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Violence at home, work and not only- do we have a choice?

By Phil Gamaghelyan and Arzu Geybullayeva

In both Armenia and Azerbaijan, countries where patriarchal lifestyle holds profound ground, violence against women in all its forms- psychological, physical, whether it is at work or at home- is widely spread... **To read more proceed to the site.**

Nagorno- Karabakh in the context of last parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan

By Elvin Yusifli

Last parliamentary election displayed some bitter characteristics of Azerbaijan's political spectrum that emerged in the shadow of insoluble NK conflict. Conflict has taken its toll on democratic values and efficient policy and decision- making in the country... **To read more proceed to the site.**

ANALYSIS

Adopt a New Approach to the Nagorno- Karabakh Conflict Resolution or Prepare for Disaster

By Armen Grigoryan

The OSCE summit in Astana in December 2010 did not help the conflicting sides to move closer towards the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, as some observers had expected. The outcome of the summit proved that hopes for a resolution in the near future were futile. Moreover, the OSCE's ability to solve the conflict within the Minsk Group framework has been questioned. Considering the statements made by the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as the war propaganda launched in both countries after the summit, the post-Astana situation is worse than it had been before.

So, the mediation efforts have not produced desired outcome, but rather led to the deterioration of the situation, quite in the same way as had happened with the attempts to normalize Armenian-Turkish relations, which are worse now than they had been before the signing of the protocols. Then, one may ask: What was wrong about those mediation efforts? And what may be expected to happen next, since the conflicting sides lack determination to make mutual concessions, as their militaristic rhetoric shows?

It may be argued that despite official optimism and politically correct posturing, the mediation efforts cannot lead to a solution to the conflict because of the mediators' own contradicting interests. Practically any kind of resolution — be it a compromise, a successful military operation by Azerbaijan, or recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh's independence — would result in Russia's loss of the ability to exercise effective control over both Armenia and Azerbaijan, and thereby loss of influence in the entire South Caucasus. So, as I've argued before, if Azerbaijan signs a long-term contract to sell all produced natural gas to Russia, the latter would exercise pressure on Armenia, leading to a deal. Then Russian dominance in the South Caucasus would remain in place, and at the same time, the much-despised Nabucco project would be scrapped.

As the latter scenario remains unlikely, it is not surprising that the OSCE Minsk Group has been unable to solve the conflict. Sadly, in the current situation, refraining from large-scale military action may be considered progress as such. Supposedly, Azerbaijan's authorities will not launch large-scale fighting if they remain a rational player. First, a sharp rise in hydrocarbons prices as a consequence of the fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh would provoke the Western actors' anger, not only because of the dire consequences for their economies not yet stabilized after the financial crisis, but also because of the strengthening of Russia's and Iran's influence. Second, Iran might try to use the period of instability and to spread the Islamist ideology in Azerbaijan, and such a possibility is viewed in Azerbaijan as a threat to national security. Third, regaining full control over Nagorno-Karabakh and the adjacent regions without Russia's willingness would be unlikely, while the price of such willingness is practically prohibitive.

So, a military solution of the conflict is rather unlikely, despite the provocative statements by the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as open provocations by forces that are not interested in the conflict's resolution. One example of such a provocation was an article published by the Russian Regnum News agency a few days before the Astana summit. That article alleged that the Armenian diaspora began to prepare lists of volunteers, who in the case of renewed fighting would be transferred to Nagorno-Karabakh via Iranian air space.

In the present situation, the perspective for a compromise solution and stable peace depends on the deepening cooperation between the actors that should be truly interested in resolution: the civil societies of Armenia and Azerbaijan, the United States and the European Union. The Western policies of engaging the authorities, despite any non-democratic practices, should be abandoned. The uselessness of such engagement has been proved, particularly by the present stance of Armenia's President Serzh Sargsyan. Despite that his mock willingness to normalize Armenian-Turkish relations gave him an image of a

progressive politician trying to put an end to an old enmity, the flawed presidential elections on February 19, 2008, the bloodshed that followed on March 1, 2008, the ongoing oppression against political opponents and the outrageous level of corruption have not been strongly condemned by the Western actors. Their approach needs to be amended, taking into consideration the reality that the authorities of both Armenia and Azerbaijan are opposed to compromise and cooperation through civil society, and are using all means of propaganda, especially state-controlled television, for spreading hatred rather than promoting trust. Besides, it should be considered that the authorities are interested primarily in staying in power, and the unsolved conflict is useful for that purpose, but the brinkmanship may at some point lead to large-scale fighting anyway, especially as there are external forces interested in such a development. Therefore, development of cooperation between civil societies and promotion of democratic development by available means would be indispensable.

Until now, a more intensive stimulation of democratic development, and suggesting a comprehensive deal for Armenia and Azerbaijan that would allow both to feel safe to settle their dispute and cooperate with the West and each other, has not been on the agenda. However, as the OSCE Minsk Group efforts have practically failed, the dangerous vacuum following the factual end of the negotiations should be filled urgently, before non-democratic entities (internal — nationalists and extremists —and external ones) do so, using the West's current tendency to keep its involvement in the region relatively small.

Certainly, trust building and the strengthening of civil societies are gradual processes, and working in that direction will not result in a faster resolution to the conflict. However, such an approach might be more effective than the one applied until now. As a matter of fact, continuing in the present direction may at best keep the conflict in a frozen stage (if the deaths on the line of contact are not counted). Time and other resources should be used more effectively. Otherwise, they may be lost.

