



# THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

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Vartan Gregorian and Charles Aznavour

## From Aznavour to Yerevan with Love

NEW YORK – Two Diasporan Armenian powerhouses came together on Monday, August 28, at the headquarters of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, to announce the creation of a new and unique museum halfway around the world.

**By Alin K. Gregorian**

Mirror-Spectator Staff

Legendary singer Charles Aznavour announced the creation of his eponymous Interactive Museum and Cultural Center in Yerevan, with the help of Vartan Gregorian, the indefatigable president of the Carnegie Corporation.

Gregorian joked that “Charles Aznavour is 73, but he claims to be 93” so that people would treat him better. He also thanked the 60 or so guests assembled, “who have defied every rule of New York” by being present in the city in late August as well as “every Armenian rule” by arriving even before the noon start time of the luncheon, contrary to a reputed predilection for lateness.

The museum will be a center for all things Aznavour – his music, life and ambitions, loves and family. He has recorded his life story so that those going through the exhibits can hear him tell his story.

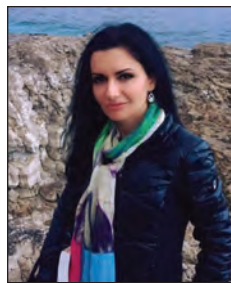
But it is not only that.

According to the brochure, the Charles Aznavour Interactive Museum “will use multi-media technologies such as computer animation and augmented reality to walk you through the realization of a dream and inspire you to be more than you see AZNAVOUR, page 11

## Bulgarian Journalist Disclosing Azerbaijan’s Support for Terrorists Dismissed from Post

SOFIA, Bulgaria (Armenpress) – Dilyana Gaytandzhieva, a Bulgarian journalist who published a scandalous report on Azerbaijani state-run airline’s supply of weapons to different unsettled parts of the world under the cover of diplomatic flights, has been dismissed from her post.

“Today after I was interrogated by the Bulgarian National Security Agency about the secret documents, which were leaked to me about the weapons supplies for terrorists in Syria, I was fired by *Trud Daily*, just few days before going back to Syria to continue my job,” she writes on Facebook, with her investigation attached, but at the same she doubts that the source can be removed from *Trud Daily*.



Dilyana Gaytandzhieva

A scandalous investigation was published in *Trud* on July 2 which reveals the Azerbaijani state circles’ direct engagement in supplying weapons to Islamic terrorist groups at different parts of the world.

Gaytandzhieva’s article mainly focuses on the illegal and large-scale export and sale of arms to Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Congo by Silk Way Airlines (an Azerbaijani state-run company) under the cover of diplomatic flights. Documents implicating Silk Way Airlines in arms supplies were sent to the author of the article by an anonymous twitter account – Anonymous Bulgaria. Gaytandzhieva says over the past three years the state aircrafts of Azerbaijan carried on board tens of tons

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## Iowa Recognizes Armenian Genocide

DES MOINES, Iowa – Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds issued a proclamation on Friday, August 25, commemorating the Ottoman Turkish Government’s murder of over 2.5 million Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians and Syriacs, making Iowa the 47th US state to properly recognize and condemn the Armenian Genocide, reported the Armenian National Committee of America Eastern Region.

During the official signing ceremony, attended by ANCA-ER leaders and a coalition of human rights groups, including representatives of the Iraqi Christian Relief Council, The Philos Project, and Iowans for Armenia, Governor Reynolds also declared October, 2017, “Armenia Awareness Month.” The ceremony, which was webcast live on the ANCA Facebook page, concluded with a moving prayer offered by Rev. Tadeos Barseghyan of St. Sahag Armenian Church of Minnesota, which is the closest Armenian church serving the Armenian-American community of Iowa.

Noting that the Ottoman Turkish government’s crime “still requires justice,” Reynolds’ proclamation cites Adolph Hitler’s ominous reference to the murder of the Armenian people just days prior to his invasion of Poland and the ensuing Holocaust, which claimed the lives of over  
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## Erdogan’s Extraterritorial Ambitions: The Case of Dogan Akhanli

BERLIN

– Deciphering the behavior of the President is a challenging task, and not only in the United States. Narcissism, paranoia and megalomania are the terms the psychiatrist would use to describe the brand of

**By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach**  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

personality disorders driving the erratic behavior that has become routine not only in the White House but also in the thousand-room presidential palace in Ankara. And the clinical diagnosis would be on the mark. That said, it fails to explain the political calculation that the affected subject has contrived to rationalize his outrageous actions. Yet, no doubt, there must be a method to the madness. The actor is after all a political animal.

Consider the recent moves by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan with regard to Germany, which, from any sane objective standpoint, he should consider his closest European ally and trade partner. Erdogan has been on the warpath with Germany ever since the

Armenian genocide. He has consistently sought provocations and conflict.

After refusing German parliamentarians access to German troops stationed in Incirlik, which led Germany to redeploy them to Jordan, he ruled against a similar request to visit troops in Konya, and a major crisis was averted only after German legislators were allowed to do so in the context of a NATO delegation. Shortly thereafter Erdogan, addressing a mass rally of his supporters, issued a call, or better, an order, to German citizens of Turkish descent not to cast their votes in the September parliamentary elections for the ruling CDU or SPD parties, or for the opposition Green Party, on grounds that they “are waging a campaign against Turkey.” When German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel denounced the bid as unacceptable interference into the internal affairs of a sovereign nation, the Turkish head of state (again in a speech to a rally of  
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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Putin Praises Ties with Armenia

MOSCOW (Public Radio of Armenia) – Russian President Vladimir Putin sent a congratulatory message to his Armenian counterpart Serzh Sargsyan on the 20th anniversary of the bilateral Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, the Kremlin press service said on Tuesday, TASS reports.

“The 1997 Treaty marked the beginning of a new era in Russian-Armenian relations,” the message reads. “The signing of this important document created conditions for enhancing political dialogue and boosting trade, economic, scientific, humanitarian cooperation, as well as interaction in other fields,” Putin added. He pointed to the long history of Russian-Armenian relations based on friendship and mutual respect between the two countries’ people.

The Russian leader commended the development of bilateral ties noting that they had reached the level of allied cooperation in the past 20 years.

“Moscow and Yerevan have been effectively cooperating within the integration processes taking place in Eurasia, coordinating their activities to ensure regional security and stability,” the Kremlin press service said.

### Armenia Coy About Syria Troop Deployment

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Armenia’s leadership on August 29 declined to confirm or deny a senior Russian military official’s claim that that it is prepared to send a demining team to Syria.

