs’ opinion of the current situation there and much in the same way as the previous report, it denies “the misinformation disseminated by the Azerbaijani propaganda”. Further he said that Armenia shares the co-chairs’ view that only the peaceful settlement can ensure a more clear vision of the future in the region.

News.am

[International Crisis Group to prepare reports on Karabakh](#)

A report issued by International Crisis Group says that despite increased international interest, including the personal involvement of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, the prospects of a resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict now seem at its lowest point in years. “The failure to secure a “Basic Principles” agreement before the December Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) summit in Astana – the first in a decade – was deeply troubling. The political deadlock was accompanied by an increase in violence over the summer – fall,” the report says.

29.03.2011

Tert.am

[Parties need to resolve security issues before opening Stepanakert Airport – Mathew Bryza \[ENG\]](#)

According to this article, US Ambassador to Azerbaijan Matthew Bryza said that Armenia and Azerbaijan should solve the issues related to the security of the Stepanakert airport before its opening. Speaking to journalists in Baku Mathew Bryza said that he agreed with the US administration’s view that the parties should before the opening of the airport in Karabakh’s capital discuss the issues that raise concerns. “We think that the details can be discussed,” Bryza was reported by the Azerbaijan news agency Trend as saying.

Lragir.am

[When Qatar recognizes Karabakh \[ARM\]](#)

The article says that France and Qatar recognize the legitimacy of the Libyan rebel, while Nagorno Karabakh has for 20 years now not been recognized. It also says that though Libya and Karabakh are various cases, they still have something in common – the institute of recognition. Saying that France would

hardly recognize a political force – the rebels in Libya’s case – had it not seen any political potential in them, the article raises an issue of whether the de facto authorities of Karabakh have any political potential.

News.am

[Karabakh’s status quo may sound good for someone, Bradtke says \[ENG\]](#)□

OSCE Minsk Group US Co-Chair Robert Bradtke said that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is not a frozen, but rather a continuing one. Speaking at a conference on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington Bradtke said the people in the region deserve a better future with stability and prosperity and that they should get chances for such future.

The situation is not stable yet. This conflict doesn’t get covered in newspapers often,” Bradtke said. “The status quo, even if it sounds good for someone, doesn’t give stability.”

[Membership of Armenia, Azerbaijan to EU may resolve Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, Alexander Rahr says \[ENG\]](#)

Alexander Rahr, Director of the Russian/Eurasia Program, German Council on Foreign Relations said that the international community’s aspiration to involve Armenia and Azerbaijan in the European Union and NATO may resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the long-run. According to him, if both countries join one of these international organizations, it will give an opportunity to come to an amicable agreement.

“Today there is a small likelihood of war resumption. Status quo is of benefit to all sides, except for Azerbaijan. The international community has sufficient weight to deter from undesirable developments in the region,” he said.

30.03.2011

News.am

[Both Armenia and Azerbaijan refused to withdraw snipers from line of contact, OSCE head says \[ENG\]](#)

OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Lithuania’s Foreign Minister Audronius Azubalis said that following the Presidents’ meeting in Sochi there is certain room for progress in the settlement of the Karabakh conflict. The OSCE Minsk Group goes on working, though the Co-Chairs are often criticized by those, who are unaware of the Minsk Group’s activities, he added. Azubalis also stressed that the mediators’ proposal to the conflicting parties through the Russian Presidents’ mediation is a major base for progress. However, the Minsk Group will not resolve the conflict between the parties. It can offer plans to the sides, but if the parties lack political will, no one will achieve a conflict resolution, Azubalis noted.

31.03.2011

Tert.am

[Switzerland closely follows developments around Karabakh conflict \[ENG\]](#)□

Switzerland’s President Micheline Calmy-Rey said that the country keeps track of the developments around the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and that a settlement to the Karabakh conflict would be possible only through peace talks. She also said that Switzerland backs the efforts by the Minsk Group of the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe.

[Armenian president says he’ll be first passenger of Yerevan-Stepanakert flight \[ENG\]](#)

According to the article, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan, speaking about the newly constructed airport in Stepanakert, said that he will be the first passenger of the first flight from Yerevan to Stepanakert. "I will be the first passenger of the Yerevan-Stepanakert flight. The population of Nagorno Karabakh has the right to benefit from air transport services. That's undoubtedly true."

[Armenia and Azerbaijan are at it again – National Interest \[ENG\]](#)

In this article British journalist Thomas de Waal says that the Armenian and Azerbaijani Presidents Serzh Sargsyan and Ilham Aliyev "temporize and avoid signing up to an agreement whose outline has been obvious for around six years now – gradual withdrawal of Armenian forces from the territories around Karabakh in exchange for the promise of a referendum in the future – because they are either afraid or unwilling to agree to compromises that carry too many risks for them."