Nagorno- Karabakh: Not Yet “Ripe” for Resolution

By Peter Roethke

Since 1994, negotiators for Armenia and Azerbaijan have sought to end the stalemate over Nagorno-Karabakh, thus far without success. This essay examines whether the conflict is currently “ripe” for resolution. A conflict is considered “ripe” when conditions exist for that conflict to be resolved through negotiation. The term itself has a long history as a common law judicial doctrine that prevents the premature adjudication of disputes. Ripeness is also a subjective determination, existing largely in the minds of the participants despite, as Christer Jönsson notes, “seem[ing] to connote an objective condition.”^[1] This essay explores the concept of ripeness and concludes that the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh is not yet “ripe” for resolution.

Ripeness

William Zartman frames his conception of ripeness as a cost-benefit analysis with two prongs. The first prong concerns whether, in the eyes of the leadership on both sides, there exists a “mutually hurting stalemate.”^[2] In a mutually hurting stalemate the perpetuation of the conflict is perceived as less advantageous to both sides than ending the conflict would be. Thus, if one party is “hurting” and the other is not, then the situation is not ripe for negotiated settlement. Central to Zartman’s thesis is that neither side believes it can “win” a mutually hurting stalemate.

The second prong in Zartman’s theory is that there must be a “way out.”^[3] In other words, the opposing sides must be able to envision possible solutions and they must perceive that the other side could plausibly entertain such solutions. Zartman refines his conception of “ripeness” with two further points. First, he assumes that parties to a conflict are rational actors. Second, he notes that catastrophic events (whether in the past, present, or future) tend to concentrate the minds of political leaders and make conflict situations riper.^[4]

In Haass’ conception of “ripeness”, there are four prerequisites for a situation to be ripe. First, there must be “a shared perception of the desirability of an accord.”^[5] Haass defines this perception in terms similar to Zartman’s, noting how “parties must conclude that in the absence of an agreement time does not work in their favor, and that they will be worse off in absolute terms, in relative terms, or both.”^[6] Like Zartman, the subjective analysis of the parties is the crucial element. More pointedly than Zartman, however, Haass notes the element of time as a determining factor. For example, if a party views the passage of time as “on their side” then the situation is probably not ripe under this view even if the parties perceive themselves to be in a “mutually hurting stalemate”.

Haass’ second prerequisite identifies “sufficient” strength or weakness from both parties as necessary to forge a compromise.^[7] A strong leader can make concessions without falling from power. A weak leader is forced to make concessions because he or she has no choice. Haass’ nightmare scenario, therefore, is probably the most common one: “a principal party that falls in between: not strong enough to compromise, but only strong enough to hang on.”^[8] Such middling leadership, in Haass’ view, will preclude a situation from being ripe and serve to prolong a conflict.

The third and fourth prongs of Haass’ analysis address reciprocity. Haass’ third prerequisite is that there exist “sufficient compromise on both sides to allow leaders to persuade their colleagues and citizens that the national interest was protected.”^[9] In other words, there must be reciprocal concessions and enough political space to “spin” an agreement as a victory. Similarly, Haass’ fourth prerequisite concerns the process of the negotiations themselves. If both sides do not agree on process, then any agreement may be denounced as manifestly unfair. The fairness of process is a deep-rooted concern in any dispute resolution mechanism (for instance, the doctrine of ‘due process’ in American jurisprudence). Such concerns are equally pronounced in negotiations between states.

Analysis

Application of ripeness theory to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict suggests that the conflict is not currently ripe for resolution. While this conclusion is unsurprising, the exercise of applying ripeness theory to the conflict is itself instructive, providing clues for how the situation may be ripened in the future.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is not a “mutually hurting stalemate.” Objectively, this diagnosis appears illogical. Both Armenia and Azerbaijan suffer economically from their continued animosity. The uncertain political environment acts as a deterrent against foreign investment. Both nations are forced to divert large percentages of their gross domestic product (GDP) to military expenditure. Armenia is forced to massively subsidize Nagorno-Karabakh’s budget.^[10] In short, both countries are objectively “hurting” from this stalemate.

The presence of a mutually hurting stalemate, however, is a necessarily subjective determination based on the perceptions of both parties rather than on objective facts. Here, neither side views the costs of the continuing conflict as outweighing the costs of ending the conflict on uncertain terms. In this calculus, the fact that the dispute concerns sovereignty over territory may be dispositive. Arguably, rational actors prefer to minimize losses rather than maximize gains. When a dispute concerns land, each side views land-based concessions as a loss rather than as a means to facilitate possible gains. This is especially true in Nagorno-Karabakh where the land is so intimately entwined with historical ethnic narratives.^[11]

The scholarly literature suggests that a “mutually hurting stalemate” did exist in 1994, but that the opportunity for resolving the conflict was squandered. At that time, the catastrophe of the war was fresh in the minds of the leaders of both nations and the renewal of hostilities remained uncertain. With the passage of time, however, the imminent threat of catastrophe has receded, and with it the imperatives that drive the “mutually hurting stalemate” in the minds of the negotiating parties.