Maj. Gen. Alexander Novikov of the Russian army’s General Staff said late last week that Armenia and Serbia have expressed readiness to join an “international coalition” which Russia hopes would help its troops clear landmines in the war-torn country.

Moscow called for the creation of such a coalition through its permanent representative to the United Nations in April.

President Serzh Sargsyan’s press secretary, Vladimir Hakobian, said: “When a decision is made and all issues are clarified, the public will be notified in an appropriate manner.”

A spokesman for the Armenian Defense Ministry similarly said on Monday that the matter requires “further examination.”

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov discussed possible Armenian involvement in demining operations in the historic Syrian city of Palmyra when he met with his Armenian counterpart Edward Nalbandian in Yerevan in April 2016. “I hope that our joint initiative can be implemented,” Lavrov said after the talks.

It is not clear whether Sargsyan and Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke about Syria when they met in the Russian city of Sochi on August 23.

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### Jerusalem Students

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Number of Asylum Seekers Increases

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The number of asylum seekers in Armenia has increased in the first half of 2017, according to the data of the National Statistical Service of Armenia, reports Armenpress. Most asylum seekers were from Syria, Ukraine, Cuba, Iran, Azerbaijan. The number of foreigners from CIS countries who were granted residence status in Armenia has also increased. 55 people have sought asylum in the first half of 2017 compared to the 46 of the previous year. This year 25 people from Syria, 9 from Ukraine, 7 from Cuba, 6 from Iran and 4 from Azerbaijan have sought asylum. Four people have been rejected from the asylum claim. 2055 foreigners were granted residence status in Armenia: most of them were from Russia (451), from Iran (336) and from India (265).

## Archeological Excavations in Artsakh's Dadivank Monastery

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Within the restoration efforts at the small domed church of Dadivank monastery, archeological excavations have kicked off which will last 10 days, the head of Artsakh's Tigranakert expedition, Hamlet Petrosyan, said.

He noted that the monastery has been partially excavated since 2007, but it still remains archeologically important.

"The southern wall of the small dome church has been cracked, and it was necessary to check the basis for restoration. Based on research works, underneath has been opened under the southern wall which is stretched along the entire wall. Currently we are excavating it and are not clear what it is," Petrosyan said, adding that if everything is not clear at this stage, the archaeologists will think about conducting excavations at that site again.

During the July 21, 2007 excavations, the relics of the apostle St. Thaddeus were found under a tomb in one of the church's monasteries. Another mausoleum was found which contained a man buried sitting on a chair, not something found in Armenian Christian burials.

Dadivank is one of the ancient monasteries of Artsakh.

## Mass Shooting Suspect Tracked Down by Armenian Police

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Police tracked down and arrested on Friday, August 25, a man accused of killing four people and wounding seven others in an Armenian village almost a month ago.

The 50-year-old suspect, Telman Kalashian, allegedly went on a shooting spree on August 1 as several hundred men gathered in Shamiram, a village about 50 kilometers west of Yerevan, to mark a Yazidi religious feast. Law-enforcement authorities say he fled the scene with the help of his uncle. The latter was arrested on August 2.

Kalashian, who lived in another village also mostly populated by ethnic Yazidis, remained on the run for more than three weeks. An Armenian police spokesman said he was caught in his home province, Armavir, but gave no details of his arrest.

Another law-enforcement body, the Investigative Committee, formally charged Kalashian with several counts of murder later in the day.

In a statement, the Investigative Committee said the root cause of shooting was \$75,000 which Kalashian lent in 2013 to five other Armenian-born men, all of them brothers, who lived and worked in Russia. It said the Khudoyan brothers subsequently paid back only \$45,000, leading the Kalashians to press their relatives and friends in Armenia to help him get back the rest of the sum.

According to the statement, the suspect traded insults with one of those friends, German Kyaramian, by phone hours before heading to Shamiram and opening fire inside a village dining hall.



## Singer Daniel Decker Dedicates New Project to Artsakh

STEPANAKERT — American singer and composer Daniel Decker will visit the Nagorno Karabakh Republic to present his new project "My Artsakh." Details of the project dedicated to the 25th anniversary of Artsakh's independence and liberation of Shushi were scheduled to be presented at a press conference on August 30. The project is being implemented under the aegis of the Armenian Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs and the Ministry of Culture.

## Armenian Wrestlers Return Home to a Hero's Welcome

YEREVAN — Armenian Greco-Roman wrestlers returned home to a hero's welcome on August 23. At Zvartnots Airport the athletes were greeted by thousands of fans, relatives and officials.

Reigning world and Olympic champ Artur Aleksanyan (98 kg) beat Russia's Musa Yevloyev 3-1 in the final to claim gold at the 2017 World Wrestling Championships in Paris. Maksim Manukyan claimed gold in the 80-kilo-gram category.

The next day, President Serzh Sargsyan received the three-time world and European champion, bronze medalist of the Olympic Games, gold medalist of the Summer Olympics in 2016 Alexanyan and world champion Maxim Manukyan, who won gold medals at the Greco-Roman wrestling world championship. The meeting was attended by Armenian national team head coach Levon Julfalakyan and Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs Hrachya Rostomyan.

The president complimented his



Artur Aleksanyan, left, and Maksim Manukyan, receive wreaths at the airport from Gagik Tsarukyan, center.

guests on coming back to the homeland with great achievements. Sargsyan thanked them for giving people great joy, pride and bolstering the spirits of all Armenians.

He pointed to the fact that any win-

ning athlete sets a good example for the rising generation who are thereby encouraged to be like them and become more industrious and purposeful.

Sargsyan asked Rostomyan and Julfalakyan about the efforts aimed at providing more favorable conditions for developing wrestling in Armenia and expressed readiness to assist them with the timely and proper implementation of the planned activities.

The guests thanked the President for keeping in focus the development of sports and his sustained thoughtfulness of the needs of Armenian athletes. They underscored that it inspires them ahead toward new achievements.

## Andrew Schofer Named New US Co-Chair of OSCE Minsk Group

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — American diplomat Andrew Schofer officially assumed the office of US Co-Chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, US State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert said in a statement.

"The United States is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Andrew Schofer as the next U.S. Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group for Nagorno-Karabakh. Mr. Schofer brings extensive experience in Europe and International Organizations to the position, and most recently served as Chargé d' Affaires for the U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna (UNVIE). From August 2015 until January 2017, he served as the Deputy Chief of Mission at UNVIE."

According to the State Department, from August 2014 to August 2015, he served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Nicosia, Cyprus from 2011 to 2014, and has also worked overseas at the U.S. Embassies in Kuwait City, Kuwait Manama, Bahrain and Moscow, Russia.