"If Key West was Karabakh's missed "Dayton moment," the differences are instructive. To make the Dayton peace for Bosnia work, Richard Holbrooke had many instruments at his disposal which the Karabakh mediators do not," de Waal wrote.

Digest of Azerbaijani Media for March 16- 30, 2011

By News Digest

16.03.2011

Radio Free Europe Local Service

[An interesting comment from Azerbaijan's official \[AZ\]](#)

In his interview with Turkey's CNN Turk, Azerbaijan's Foreign Affairs Deputy Araz Azimov said Turkey complicated the resolution of the Karabakh conflict by signing Zurich protocols. Deputy also believes there is no point in expecting any major developments in Karabakh process prior to April 24th or after, given Armenia's attempts in pulling Karabakh away from Azerbaijan while Azerbaijan wanting re- integration of Karabkh to Azerbaijan. "In this situation, we won't reach any mutual conclusions" said Deputy in his final remarks to the channel.

[Azerbaijani officials made it clear that any flights flying over and to Khankendi will be shot \[AZ\]](#)

Azerbaijan Commercial Aviation Administration notified the International Commercial Aviation Administration that Azerbaijan having closed air traffic to Karabakh will take necessary measures if flights coming in from other countries land in Karabakh. According to Azerbaijan Aviation Administration's Director Arif Mammadov, any flights that would land in Khankendi are subject to physical destruction according to law on Aviation. In the meantime the under construction airport in Khankendi will be operative as of May 2011 and Separatist Karabakh's leader Bako Sahakyan, responded that any attempts to prevent flights will be reciprocated by the Armenian army stationed in Karabakh.

Azerbaijan's Air Line (AZAL) named the construction and further operation of the airport in Khankendi as that of no international legal basis. In this article [[31.03.2011, RUS](#)] published by DAY.az the main argument raised is that just as Armenia and Azerbaijan are negotiating the resolution of the Karabakh conflict within the framework of international and legal norms so should the operation of this airport too be seen within this very same framework.

DAY.az

[Russian political scientist: "Armenia's position in Karabakh conflict is growing weak" \[RUS\]](#)

Yevgeniy Minchenko spoke to Day.az on Karabakh's current situation and intentions of both countries involved in this conflict. According to political scientist, Armenia's position in Karabakh conflict is weakening due to several factors such as intense lobbying carried out in Russia and Turkey's involvement in this conflict. However, Minchenko notes that no hope should be vested in any early resolution rhetoric. When asked whether he thinks US and France should be replaced by other countries as OSCE Co- Chairs, Minchenko notes with a touch of irony- "there aren't many interested parties today not to mention parties with serious international presence who could replace these two countries".

While commenting on recent death of a child as a result of a sniper shooting from the Armenian side, Minchenko said this gives more ground to believe that there is a possibility for military resolution, in fact, that this possibility is relatively high. Overall, Minchenko sees the current situation around the conflict as that of yet another few years of unproductive negotiation processes.

17.03.2011

DAY.az

[Azerbaijani political scientist explained why Armenia would continue pushing for starting a way \[RUS\]](#)

Samir Gamidov, an Azerbaijani political scientist, says that while Armenia sees Azerbaijan's growth and strengthening of its positions, it will want to start military actions, in order to prevent this development. It's a provocation method. He noted that recent death of a child is also a proof of such provocation method. Gamidov believes that no progress been achieved over the last months of negotiations over the final status of Karabakh and the surrounding regions and little development will come through so long as Armenia has no intentions in returning occupied territories to Azerbaijan.

TREND.az

[Azerbaijan, Armenia exchange POW and civilian \[ENG\]](#)

Two soldiers were exchanged in Aghdam region- Azerbaijan swapped Arthur Badalian with Anar Hajiyev. Anar Hajiyev is the junior sergeant, who was captured in May 2009 by the Armenian Armed Forces. Having seen this exchange ICNC's Yerevan delegation head, Lorenzo Caraffi says he is pleased to see the two countries follow through the exchange of persons as declared earlier by the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Astrakhan and later in Sochi.

18.03.2011

Radio Free Europe Local Service

[OSCE co- chairs called on restraining snipers from the contact line \[AZ\]](#)

Following their visits to Yerevan, Baku and Karabakh, OSCE co- chairs made their final statements. In these statements, the Co- Chairs call on the two governments to continue fulfilling good will promises given during the meeting in Sochi earlier in March. The Co- Chairs asked the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan to take concrete steps in preventing ceasefire violations that have become sporadic on the contact line. This, according to the Co- Chairs could be an initiative to save lives of innocent people.