If we focus on Haass’ element of time it becomes apparent that the “share[d] perception of the desirability of an accord” is absent. Both parties believe that they have time on their side. Tabib Huseynov argues that “both the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaderships have adopted a mixture of avoidance and competition conflict behaviors, which is often referred to as the ‘buying time’ strategy.”^[12] Azerbaijan is using its oil wealth to upgrade its military – increasing spending from \$135 million to \$1.85 billion between 2003 and 2008^[13] – perhaps with the intent of winning back its lost territory by force.^[14] Armenian leaders are not intimidated by the buildup, counting on Russian and Iranian support to defend against an Azeri attack.^[15] Also, Armenian officials believe that the longer Nagorno-Karabakh is *de facto* independent, the more legitimate the *status quo* becomes. Huseynov therefore concludes that “neither of the sides has been seriously thinking about peace.”^[16]

Looking at Haass’ second prerequisite – the strength or weakness of the leadership – it is unclear whether the leaders are strong (or weak) enough to forge an agreement, particularly the Armenian side. President Sarkisian of Armenia, despite his native Nagorno-Karabakh credentials, is constrained in any negotiation by the effective veto wielded by the Nagorno-Karabakh leadership.^[17] Also, his coalition government could be vulnerable in the event of a peace deal, as evidenced by the coalition’s fragility during the 2009 debate on normalizing relations with Turkey.^[18] Thus, Sarkisian is neither a particularly strong nor a weak leader. By contrast, Azerbaijani President Aliyev faces less democratic opposition to his rule and would probably be able to conclude an agreement without prohibitive domestic opposition.

Concerning the existence of a ‘way out’ of the conflict in Zartman’s terms, it is difficult to conceive of a path at present that is not zero sum. Hopmann and Zartman write that “there is no Zone of Possible Agreement (ZOPA), that is, there is no conceptual area where the gains for each side overlap.”^[19] Again, this impasse finds its origins in the zero-sum nature of sovereignty over land, which is finite and tangible. The concept of dual sovereignty – federalism – has been proposed and thoroughly rejected, thereby hardening the Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh demand for independence and the Azerbaijani demand for territorial integrity. The political rhetoric of these demands is militaristic and uncompromising on both sides, rendering Haass’ third prong increasingly elusive (the third prong being the ability to compromise enough so that leaders may convince their constituents that “the national interest was protected”).^[20]

This last point is especially important because the increasingly divergent societal understandings of the conflict make its resolution less ripe (or more “raw,” to use the appropriate antonym). Both Armenian

and Azeri scholars lament the distortion and bias that is rampant in the press and in schools in both societies.^[21] The demonization of the “other” transmitted through these media finds no counterbalancing force in human relationships because of the lack of contact between Armenian and Azeri society. The bar for politicians is thus set ever higher for ensuring that they “protect the national interest” – thereby decreasing the bargaining space for negotiators.

Finally, Haass’ fourth prerequisite – that there be “a mutually acceptable approach or process”^[22] – is lacking. The competing “package” and “step-by-step” solutions favored by Armenia and Azerbaijan respectively indicate this lack of agreement. Although the Madrid Principles do present a hybrid approach, they are themselves still the subject of negotiation. Because the process of negotiations has the potential to alter the power dynamics between the participants, it has become a major source of contention. Indeed, even the mediation of the Minsk Group itself has been called into question by Azerbaijan, which sees the forum as biased in favor of Armenia due to the large Armenian Diaspora in Russia, France, and the United States.

Despite this gloomy assessment, however, both sides have continued to negotiate for the past fifteen years. Such persistence suggests that the parties truly desire a peace agreement of some sort. If such optimism is warranted, then the conflict is perhaps amenable to ripening. As noted above, ripeness theory postulates that the ripeness of a situation is inherently subjective; it is the perceptions of the participants that matters. As such, the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh can theoretically be ripened if the perceptions of the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaderships and peoples can change. This requires, as Zartman reminds us, that “the parties need to feel that they are in a mutually hurting stalemate and that there is a way out only through negotiation, mediation or a related non-coercive process.”^[23]

Outside state actors, particularly Russia, Turkey, and the United States could wield enormous influence in this regard. Turkish rapprochement with Armenia and warmer Russian relations with Azerbaijan could work to dispel the historical ethnic and religious edge to the conflict. The United States is in a structurally advantageous position to act as an honest broker because it is neither a regional power nor does it instinctively favor one side. A recent visit to both countries by Secretary of State Clinton in July 2010 indicates that the United States may be willing to play a more active role as a chair of the Minsk Group.^[24] Such top-down (or “Track 1”) initiatives are necessary, but insufficient for ripening the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. For instance, civil society may have the ability to help foster a more hospitable environment for a peace agreement.^[25] Combined with diplomatic efforts, civil society can help increase the costs of stalemate (and the benefits of agreement) and advocate a dialogue of mutual interest instead of zero-sum positioning.

Conclusion

The “frozen conflict” between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh is not currently ripe for resolution. The participants to the conflict do not perceive it to be a “mutually hurting stalemate” nor are they able to articulate a “way out” through negotiated settlement. Nonetheless, both sides continue to negotiate and proclaim their desire for peace. Inter-governmental negotiations and pressure from civil society will both be crucial in realizing this goal. As Zartman reminds us, however, even if the situation does become ripe, “practitioners need to employ all their skills and apply all the concepts of negotiation and mediation”^[26] to turn that ripeness into a sustainable peace agreement. Ripeness alone is not enough.