Schofer's Washington assignments included postings on the Iraq Desk in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, and as special assistant to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, where he was primarily responsible for the Middle East and Counterterrorism portfolios.

The statement stressed that "The United States remains firmly committed to the Minsk Group Process and helping the sides reach a lasting and peaceful settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. As expressed in the June 19 and July 6 statements, the United States supports a just settlement that must be based on international law, which includes the Helsinki Final Act in particular, the principles of nonuse of force, territorial integrity, and self-determination. Andrew Schofer looks forward to helping the sides achieve this goal. We have informed the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan of Andrew Schofer's appointment."

Schofer will assume his new position effective immediately.

## Corrections

A story in the August 26 issue, "Tsoleen Sarian Eager to Spread the Gospel of Project SAVE," should include the following corrections.

Representatives from Project SAVE were on hand at the first Armenian Genealogy Conference in Massachusetts, not the recent one in Michigan.

Photographs from Project SAVE have been used in documentaries by Bared Maronian, especially in "Women of 1915."

The program by Prof. Armen Marsoobian was a symposium and lecture, and it was cosponsored by Armenian Museum of America.





## INTERNATIONAL

# Turkey Rift: German Politicians Demand Economic Pressure

BERLIN (Deutsche Welle) — The leader of Germany's Social Democrats (SPD) Martin Schulz, on Sunday accused Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of establishing a political tyranny and called on the European Union to scrap any further negotiations on expanding its customs union with Turkey.



Martin Schulz

"How long can we really continue to tolerate a president, who has already lost all sense of proportion domestically, now losing his sense of restraint internationally?" Schulz asked in an interview with German public broadcaster ARD. "Can we continue to accept that innocent German citizens languish in prisons in a country ruled by tyranny?"

According to the German government, 54 German nationals are being held in detention in Turkey, 10 of which are for political reasons. Two of the most high-profile detainees are jailed journalist Deniz Yücel and rights activist Peter Steudtner.

Schulz, the main challenger to Chancellor Angela Merkel and her Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in

next month's federal election, warned that Germany would have to seek its own hardline measures against Turkey if Erdogan refused to cooperate.

One measure would be to halt any talks of expanding Turkey's customs union with the EU. Ankara has made no secret of its ambition to boost market access for Turkish enterprises in the EU and sees the current arrangement, agreed back in 1995, as too restrictive.

Horst Seehofer, the leader of the Christian Social Union (CSU), called on the EU to freeze all aid payments to Turkey.

"Payment aimed at preparing Turkey to join the EU must immediately be put on hold," he told

Germany's Funke media group on Monday. The state premier of Bavaria went on to say that barely a week passes in which Ankara doesn't issue further threats and provocations.

Turkey is scheduled to receive almost 4.5 billion euros (\$5.4 billion) for the period from 2014 to 2020. The money is meant to help bring its institutions up to a European standard and ultimately help it become a member of the bloc.

German Foreign Minister, Sigmar Gabriel joined in the chorus of condemnation directed at Ankara, but warned that any action too drastic would only serve to strengthen Erdogan.

During a press conference Sunday in Berlin, Germany's top diplomat said it would be wrong to completely call off

EU-accession talks with Turkey as "Erdogan is waiting for just that."

"He (Erdogan) would then be able to back up his notion that Europe is turning its back on Turkey," Gabriel said. "He faces so much discord at home that he needs to take aim at a foreign foe."

Gabriel has in recent weeks taken a more hardline approach against Turkey. In July, he delivered the government's most strongly-worded statement yet against the Erdogan regime. As part of Germany's "reorientation" in policy towards Turkey, Gabriel warned German citizens to exercise extreme caution when traveling to Turkey and advised German firms against investing and doing business in the country.

## German Pilgrim Detained in Turkey

Germany's Foreign Ministry admitted on Sunday that another German national had been in detention in Turkey since April. The case had not been reported in the German until the Bild am Sonntag newspaper broke the story.

Little official information known is about the prisoner, David B. The 55-year-old, from Schwerin, was reportedly on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem before being arrested in south-eastern Turkey. While the reasons for his arrest have not yet been disclosed, he is thought to have lived with a Kurdish family while traveling through Istanbul.

A spokesperson for the German Foreign Office said that David B. had received consular advice from the German embassy in Ankara.

The leader of Germany's Green party, Cem Özdemir, told the local newspaper *Schweriner Volkszeitung* the case was the latest example of Erdogan collecting "hostages against our country." He added that Erdogan only understood a hardline stance and the "language of money."

## Victorian Young Labor Adopts Motion Recognizing Armenian Genocide

MELBOURNE, Australia — On August 19-20, Victorian Young Labor held its Annual Conference at the Victorian Trades Hall in Melbourne, where delegates gathered for lively debate and passed various motions including a motion to recognize the Armenian Genocide, which was adopted without dissent.

The motion noted: "Raphael Lemkin invented the word genocide, based on defining the Armenian Genocide, in order to describe the systematic and brutal murder of an ethnic and religious minority... in 2017, a first major Hollywood film set during the events of the Armenian Genocide was aired to audiences around the world titled 'The Promise', further raising mass awareness of the issue."

"Victorian Young Labor condemns the genocide of over one and a half million Christian Armenians, Assyrians and Pontian Greeks at the hands of the then Ottoman Empire and all other acts of genocide as the ultimate act of racial, religious and cultural intolerance."

The motion called for the Victorian State and Commonwealth governments to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide.

Victorian Young Labor Conference delegate Ariel Zohar, who moved the motion, said: "I'm absolutely delighted that Victorian Young Labor, the largest democratic youth political body in Victoria, unanimously supported the motion and committed to raise aware-

ness about the Armenian Genocide."

"Hopefully this motion contributes to the increasing global pressure for the Turkish state to pay reparations to the descendants of the victims and to the Armenian community for whom justice has still not yet been received."

"With the South Australian and NSW Parliaments already passing similar motions of support, it is now up to the Victorian and Australian parliaments to follow suit," Zohar added.

Armenian National Committee of Australia - Melbourne (ANC-AU Melbourne) chairperson, Asbed Boymoushakian congratulated and

thanked Victorian Young Labor for their unanimous support and strength in standing up for truth and justice.

"This is motion is part of the tidal wave of growing pressure with countries and organizations around the world having already adopted similar motions calling for recognition," he said.

"I call on all political parties and their youth wings to adopt the same stance, educate their members about the Armenian Genocide and stand shoulder to shoulder with many of the victims' families and descendants, many of whom are fortunate to now call Australia home."