19.03.2011

NEWS.az

['All steps in Karabakh process should be mutual' \[ENG\]](#)

Eduard Sharmazanov, spokesman for the ruling Republican Party, believes any steps taken by either sides of the conflict, should be mutual, and that includes removal of snipers from the contact line. He noted violations by Azerbaijani Military forces, before and after the meeting in Sochi, which according to Sharmazanov, makes OSCE calls for mutual steps invalid. Sharmazanov, also called on the international organizations to asses Azerbaijan's actions too.

Similarly, in another article titled '[Karabakh to not accept proposal of the OSCE chairman](#)' leader of Karabakh separatists Baki Sahakian too notes that concessions would be made as long as they are mutual while referring to removal of snipers from the contact line. Sahakian added that Azerbaijan not removing its snipers only proves that the country is not interested in removing tension on the contact line.

23.03.2011

Radio Free Europe Local Service

[An Azerbaijani soldier died \[AZ\]](#)

24- year- old Samir Agayev died during ceasefire violation caused by the Armenian Armed Forces in Fizuli district.

24.03.2011

BBC Azeri Service

[Is Armenia- Azerbaijan ceasefire regime stable? \[AZ\]](#)

The article touches a pressing issue- that over the last months, tensions have increased on contact line and ceasefire regime is broken almost every day. The article reports of another death of a soldier killed as a result of ceasefire violation- 20-year-old Elnur Mammadov.

Experts in Baku agree that these and previous incidents alike only justify the fragility and instability of the ceasefire regime.

26.03.2011

TREND.az

[Azerbaijan National Army officer wounded \[ENG\]](#)

Another violation and another casualty- according to this article, an officer from the Azerbaijan National Army was wounded as a result of cease-fire violation in Fuzuli region. According to field reports, the soldier was wounded while driving in one of the military trucks.

29.03.2011

DAY.az

[Military expert: "Armenia is doing this to provoke Azerbaijan to military actions" \[RUS\]](#)

Military expert, Ildirim Mamedov believes that foreign organizations like the OSCE Minsk Group have done nothing in pointing to Armenia's real intentions nor have they recognized Armenia as an aggressor. "They simply pretend, that everything is under their control, while in reality, they don't care about the lives of local population, suffering from the on-going conflict". Expert strongly believes that by hiding the truth about Karabakh conflict, these organizations give Armenia a blank check.

Mamedov believes that for Azerbaijani soldiers not to lose their lives, Azerbaijan should retaliate 10 times more in order to teach a lesson to the provocateur. In fact, if something like this ever happened, that would have put an end to official Yerevan's lies and military provocations.

TREND.az

[EU 'could substitute France' as Karabakh mediator \[ENG\]](#)

In his interview with TREND.az Lord Laird, member of the Ulster Unionist Party and Chairman of the advisory board of the European Azerbaijan Society said it was unfortunate that in the course of 17 years, OSCE Minsk Group failed to achieve any significant level of progress. Lord Laird, noted that perhaps the biggest factor behind this failure is the existence of large Diaspora communities in these countries, which have in one way or another affected impartiality of the co-chairs. And not just France and the US but Russia too, who in Lord Laird's words offered substantial military support to Armenia during war which is too making it difficult for balanced negotiations to evolve.

Given this impartiality of parties involved in the negotiation process, Lord Laird said it would be useful if EU showed more involvement in the Southern Caucasus. Perhaps even substituting France as a Co-Chair could be an option as well as an offer to supply peace keeping forces to help implement and monitor peace deal.

30.03.2011

DAY.az

[Russian expert speaks of possibility of Russia's involvement in Karabakh in case of resumption of military actions \[RUS\]](#)

Alexandr Khranchikhin, who is in charge of analytical department at the Institute of Political and Military Analysis, says none of the actors involved in the resolution of Karabakh conflict, have any idea of how resolving this conflict, including the OSCE Minsk Group. According to the expert, right now, the priority in these negotiations is preventing any possibility of resumption of military actions between the two countries. Pointing out to the fact that none of the parties in the negotiation process, including Armenia itself have recognized independence of Nagorno Karabakh only justifies Azerbaijan's struggle to fulfill its territorial integrity. However, expert believes, in case military actions resume and spread on the territory of Armenia, in this case involvement of Russia is inevitable.

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
April 15:***

Special Issue:

Bridging the Void:
evaluation of Caucasus
Edition

By Elise Crane

Introduction of Russian-
language version of the
Journal

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