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NEWS DIGEST

Digest of Armenian Media for Jan 1-14, 2011

By News Digest

01.02.2011

RFEL

[Mammadyarov: 'We are ready to use every measure to return our territories'](#) [ARM]

Azerbaijan is ready to use every possible effort to return its territories that are currently under Armenian rule, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov said in an interview.

"If the diplomatic efforts don't bear any result, we are ready to use any method to return our territories," said he, adding that as a foreign minister he always prefers diplomatic solutions to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. "I don't think we have exhausted all the diplomatic variants over that issue. But if military measures are used against Azerbaijan as it was previously, the resolution of [the Karabakh conflict] may be military."

01.04.2011

RFEL

[Aliyev again speaks about 'Iran's Khanate' and their other 'historical lands'](#) [ARM]

The article says that in his New Year congratulatory address Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev once again spoke about "Iranian khanate," "Zangezur mahal" and other "historical lands". Mr Aliyev said that the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is the number one priority for Azerbaijan.

"We are trying to solve that issue peacefully, through negotiations. In its turn, Azerbaijan spares no effort to resolve the issue at the nearest future," said Azerbaijani president.

01.07.2011

Lragir.am

[EU's experience may help Armenia and Azerbaijan to unite](#) [ARM]

Talking to Azerbaijani news website, Irina Gasparyan, a graduate of Cambridge University and an Armenian in origin, said that the idea of creating a Confederation in the South Caucasus will be possible to bring to life only when the Armenian and Azerbaijani societies realize the necessity of turning the South Caucasus region into a self-sufficient and a strong region. Further she said that the European Union has been built around the idea that the war cannot contribute to the resolution of any problem.

01.08.2011

Epress.am

[Armenia's military doctrine will be translated into Azerbaijani](#) [ARM]

This article says that the military doctrines of six Caucasus countries – Russia, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and Iran – will be translated into Azerbaijani, Russian and possibly into English. The translated version of these documents will be available for the Azerbaijani societies in an attempt to enable them to be aware of any potential military threat from a neighboring country.

[Yeltsin had sent a letter over Karabakh to US president](#) [ARM]

Publication of former Russian President, Boris Yeltsin's letter has revealed that he sent also a letter to his US counterpart Bill Clinton in which he touched upon the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In his letter Mr Yeltsin says that the Trans-Caucasus region "has always been at the focus of Russia" and that Russia's main objective is to maintain peace in the region. Further, he says that he is satisfied with the level of cooperation between Azerbaijan and the US over the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, adding that they could reach common ground with the then Azerbaijan President Heydar Aliyev in a meeting.

01.08.2011

RFEL

[The 'Disrupted Song' is about 'search of healthy dialogue'](#) [ARM]

In an interview with Azerbaijani news agency Arik Manukyan, the director of the film "The Disrupted Song" said that the film is about seeking what he calls a "healthy dialogue" between the Armenian and Azerbaijan societies.

"Our film is about seeking a healthy dialogue," Manukyan said as he spoke about the film that feature an Armenian and an Azerbaijani who are caught in the same deep hole and engage in a dialogue with each other, speaking about issue they are most concerned about.

01.10.2011

News.am

[West hinders resolution of Karabakh conflict, Faker says](#) [ENG]

Nagorno-Karabakh conflict should be resolved through negotiations, but the West's interference only aggravates the situation, Chairman of Tabriz Chamber of Commerce Hausheng Faker said at a meeting with the head of Iran Commission of the Moscow Chamber of Commerce and Industry Rajab Safarov. According to him, Karabakh conflict settlement is a precondition for renewal of Julfa-Moscow railway.

"The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan led to the destruction of the railway. Today the restoration of the railway is necessary for cooperation with Russia," he said.

01.11.2011

Tert.am

[Azerbaijan will demand OSCE PA to accelerate resolution of Karabakh conflict](#) [ENG]

According to this article, Azerbaijan's delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is planning to raise the issue of accelerating the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict during the OSCE PA winter session which is also expected to see debates related to results of the elections held in the region.

"The Azerbaijani parliamentarians are planning to raise during the winter session the issue of accelerating the resolution of the Karabakh conflict, and the aggression Armenia commits against Azerbaijan," the source said, adding that the OSCE PA winter session will be held in Vienna in February.

01.11.2011

News.am

[Azerbaijan's militarization threat to balance of forces in region \[ENG\]](#)

In an interview with the source Masis Mailyan, Chairman of the Public Council for Foreign Policy and Security of the unrecognized Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR), said that Azerbaijan's further militarization may disturb the balance of forces, which has actually been the pivot of the ceasefire for many years.

"Peace in the region is a requirement for further dialogue and must be the international actors' major task in 2011," said he adding that if the negotiations continue on the basis of the Madrid Principles, no positive developments should be expected.

01.12.2011

Tert.am

[US indifference to Karabakh conflict can damage its credibility in the region – analyst \[ENG\]](#)

US have displayed indifference to the situation over the Karabakh conflict which can only harm its credibility in the region, US military expert Stephen Blank said. Failure to take an active role in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, according to him, not only cements Armenia's dependence upon Moscow and estrangement from Turkey and Europe; it also undermines the success Azerbaijan has had in strengthening Europe's position vis-à-vis Russia on energy security.

"Continued neglect of Azerbaijan, and of the Transcaucasus as a whole, can only erode US standing and damage its credibility in the region," said he.