## Bulgarian Journalist Disclosing Azerbaijan's Support for Terrorists Dismissed from Post

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of heavy weapons and ammunition headed to terrorists. She added that some of the weapons that Azerbaijan carries on diplomatic flights were used by its military in Nagorno Karabakh.

The international media reacted to Gaytandzhieva's investigation. Pressure was exerted on others in Bulgaria, as well. The Azerbaijani ambassador even urged the Union of Journalists of Bulgaria to freeze journalist Tsvetana Paskaleva's membership, as well as to hinder the events of AGBU Bulgaria branch that carries out legal activity in that country. Weeks ago it became known that Chairman of AGBU Bulgaria's youth union Hayk Karapetyan had to leave the post of the member of the Plovdiv National and Integration Council under still undisclosed circumstances. The reason, according to Armenpress information, was the interference of the Azerbaijani side and the fact that Bulgaria's state bodies succumbed to pressures instead of protecting the rights of a citizen of the country.

## International News

### Armenia Abolishes Visa Requirements for Japan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Citizens of Japan will be exempt from visa requirements when visiting Armenia. They will be able to remain in Armenia for 180 days within a year, according to a draft decision included in the agenda of the cabinet's meeting of August 31.

According to the document, Armenia enjoys friendly relations with Japan and has mutually beneficial cooperation with that country, the relations between the two states develops, while the opening of the Armenian Embassy in Tokyo in 2010 and the opening of the Embassy of Japan in Yerevan in 2015 further fostered the development of relations in all the spheres.

Citizens of Japan can visit Georgia without a visa, while they receive the visa upon arrival in Azerbaijan.

### Nalbandian Highlights Strengthening Business Ties with Estonia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Foreign ministers of Armenia and Estonia Edward Nalbandian and Sven Mikser exchanged congratulatory messages on the 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Estonia.

Nalbandian in his message said more than the past 25 years the two countries managed to form a firm base for the constant development of bilateral friendly ties. He attached importance to strengthening of bilateral business ties, stating that there is a great potential for boosting the trade and economic ties. Minister Nalbandian appreciated the Armenian-Estonian productive cooperation within the frames of the EU. He also emphasized the role of the Armenian community in terms of making close the two countries. In his turn the Estonian FM said over the past 25 years the relations between Armenia and Estonia have further intensified, the two countries deepened the practical partnership for the prosperity of the two peoples.

Mikser highlighted that the Estonian government has declared the Eastern Partnership as one of priorities of its chairmanship in the Council of the European Union and expects the signing of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership agreement between Armenia and the EU which will further expand the framework of relations.

### Israeli Defense Ministry Bans Defense Systems From Supplying UAVs to Azerbaijan

TEL AVIV (Armenpress) — The Israeli defense ministry has enforced a temporary ban on Aeronautics Defense Systems for the supply of \$20 million worth of Orbitier K1 unmanned aerial vehicles to one of its important customers, the Israeli *Bizportal* reports, citing the company's data in the stock exchange. The supply had to be carried out in 2017-2018, and in 2016 the acquisitions of this "customer" comprised 20 percent of the Israeli company's income, while in 2015, it was 18 percent. It also said a factory of Aeronautics Defense Systems spare parts operates in this country. The article emphasizes that only two countries from Aeronautics Defense Systems customers have Ba ratings — Serbia and Azerbaijan, while it is only in Azerbaijan that the Israeli company has a plant for spare parts of the UAVs.

A few weeks earlier Israeli media reported that the defense ministry is validating information alleging Aeronautics Defense Systems had declined to display the capabilities of their new UAVs, which are being supplied to Azerbaijan, on Armenian positions. The media report said a complaint had been filed to the Israeli defense ministry on the matter. Aeronautics Defense Systems denied the accusation. The incident is said to have occurred when the company's delegation had arrived in Baku to renegotiate supply conditions. Azerbaijani military officials requested the Israeli defense manufacturers to display their products during live combat operations, on the Armenian military.





## INTERNATIONAL

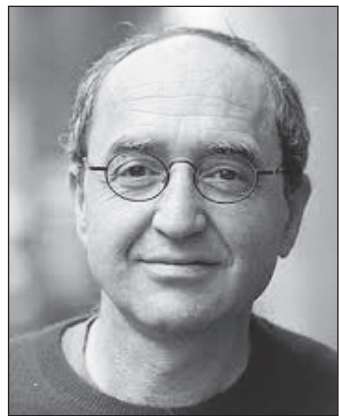
# Erdogan's Extraterritorial Ambitions: The Case of Dogan Akhanli

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supporters) responded with cheap ridicule. “Who are you,” he asked Gabriel rhetorically, “to talk to the President of Turkey? You should know your place!” i.e. he should address his remarks to his ranking counterpart, the foreign minister. He slammed Gabriel for “trying to teach us a lesson,” adding, “How long have you been in politics? How old are you anyway?” Gabriel, he said, was “a catastrophe.”

## The Long Arm of Turkish “Justice”

Days later, it became clear that the huffing and puffing was only the prelude to an act of far graver import. On August 19, on the basis of an international arrest warrant issued by Turkey, and implemented through Interpol, Spanish police arrested a German citizen of Turkish descent during his vacation in Grenada. Dogan Akhanli, a well-known novelist, playwright and human rights activist residing in Cologne and Berlin, was awakened that Saturday morning by loud banging on the door of his hotel room. Three Spanish policemen in bullet-proof vests and armed with submachine guns, asked him for identification, and, having ascertained he was the same person Interpol was pursuing with a “Red Notice”, slapped handcuffs on him and hauled him off to prison.



Dogan Akhanli

From Grenada, he was transferred to Madrid, and then, thanks to the prompt intervention of his lawyer, Ilyas Uyar, and German political authorities, released the following day, on condition he remain in Spain for 40 days and report weekly to the

authorities. During that ominous number of days, the Turkish authorities will have to supply documentation to substantiate their demand that he be extradited to Turkey for trial.

The mood in Berlin was livid. Foreign Minister Gabriel spoke to his Spanish counterpart by phone, urging him to deny Turkey's demand for extradition. Chancellor Angela Merkel said, “This is unacceptable, we cannot allow international organizations like Interpol to be misused for something like this.” It is due to such cases, she said, that Germany had “massively changed its Turkey policy,” adding that “we have to settle this conflict.” Her spokesman Steffen Seibert expressed the suspicion that the Turkish authorities were using Interpol against political critics. He said he was particularly upset because the “Red Notice” had been used against Akhanli. “Here we are dealing with a German citizen!” he said. The SPD's chancellor candidate Martin Schultz denounced the political motivation behind the outrageous arrest: “Anyone who takes the liberty of criticizing Mr. Erdogan is stigmatized as an enemy of Turkey and is persecuted. This is a new level of escalation. Therefore, I believe that one answer must be that we say to Turkey: further and deeper economic relations are not possible as long as Turkey behaves in this manner.” Cem Özdemir, Green Party leader, called for a review of security cooperation with Turkey, given that it is no longer a state based on the rule of law. Other political figures echoed these sentiments.

## What Crime?

Judging by the character of the security forces deployed to apprehend Akhanli – three armed policemen at his door and two police cars with six to eight policemen waiting outside – one might assume the suspect were a dangerous felon, especially in the heightened security atmosphere reigning in Spain in the wake of the vile terrorist attacks that had just shaken Barcelona. Akhanli himself told the press that he thought the Spanish police must have been surprised. They acted correctly, he said, but evidently, they had been prepared to apprehend a terrorist, and when they found him and realized he was a normal person, they must have been shocked.

They must have been told that he was, if not a terrorist, at least a dangerous criminal, a murderer. For this is what the arrest warrant asserts. In 2010, when he travelled to Turkey to visit his terminally ill father, he was apprehended at the airport and arrested. He was then put on trial, charged with involvement in a case of robbery and murder from 1989. After months in jail, the case finally came to court and, on grounds of insufficient proof, he was acquitted. Three years later however the ruling was reversed, and an arrest warrant followed. Now Turkey was activating it through Interpol.

At the time of the trial, human rights activists mobilized an international solidarity campaign for Akhanli, which organized a delegation of observers at the trial, among them this author. The message that was stressed in that

campaign, and what remains valid in the current situation, is that the only “crime” Akhanli has committed is that he has told the truth.

Dogan Akhanli was born in a Turkish village in the north-east and moved to Istanbul with his brother to attend school as an adolescent. He opposed the military regime in the 1980s and spent two years in prison as a result. He succeeded in fleeing to Germany, where he was granted political asylum and then German citizenship in 2001. Since then he has been engaged, not in party politics, but in civil society and, as an intellectual, he has dedicated his literary efforts to shedding light on the true story of the Armenian genocide. One of his novels that appeared in 1989-1999 in Turkish and was translated into German, “The Judges of the Last Judgment”, deals with the Armenian genocide. It was the first novel by a Turkish author to do so. In 2016, his novel *The Days without Father* appeared in German, a work that relates the drama of a politically persecuted exile in Germany.

Perhaps the most important work is the play he wrote as a monodrama, “Anne's Silence.” The play was conceived by German-Armenian actress Bea Ehlers-Kerbekian, who performed it on the stage in several cities in Germany as well as Armenia. It tells the story of a Turkish-German girl who discovers that her mother, whom she knew as a Turkish Muslim, had actually been an Armenian genocide survivor. The play was an important contribution to the discussion process that unfolded in Germany around the genocide, which eventually led to the Bundestag resolution.

Akhanli has also been active for years in civil society initiatives involving Germans, Turks, Armenians and Kurds aimed at working through the common history and reaching recognition of the genocide, as a prelude to reconciliation. He organized and led week-long seminars in Berlin (which I also participated in), dealing with the genocide and the Shoah. He has been honored for his literary and civil society engagement, and was invited to be the keynote speaker at the St. Paul's Cathedral in Frankfurt commemoration of the genocide on April 24. Recently he was among the founding members of the German-Turkish-Armenian Friendship Society. In short, if there is any German intellectual of Turkish descent who has fought for recognition of the Armenian genocide, it is Dogan.

That is, in short, the crime that the Erdogan establishment wants to punish him for.

## The Time is Ripe

But then, the question arises, why should Erdogan and company revive their witch hunt against Dogan Akhanli now? Here we move from the psychoanalytical to the political.

Erdogan himself may have betrayed the secret, when he spoke about the extradition of persons in Germany to Turkey. Referring to the German-Turkish journalist Deniz Yücel, jailed in Turkey, Erdogan had quipped that maybe the Germans would now comply with his demands for handing over persons he claimed were behind the attempted coup last summer. In July, the mass tabloid *BILD-Zeitung* reported that, according to Foreign Ministry sources, Erdogan had discretely inquired whether Germany would be interested in swapping Yücel for two former Turkish generals allegedly in Germany. The response, *BILD* wrote, was “Naturally we cannot embark on such a trade.” Now it appears confirmed that Erdogan had planned to use the arrests of enemies of Turkey abroad (like Dogan Akhanli) as pawns in a game of political chess with his European partners. If they will not hand over to Turkey those persons he and his regime have identified as coup plotters (=Gülenists), then he will continue to arrest persons he considers enemies, even if they reside in European countries.

Turkey expert Rainer Hermann penned an editorial on August 21 in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* entitled, “Erdogan's Hostages,” in which he stated that the Akhanli case would set a precedent: if Spain were to agree to his extradition to Turkey, then “all critics of Erdogan would have to be afraid of travel.” A day later the same newspaper of record carried an interview with Ilias Uyar, Akhanli's lawyer, in which he stated: “I believe that the Turkish legal authorities are trying to set an example: you are not safe anywhere. Turkey perhaps assumed that Akhanli would be in detention Sunday. That would have been a very strong sign to demonstrate their power. No one is supposed to feel safe anywhere.”

Erdogan's cheerful disregard for national sovereignty has prompted suggestions that he may seriously style himself as a new sultan, with territorial ambitions stretching westwards across Europe, a suggestion that would be coherent with the vision of a “new Ottomanism” that his AKP has embraced.

## Spain's Response

What is going to happen next? On August 25, the Red Notice was formally lifted, but it is not clear why. That decision may be made on technical grounds: since it signifies the request to pursue and arrest the sought individual, once Akhanli had been found, there was no reason to maintain

that level of alarm. Or, it may be lifted if it is found that political motivations were behind the issuance of the alert. Interpol headquarters in Lyons gave no reasons to the press for their action, and there was no statement issued by the Spanish authorities either. The German Foreign Ministry declared it was “glad that Interpol cancelled the Red Notice.”

Whatever the thinking behind the move, Akhanli has still not been allowed to leave the country. Reached by telephone by this author on August 29, he explained that he had to wait for the procedure to be completed by the Turkish and Spanish authorities, which might take a long time. He said he would stay in Madrid, was in good spirits and the German Foreign Ministry was taking good care of the matter.