01.13.2011

Tert.am

[Southern Sudan independence referendum important trump card for Karabakh\[ENG\]](#)

The Sudan referendum cannot be a key element for the settlement of the Karabakh conflict as Karabakh established its independence 19 years ago; political analyst Alexander Markarov said it.

"Following the self-determination referendum in southern Sudan, we gain a new trump card in the Karabakh settlement process," he said, adding that the negotiations over Karabakh will continue, and Azerbaijan will grow concerned, realizing that the referendum in the South Sudanese republic was nothing more than an attempt to enable that country's people to exercise their right to self-determination.

[Sudan referendum shows self-determination is more important: Richard Giragosian \[ARM\]](#)

Political analyst Richard Giragosian says in an interview that in general the referendum of South Sudan will have not a direct impact on the settlement of the Karabakh conflict.

"But given what is happening in international relations, it will have a direct impact, especially in creating favourable atmosphere," said he, adding that the Sudanese referendum shows that territorial integrity is not that much important now as it used to be. "The referendum in the South Sudan shows that self-determination is more important, that territorial integrity."

01.13.2011

Lragir.am

[Trilateral meeting over Karabakh](#) [ARM]

At a press conference Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that there will be a trilateral meeting among Armenian, Azerbaijan and Russian foreign ministers in January to discuss the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Explaining the logic behind the upcoming meeting, Lavrov noted that the three countries' FMs meet before each round of negotiations over Karabakh peace process, which takes place in the form of a trilateral meeting among the presidents of Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia.

01.13.2011

Epress.am

[Don't interfere with Karabakh peace process, advises Russia's foreign minister](#) [ENG]

Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov said at a press conference that the most important thing to do at this stage of the settlement of the Karabakh conflict is not to interfere with the process, because interference by other countries or organizations makes the situation worse.

"The most important thing at this stage of the settlement is not interfering with the process, because as soon as organizations such as the UN and the OSCE get involved, the issue spills over from the field of discussion to the public debate arena," he said.

01.14.2011

Tert.am

[EU approach to Karabakh conflict coincides with Armenia's policy – Edward Nalbandyan](#) [ENG]

The European Union's approach to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is consistent with Armenia's policy, Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandyan said, adding that European Union Council President Herman Van Rompuy clearly expressed EU's stance on the issue at the OSCE Summit in Astana.

"On behalf of the European Union, Rompuy expressed support to the principles and clauses proposed by the co-chairs. Such is the EU approach which coincides with our position," asked to comment on EU Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso's recent statement on supporting the principle of territorial integrity.

[Azerbaijani coach criticized for pledging to fire Armenian player in Kazakhstan](#) [ENG]

Chief Coach of Kazakhstani football team Atirau, Ramaz Mammadov, has come under fire by Atirau's fans as he said Tigran Karabakhtsyan, an Armenian in origin, cannot play in the team as long as he is the chief coach. "As far as I know Tigran Karabakhtsyan is no longer considered an Atirau player. But even if that isn't that case, then a serious conversation with the club's managers is awaiting for me. There can be no Armenian in Atirau, as long as I work here," Mammadov said. Atirau's fans criticized Mammadov for his statement. "If you regard a player for his ethnic grounds rather than his playing capabilities, then it reveals your human qualities," they said in a statement.

[UN countries' independence establish good precedent for Karabakh – Nalbandyan](#) [ENG]

The independence of the UN member states can establish a good precedent for Nagorno Karabakh, Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandyan said. "The major part of the UN member countries can

serve as an example, as well as a precedent for Karabakh,” he said, referring to the referendum in Southern Sudan. According to him, the developments in Sudan came to prove once again that it is impossible to resist people’s efforts to exercise their right to self-determination.

[Azerbaijan not likely to resort to military operations – Arman Melikyan](#) [ENG]

Despite its belligerent statements, Azerbaijan is unlikely to resort to military operations within a year, according to Arman Melikyan, a former foreign minister of the unrecognized Republic of Nagorno Karabakh. A decisive factor in the Karabakh peace process, Melikyan said would be Russia’s policy – whether on the western or eastern front, while Azerbaijan would seek only to take more active efforts in the international arena. “I expect a number of specific and serious geopolitical decisions and solutions that will definitely change the timeframes of the Karabakh conflict settlement,” he said.

01.14.2011

Lragir.am

[Nalbandyan: The Azerbaijanis themselves don’t understand what they say](#) [ARM]

Asked whether Armenia fully accepts “the Madrid proposal about returning the occupied territories,” Armenia’s Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandyan said that currently there are three principles and six provisions under discussion. According to him, the mediators say that those principles and provisions are considered as one whole entity and none of them can be taken separately or given preference – something Armenia says too. But when it comes to what Azerbaijan says over this issue, in his words, it seems like they “don’t understand what they say. “They are saying ‘yes,’ ‘but yes,’ ‘but no’,” said he adding that Azerbaijan should put it clearly: a yes or no.

[Why is Nakhichevan closed?](#) [ARM]

Speaking about the reports that Azerbaijan is creating problems for those international citizens who visit Karabakh, Armenia’s Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandyan said that Baku doesn’t allow also international delegations to visit Nakhichevan which is under Azerbaijani rule. According to him, the reason may be the fact that the Azerbaijani authorities don’t want the international community to see “demolished cross stones, eliminated Armenian cultural heritage”. Further he said he would like to express his gratitude to those who “despite the obstacles by Azerbaijan” continue to visit Karabakh and see everything themselves.

01.14. 2011

Hetq.am

[Director of RCPD French branch spoke in Geneva about elimination of cross stones in Jugha](#) [ARM]

At a conference titled “The economics of Intellectual Property” and organized by World Intellectual Property Organization – WIPO in Geneva, Sasun Hovhannisyan, the director of the French branch Research Centre for Political Developments spoke about the Jugha cross stones. Hovhannisyan said that in 2005 “in an organized way the Azerbaijanis eliminated more than 5000 cross stones forever”. But what is worst, according to him, is that the civilized humanity has not yet adequately responded to that. “It is regrettable that it is the oil dollars that eliminate the cultural heritage”.

Digest of Azerbaijani Media for Jan 4- 14, 2011

By News Digest

04.01.2011

TREND.az

[FM: Azerbaijan stands ready to use any means to return \(its\) territories](#) [ENG]

Elmar Mammadyarov speaks of NK conflict and Azerbaijan's place in the international community in an interview with a Mexican newspaper "The News". In his interview, he mentions how much work does the embassies of Azerbaijan and its other representatives put into disseminating information about the country, the war and the current status of the resolution process.

He believes that some of the key countries involved in the resolution process, namely US, Russia, and France don't pressure Armenian government enough to release occupied territories and thus respect Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

The foreign minister also spoke of a possible resolution to war if all diplomatic means fail.

05.01.2011

DAY.az

[Aleksandr Iskandaryan: "War will last not more than 10 days"](#) [RUS]

The newspaper interviews Armenian political scientist Aleksandr Iskandaryan who believes that Armenia's recognition of Karabakh is unlikely. In fact, this- the fact that Armenia hasn't recognized NK- is the card that Armenia is willing to pay in order for the dialogue continue within the Minsk Group framework. Iskandaryan also strongly believes that war is not possible. And it does happen it will only last for 10 days and wont change anything except than massive losses for both sides- communication lines, economically viable locations, more replaced people and of course deaths.

Speaking of OSCE/Minsk group and its role in the conflict, political scientist said it would be naive to expect that Minsk Group will resolve the conflict. What Minsk group does instead is sustain meetings of foreign ministers, diplomats, and presidents; inclusion of the conflict into larger contexts.

NEWS.az

[Azerbaijan General Prosecutor's website opened page for Sumgayit events](#) [ENG]

In the light of recent official rhetoric in Azerbaijan to raise awareness and "deliver true information" on NK and events prior to the conflict, Azerbaijan's General Prosecutor website, launched a new section on Sumgayit programs. According to this article, the website fill feature "the real essence of the crimes committed" and facts about what really happened in Sumgayit in 1988.

06.01.2011

TREND.az

[Tourist trip to Nagorno- Karabakh planned by British company prevented](#) [ENG]

The newspaper reports of a British travel agency wanting to organize tours to Nagorno Karabakh. According to the article, the tour was cancelled following a phone call from the Azerbaijani Embassy in the UK warning the company that any visit as such would result as violation of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

[Russia to take role of most active mediator in Nagorno- Karabakh conflict in 2011](#) [ENG]

The article provides an overview of countries that are part of the negotiation process and their 2011 international and domestic policies that will in one way or another result in their little attention given to the Southern Caucasus let alone the NK conflict. According to the author of the article, it is in these circumstances that Russia will no doubt preserve its role as the "most active mediator".

07.01.2011

NEWS.az

[Peace in South Caucasus requires political will](#) [ENG]

A rather positive stance on the settlement of NK conflict is expressed in this article by an Armenian International expert Irina Gaparyan. According to Gaparyan, the belief that Azerbaijanis and Armenians are incompatible can be overcome so long as there is a desire to do so.

[Azerbaijani diplomacy to focus on Karabakh in 2011](#) [ENG]

Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry spokesman Elkhon Polukhov says 2011 will be crucial in bringing the conflict of NK to the international attention. As part of Azerbaijan's diplomacy to liberate Karabakh and thus, Azerbaijani diplomats will be using every opportunity to prove the world that Karabakh should be liberated from its occupiers according to the international law requirements.

08.01.2011

TREND.az

[Defense Ministry: Armenia's statements on intense violation of ceasefire by Azerbaijan is groundless](#) [ENG]

As violations of ceasefire on the front line continue, the two defense ministries continue blaming and dismissing each other's statements of continuous violations. As such, in yet another similar statement, Azerbaijani Defense Ministry said, "Azerbaijan is committed to the ceasefire and we do not break it. On the contrary, over the past two days the Armenian side violated the ceasefire regime and a soldier of the Azerbaijani army got injured as a result" [[January 6th, ENG](#)]. The statement came as a reaction to reports from the Armenian side of Azerbaijani Armed Forces violating the ceasefire regime on the night of the 7th and 8th of January at least 30 times.

Surprisingly, TREND.az also reports in another article published on [January 7th, \[ENG\]](#) of Armenian Armed Forces violating the ceasefire by opening fire in Berd region of Armenia.