As announced at the time of the arrest. Turkey would be given forty days to provide the documentation to prove he should be extradited. It will be up to the Spanish authorities to decide whether or not the documentation meets the requirements. The German government has already made clear that it is totally opposed to any such move, and has signaled this view to the Spanish government in several ministries. As representatives of the Justice, Interior and Foreign ministries told reporters on August 21, any state working with Interpol can decide how it reacts to arrest warrants and actually the organization conducting the search should examine the possibility of a political motivation behind the warrant. In Germany, decisions at every stage of the process are both juridical and political: one must ascertain whether or not the criminal charges are valid, and then evaluate politically, whether the accused person is being politically persecuted, what the consequences of an extradition might be for that person's safety, and so forth. The ministry spokesmen were unanimous in excluding the possibility that Spain would extradite him.

Given the precedents in this case – that Akhanli has a history of juridical and political persecution at the hands of Turkish legal authorities – and the current sad state of affairs inside Turkey today, where prisons are overcrowded with critics, dissidents, journalists, teachers, “Gülenists” who have been arbitrarily jailed, it is indeed very unlikely that Spain would bend under pressure. When asked for his prediction, lawyer Uyar said, “A trial against Akhanli according to the rule of law is impossible in Turkey.” To depict how disastrous the human rights situation there is and how paralyzed the judiciary is, he pointed to the Hrant Dink murder trial: “... during a pause in the proceedings of the trial, a judge was arrested.” If European standards hold in this case, Uyar said he did not believe it would come to extradition.

The entire affair has left many open questions regarding the legality or lack thereof of Turkey's initiative. If the international arrest warrant was reactivated, and even on “Red Notice” denoting the highest degree of urgency, why were the German authorities not informed? Did Interpol in Ankara contact Interpol in Madrid directly, instead of going through the central agency in Lyons, in which case other states would have been informed? How did the Spanish police know what hotel Akhanli was staying in? Were Turkish intelligence agents involved? In short: was the law broken somewhere along the way? And if so, by whom?

## Truth Will Tell

It may well be that the clumsy attempt on Erdogan's part to take justice into his own hands will boomerang, as have so many other of his ill-conceived political antics. For sure he is the one who has mud on his face; editorials and cartoons have made him the laughing stock of the political circus. The story has dominated TV and press coverage since the arrest; on August 27, it was the topic of a prime-time talk show, with participation of nationally prominent politicians, including Foreign Minister Gabriel, connected by video. The political establishment in Berlin has united in denouncing the abuse of power demonstrated by Ankara and the question of how to revise German and EU policy downwards vis-à-vis Turkey has become a leading issue in the ongoing parliamentary election campaign. Friends, colleagues, intellectuals and human rights activists have rallied in Dogan's defense.

As for the victim of this judicial travesty, Akhanli told German TV reporters that he was shaken by the events, shocked to find that even in the EU he was not safe. He had no doubts about the motivation behind events; “I have expressed criticism of Turkey's politics and Turkey's past, and they didn't like that. They want to silence me,” he said, “but at sixty, I am not going to remain silent.” In a press conference after his release from custody, he said it would be “a juridical scandal” if he were extradited. Erdogan, he said, displayed “a despotic attitude” and “believes he can do whatever he wants.” Erdogan “has nothing to do with an elected state president.” Asked what he might do during his forty-day forced vacation in Spain, he said, “Who knows? Maybe I will write a book.”

(Quotations from German press sources have been translated by the author.)



# Community News

## Four Students from Sts. Tarkmanchatz Join St. Nersess Summer Conferences

By Florence Avakian

ARMONK, N.Y. — Once again, for the 12th year, outstanding students from the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem's Sts. Tarkmanchatz School joined their counterparts at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary. This year, the St. Nersess Summer Conferences for youth, afforded four Jerusalem students unique opportunities to interact with their Armenian-American peers, strengthen their Christian faith, and experience the special New York environs and flavor.

This project was initiated by Rev. Mardiros Chevian, dean of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, and has been realized by contributions from donors. This year, the main benefactors of the project were Russell and Susan Kashian (Muskege, WI), with support by George and Lorraine Marootian (Franklin Lakes, NJ), Vicken and Rosette Arslanian (Englewood, NJ), Joseph and Kristine Casali (Ramsey, NJ), Gregory and Meline Toufayan (Saddle River, NJ), Glen and Kristin Dabaghian (Ramsey, NJ), and Keith and Karyn Bilezerian (Wrentham, Mass.).

The four exceptional students included 17-year-olds Ike Demirjian, Hagop Hagopian, Sevana Hekimian, and 15-year-old Serena Karin Bush, all of whom praised their student life at Sts. Tarkmanchatz and its principal, the Very Rev. Norayr Kazazian.

Several comments about Kazazian reflected the love and admiration they felt for him and his leadership of the school which Ike called "very supportive." He was praised for advancing the school's its educational programs and its facilities, and for being "close, friendly, kind, caring and principled" with the students. "Sts. Tarkmanchatz has been a beautiful flower in our lives," declared Hekimian.

Ike Demirjian, who grew up in Tel Aviv and moved to Jerusalem two years ago with his family, said he "loves Jerusalem and Sts. Tarkmanchatz" where he has served a Student Council president, and started a basketball team which he coaches. He has decided to study either engineering "because I love making things and am very creative," or medicine "in order to help people."

Born in Jerusalem, Hagop Hagopian comes from a family of Genocide survivors. His paternal grandmother escaped from Eskishehieh and his maternal grandparents from Marash. He sees medicine as his future work. He plans to stay in Jerusalem, attend Hebrew University, then go to the Medical University in Yerevan. Having family in Armenia, and a sister studying medicine there, he has visited Armenia nine times, and especially loves Artsakh, "its nature, endless green mountains and its weather."

Sevana Hekimian's family came to Jerusalem through a journey that involved her paternal grandfather and his uncle from Musaler, escaping the Genocide, going to Syria, Jordan and finally an orphanage in Jerusalem's Armenian Convent. There, he met his future wife at the Homenetmen Club.

She plans to study economics and accounting management at Hebrew University, then live and study in Armenia "because it's time that our generation should be the ones to make the country brighter." She traveled to Armenia in 2013 with the Ari Tun (Return Home) program where young Armenians from around the globe stay in local volunteer homes and interact with the local population. "When I got to Zvartnotz Airport, something touched my heart. It was comfort," she revealed.

see STUDENTS, page 9



Armenian Assembly Co-Chair Anthony Barsamian and Rabbi David Rosen of the American Jewish Committee

## Armenian Assembly Co-Chairs Meet with Religious Leaders in Jerusalem

WASHINGTON — Armenian Assembly of America Co-Chair and Massachusetts Council of Churches President Anthony Barsamian travelled to Jerusalem this month, where he met with religious leaders, including the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, Archbishop Nourhan Manougian.