In another article published on January 7th, this time by NEWS.az and titled "[End of relative calm on Azerbaijani- Armenian front line?](#)" [ENG] Ministry Spokesman Lt- Col. Eldar Sabiroglu "said that the break in the ceasefire had shattered the relatively long period of quiet along the contact line". The article also presents respond by Sabiroglu to recent threats made by Karabakh Separatist leader Bako Sahakyan that Karabakh is ready for massive counter- attack at any time. Sabiroglu says these statements are most probably the result of Armenia's ruling circles.

10.01.2011

DAY.az

[Russian expert presents two scenarios for the settlement of NK conflict in 2011](#) [RUS]

Alexander Lukyanov answers questions by DAY.az. According to Lukyanov, the fact that no solution has been reached doesn't mean anything and that the sides still have a chance to come to a conclusion. Especially as relations between Yerevan and Ankara continue to move forward. If add Iranian factor to this equation then things are bound to change. According to Lukyanov, if the situation around Iran worsens, and requires more action, then the West and Israel will need more Azerbaijan's support than it would Armenian. And in this case Azerbaijan might pressure the west on the Karabakh conflict.

Lukyanov believes that possible escalation of war is also out of question, unless of course, none of the above takes on a full scale.

11.01.2011

DAY.az

[Arif Yunus: "Armenia will pay a high price for its intermediate victory"](#) [RUS]

Arif Yunus, political scientists, believes that 2011, will be another slow year in terms of NK settlement especially as there will be most probably more meetings between the sides and vague statements made by the OSCE that the sides are moving in the right direction. It is also groundless to speak of war says Yunus.

NEWS.az

[Conflict prevention, not resolution, the priority in 2011](#) [ENG]

Phil Gamaghelyan, managing editor of the Journal of Conflict Transformation (www.caucasusedition.net) speaks about the conflict and its prospects in 2011. According to Gamaghelyan 2010 was an unsuccessful year for Karabakh settlement especially given that the beginning of 2010 was more promising given the unveiling of Georgia- Russia war and changing geopolitical environment. In fact, the beginning of 2010, was an opportunity missed by the leaders of the two countries to use actually use this opportunity for reaching any progress on the settlement of the conflict.

And thus, in 2011, if the two countries, manage to stay out of war than that should be considered a development. "The priority, for 2011, still, is the prevention of conflict, not resolution" says Gamaghelyan.

Both countries should regard the conflict as a common problem and solve it together rather than rely on third parties. Though if that's the case the two sides should act quicker.

Changing the hostile language is a key in moving forward. And not just on the political level, but also changing the hostile language that is widely spread in education, media and what not.

Similarly [[January 7th, ENG](#)], Tabib Huseynov, Caucasus Analyst at the International Crisis Group, believes, "2010 was a year of missed opportunity for both Armenian and Azerbaijan to begin peacefully transforming the regional status quo in a mutually beneficial way". In his interview with NEWS.az Huseynov refers to 2010 as a year when expected breakthrough in the resolution of NK conflict as replaced with nationalist backlash, and negative rhetoric on both sides.

According to Huseynov however, it wasn't all "too bad" in 2010, especially if we remember Azerbaijan's endorsement of the basic principles document; June Muskoka joint statement of the presidents of France, Russian and the US; and one last joint statement made in December by Armenia, Azerbaijan and the three mediator countries (France, US and Russia) in Astana.

Unlike Huseynov and Gamagheylan, others, like Azer Babayev, researcher at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, believes it is the West that is the sole role player in this conflict [[January 5th, ENG](#)]. According to

Babayev, "the main reason for the continued occupation of Azerbaijani land by Armenia is the failure of the Western superpowers to condemn this policy [...] In other words, it should be explained to Armenia that this conflict can be settled only on the basis of compromise and the continued occupation of land is inadmissible". Babayev believes that to be able to exercise such influence on the West, Baku must strategically use its energy capital for influence, referring to projects like Nabucco and the importance West attaches to this project.

12.01.2011

DAY.az

[Azerbaijani parliament member speaks on when the second Karabakh war will begin](#) [RUS]

According to Tair Rzayev, an Azeri PM, current status of NK settlement reached a dead-end. And it is mostly due to Armenian position in this settlement process and ineffectiveness of international organizations, namely OSCE and UN. Rzayev also noted Azerbaijan's current status as a country comparing it to the country when the first Karabakh war took place- its not the same not to mention that the situation in the region is not the same either.

He called on the Armenian government and the international organizations to take into account the fact that Azerbaijan is no longer the same, that it grew stronger and war will result in a lot more losses not only for both countries but also on a larger international scale.

If international organizations fail to pressure Yerevan to return Azerbaijan lands, then, it is possible that in 2011, Azerbaijan righteously will use its army and return Karabakh as well as occupied territories.

NEWS.az

['Armenian Diaspora obstacle to resolution of Nagorno Karabakh dispute'](#) [ENG]

While the title of this article suggests different angle to the resolution of the conflict, it fails to provide full argument as it focuses instead on Azerbaijan's successful economic development and moderate Muslim country. Published originally by the Diplomat and International Canada and authored by the dean of the School of International Relations at Carleton University, titled "Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia: East vs. West" the version re- published in NEWS.az only at the end mentions the Diaspora aspect and its obstacle failing to present any further information supporting this statement.

[Book exposing Armenian falsification published in English and Russian](#) [ENG]

The article writes of a book recently published by the Head of the Azerbaijan Presidential Administration Ramiz Mehtiyev. The book titled "View point- 2010: season of absurd theatre" dismissed any historical facts often referred to by the Armenian President Sargsyan.

According to the article this book is "is a timely and worthy respond to failed attempts of ungifted speechwriters of Armenian President Serzh Sargsyn".

TREND.az

[Permanent Representative: Azerbaijan may disseminate OSCE field assessment mission's report in UN about situation in occupied territories](#) [ENG]

It is yet unknown whether Azerbaijan's permanent mission will circulate OSCE's final field assessment report on the occupied lands. It was Azerbaijan who urged for UN to call for the OSCE to send the assessment mission to the occupied territories however now, Azerbaijan would only discuss the report once it familiarizes itself with the report.

13.01.2011

DAY.az

[Russian political scientists: "Armenia is obliged to hid behind Moscow" \[RUS\]](#)

This is from an interview with Russian political scientists Aleksey Mukhin, head of the Center of Political Information. Mukhin while answering the question on who is actually interested in the resolution of NK conflict, said it is US, Russia and Turkey that are interested the most given that each of these countries is trying exercise their own regional interests. Mukhin believes that once perspectives of 'Souther stream' and 'Nabucco' projects are fully cleared up then the settlement of NK conflict will also gain clearer perspectives.

Mukhin also spoke of OSCE's role in the conflict seeing at as rather weak part of the bigger equation- its simply there because it has to show some kind of interest to it so that it doesn't fall out of the bigger equation.

And regarding Armenia and its role in the conflict, Mukhin said the country will continue to play rather passive role, since it doesn't poses any real abilities for the resolution of the conflict and obliged to hide behind Russia, carry on dialogue with Armenian Diaspora in Russia and US.

NEWS.az

[The referendum in Karabakh should no be delayed – Armenia expert \[ENG\]](#)

Sergey Minasyan, director of Caucasus Institute, talks about referendum in Karabakh and its further delay in holding a referendum while comparing its status with that of Sudan. Given that international community was involved in Sudan since 2000, the situation there was different from NK. Therefore, the referendum in Karabakh should not be delayed any longer, in fact, referendum should have been held there in the beginning of the 90s.

[2010 is a year of exposing lie. spread by Armenians for a century \[ENG\]](#)

This is the title of an interview with Azerbaijani parliament member Ulvi Guliyev, who claims that Azerbaijan is winning the information war over Armenia. According to Guliyev, the term- information warfare- that was once brought up by an American expert Thomas Rona can easily apply to Azerbaijan and Armenia as Azerbaijan tires to "bring the truth about the reasons and outcomes of the Armenian- Azerbaijani conflict over NK to the attention of the world community.

The hard rhetoric of the interview ends with optimistic notes of Azerbaijan's strong position in the information warfare over Armenia.

(RFE/RL) Radio Liberty Azerbaijan Service

["To prevent the resolution of Karabakh conflict with arguments is inappropriate" \[AZ\]](#)

This is how Russia's foreign minister Sergey Lavrov sees statements made during UN and OSCE meetings. According to Lavrov, whenever institutions like the UN and OSCE get involved in this (resolution) process, the debate moves from being effective discussions to notable arguments and results in further moving sides to the conflict apart rather than drive them closer.

By expressing such view, Lavrov tried emphasizing the important role Russia has been playing in the resolution process of this conflict.

In this press statement, Lavrov also noted an upcoming meeting [\[January 13th, AZ\]](#) of Russian, Azerbaijani and Armenian foreign ministers later in January.

14.01.2011

DAY.az

[Armenian political scientist: "Russia's position in the settlement of Karabakh will change not to Armenia's advantage" \[RUS\]](#)

Leader of Armenia's Liberal Party Ovanes Ovanisyan believes that Russia's position will change soon in the settlement of NK conflict, and it won't benefit Armenia in any way. These changes will largely be the result of changing geopolitical interests of Russia and surely, in this context, it won't benefit Russia to ruin its relations with Azerbaijan. Adding that Armenia doesn't hold such advantages as does Russia especially as it has "given everything that's possible and impossible to Russia."

NEWS.az

[Sargsyan signs law allowing for conclusion of agreements with unrecognized countries \[ENG\]](#)

President of Armenia, approved the amendments to the law "On international treaties". With this law, Armenia will now be able to ratify agreements and other contracts with Nagorno- Karabakh in the parliament.

TREND.az

[European Commission president: EU ready to provide political assistance in resolving Nagorno- Karabakh conflict \[ENG\]](#)

In meeting with President Aliyev, the President of EU Commission Jose Manuel Barroso explicitly stated his support of the peaceful resolution of the NK conflict within the OSCE Minsk Group framework, expressing his "concern over the plight of people affected by the conflict".

Once the final settlement agreement is reached, EU would provide all the assistance required for rebuilding infrastructure said Barroso in his meeting.

[Date of Azerbaijani, Russian, and Armenian FMs' meeting announced \[ENG\]](#)

As a follow to Russia's Foreign Minister's Lavrov statement of a possible meeting of foreign ministers this January, TREND.az writes that the meeting was scheduled for January 24 in Moscow. According to the Armenian FM, there will be another meeting with the OSCE Minsk Group co- chairmen in early February as well.

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 February 1:

Analytical issue:

Vulnerable status quo and civil society as the preventer of armed conflict

By Anna Poghosyan

Time to shine a light on a hidden conflict: Nagory Karabakh in 2011

By Thomas de Waal

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