"It was an honor meeting with the Armenian Patriarch and Armenians in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and holding vibrant discussions with the Armenian community in the Holy Land. The Patriarch made a point to welcome us and encourage Armenian Americans to visit the Armenian Quarter and meet with members of this important Armenian community. His Eminence made sure we had the opportunity to pray with our Christian brothers and sisters at Saints James Cathedral and participate in Divine Liturgy at the tomb of Christ, also known to Armenians as the Holy Resurrection Church and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, while having an opportunity to visit the numerous Armenian shops and enjoy Western Armenian culture which continues to exist since the 4th Century," Barsamian stated.

The participants visited Srpts Tarkmanchatz (Holy Translators) Armenian School within the Armenian Quarter. They were led by Fr. Mardiros Chevian, dean of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary and Fr. Krikor Sabounjian, a member of the Eastern Diocese Council and pastor of Holy Translators Church in Framingham, Mass. They met the Gulbenkian Library Director and principal of

see JERUSALEM, page 7



Armenian Assembly Co-Chair Anthony Barsamian, St. Nersess Armenian Seminary Dean Fr. Mardiros Chevian, Gulbenkian Library Director and Principal Very Rev. Norayr Kazazian, and Eastern Diocese Council Member Fr. Krikor Sabounjian

## Armenian Studies Program To Hold Two-Day International Conference on 'Armenians, Greeks, and Kurds: A People's History of The Ottoman Empire'

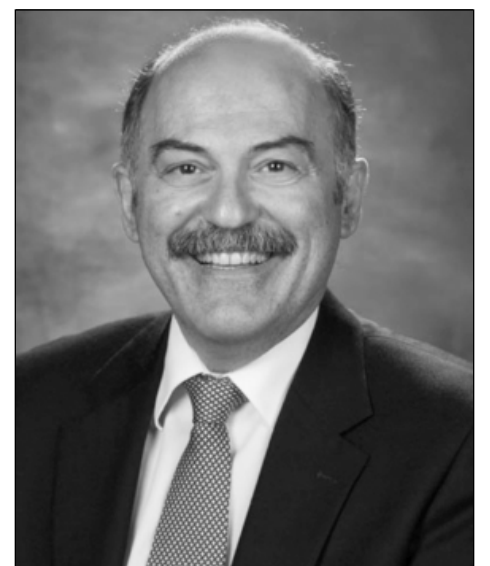
FRESNO — The Armenian Studies Program will hold an international conference exploring the topic of "Armenians, Greeks, and Kurds: A People's History of the Ottoman Empire" to be held on Friday, September 22, and Saturday, September 23. The conference will be held in the University Business Center (5245 N. Backer Ave.), A. Peters Auditorium, Room 191 on the Fresno State campus.

Ottoman history is often studied through the lens of Ottoman Turkish archives, sometime neglecting the important contribution of Armenian and other sources to the construction of that history. The invited scholars are innovators in this area utilizing Armenian and other archival sources for their papers. The Conference focuses on the pre-1915 Genocide period in the Ottoman Empire, with papers featuring micro-histories of various regions.

The conference is co-sponsored by the College of Arts and Humanities and the Department of History at Fresno State. The Thomas A. Kouymjian Family Foundation, the Leon S. Peters Foundation and the M. Victoria Kazan Fund for Armenian Studies are supporters of the conference.

Armenian Studies Program Coordinator Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian and Dr. Ümit Kurt (Harvard University) are co-organizers of the conference.

Der Mugrdchian will open the Conference at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, September 22 in the University Business Center, Alice Peters



Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian

Auditorium, Room 191. An hors d'oeuvres reception will take place from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the University Business Center Gallery, just prior to the conference.

Following the opening address, the first session will open with three panelists: Owen Miller (Union University) "The Colonization of the Mountains: Sasun, Zeytun and Dersim at the End of the Ottoman Empire"; David Gutman (Manhattanville College) "The Sojourners of Harput (Kharpert): At the Intersection of the Local, the Imperial, and the Global"; and Ugur Z. Pece (Harvard University) "From Ballots to Barracks: The Conscription of non-Muslims at a Time of Parliamentary Politics in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1912."

The conference will reconvene at 10 a.m. on Saturday, September 23, with two sessions, the first chaired by Dr. Sergio La Porta, Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies at Fresno State. All Saturday sessions will take place in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, Room 191.

Session I will feature presentations by Emre Can Daglioglu (Clark University) "Intra-Imperial Space and Anti-Armenian Violence in the

see CONFERENCE, page 8





## OBITUARY

# Dorothy Chakarian Hartmann

## Devoted to Family, Children

CHEVY CHASE, Md. — Aroosiag (Dorothy) Chakarian Hartmann passed away peacefully on Saturday, August 19, at her home in Chevy Chase, at the age of 101.

Dorothy was born in Providence, RI, on January 17, 1916 to the late Nighohos Kashmanian and Vartoohi Yesaian. She was a longtime resident of Watertown, as well as Amityville, NY and Dunedin, Fla. For the past 10 years, she had lived in her apartment in Chevy Chase.

Dorothy was the wife of Albert Kevork Chakarian (deceased) and Karl Gunter Hartmann (deceased). She was the mother of Dale Chakarian Turza (Peter Henry); sister of Virginia Keljikian (Paul, deceased); grandmother of Kristin Turza Campbell, M.D. (Chris), Lauren Turza Greer, M.D. and Allison Turza Bajger PhD (Dan); and great-grandmother of Chase, Haley and Baby Parker Turza Campbell, Lester Kyle and Olivia Dale Greer, and Henry Albert Bajger. She is survived by her grandnieces, Deborah Quick Zavaleta (Raul) and their children, Raquel, Jordan, Dylan and Tristan Zavaleta, and Pamela Quick Reeder (David) and

their children, Jonathan and Erica Reeder, as well as her grandnephew, Joel Mazmanian (Jill) and their children, Jacie and Jordan and cousins, Helen Krikorian (Deeran, deceased) and their sons, Mark Krikorian (Amelie) and their children, Alex, Ben and Theo and David Krikorian (Kristien) and their children, Sebastian, Katia and Ara, and Annette Krikorian Arnott (Peter) and their son, David Arnott. She is also survived by Thomas Hartmann and his son, Michael. She was preceded in death by her two sisters and their husbands, Margaret Mazmanian (Joseph) and Zarie Keosian (George) and by her niece and her late husband, Doris Mazmanian Quick (William) and her nephew, Edward Mazmanian (Carole Mazmanian Chooljian).

Born and raised in Providence, Dorothy met the “love of her life,” Albert Chakarian, a successful lawyer in Cambridge, and moved, after marrying him, to Boston, in 1939.

During World War II, she worked at the Watertown Arsenal and Raytheon Corporation. When her daughter, Dale, was born, Dorothy devoted her life to being a homemaker, raising

her daughter and volunteering at St. James Armenian Church in Watertown, where she was very active in the Women’s Guild, and Mt. Auburn Hospital in Cambridge, where she helped out in the gift shop.

After Albert died in 1963, Dorothy worked in the business office of Widener Library at Harvard University.

She was blessed to meet and fall in love again with Karl Hartmann in 1971, and she then moved to Amityville, and Dunedin, Fla., ultimately relocating to Chevy Chase, in 2007 to be close to her daughter, grandchildren and cousins. By that time, her sisters, Virginia and Zarie, had also moved to Chevy Chase, Maryland. After Karl died in 2009, she joined a small knitting group at St. Alban’s Church in Washington, D.C., as Dorothy was an inveterate knitter all of her life. She was a great Armenian cook and baker. She loved to read and play Scrabble. She adored her family and friends, and they all adored her back. She will be very missed by everyone!



Funeral services were held on Tuesday, August 29, at St. James Armenian Apostolic Church, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472. Interment followed at Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, MA.

# Zarouhi (Zarie) Irene Keosian

## Devoted to Family

CHEVY CHASE, Md. — Zarouhi (Zarie) Irene Keosian passed away after a very short illness on Tuesday, May 9, in Chevy Chase, Md. at age 97.

She was born in Providence, RI, on September 25, 1919 to the late Nighohos Kashmanian and Vartoohi Yesaian. She was a long-time resident of Watertown, as well as Amityville, NY. For the past 17 years, she had lived in her apartment in Chevy Chase with her



(David) and their children, Jonathan and Erica Reeder, as well as her grandnephew, Joel Mazmanian (Jill) and their children, Jacie and Jordan and cousins, Helen Krikorian (Deeran, deceased) and their sons, Mark Krikorian (Amelie) and their children, Alex, Ben and Theo and David Krikorian (Kristien) and their children, Sebastian, Katia and Ara, and Annette Krikorian Arnott (Peter) and their son, David Arnott. She is also survived by Kenneth Keosian, Marlene Keosian Weinberg and Sandy Keosian Kahn and their families. She was preceded in death by her two sisters, Margaret Mazmanian (Joseph, deceased) and Dorothy Chakarian Hartmann (Albert, deceased and Karl, deceased), and by her niece, Doris Mazmanian Quick (William, deceased) and her nephew, Edward Mazmanian (Carole Mazmanian Chooljian). She is survived by many loving relatives and friends.

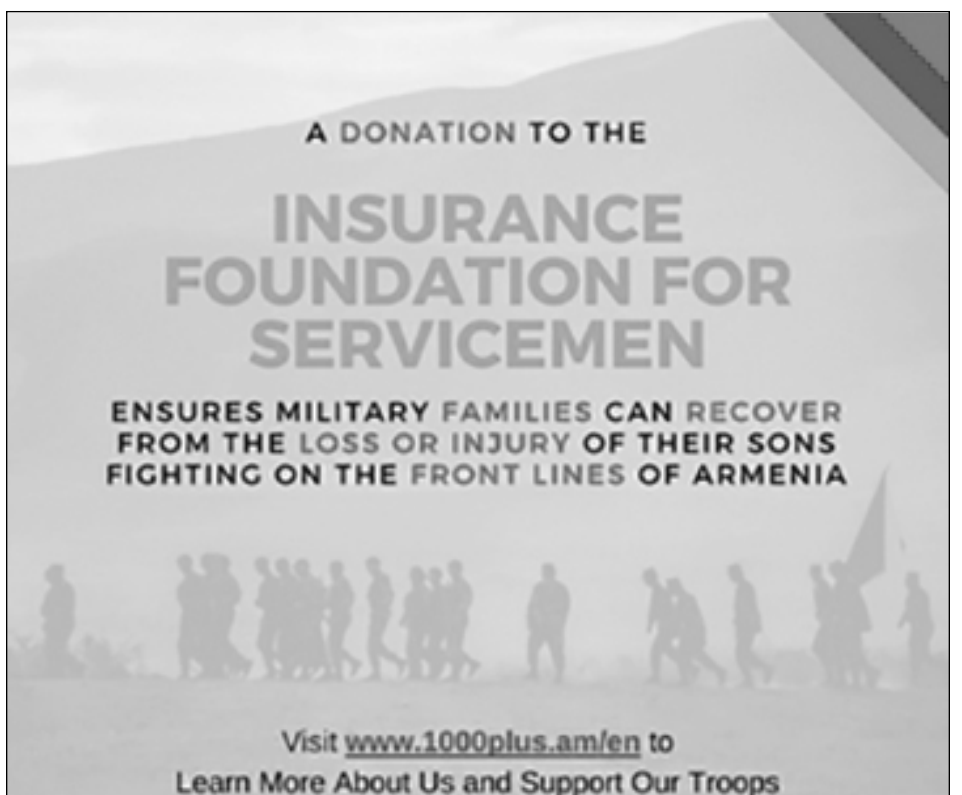
Born and raised in Providence, she was a prominent fixture for many years in the retail world, having worked at Gladdings in Providence, the Guild House in Boston, and Grover Cronin in Waltham, Mass.

In 1969, Zarie met and fell in love with George Keosian, an entrepreneur from New York, who dabbled in politics. After marrying him in 1970, she left retail behind and moved to Amityville, NY. When George died in 1999, Zarie and her widowed sister, Virginia, moved to Chevy Chase to be close to their niece, Dale, whom they considered to be like a daughter, and her family, and later, their sister, Dorothy and her husband, Karl, and their cousins.

She was a fine Armenian cook and baker, who loved to read and talk endlessly about politics. She enjoyed doing crossword puzzles and playing Scrabble and backgammon. She always loved her family and friends, and they cherished her in return.

Interment was at Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, on August 29.

Arrangements were made by the Aram Bedrossian Funeral Home.



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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# College Newspaper Features Story of College Junior Concluding Washington Internship

CHAPEL HILL, North Carolina (*Daily Tar Heel*) – While many students would be happy with landing just one internship before they graduate, junior biology major Taylor Boole managed to score two summer interning positions on Capitol Hill.

Boole lived in Washington, D.C., for 10 weeks this summer. He spent the first four weeks working as an intern in the office of US Rep. George Holding, R-NC, and the following six weeks at the Armenian Assembly of America, the largest non-partisan Armenian-American advocacy organization in the US.

Boole said the experience in Rep. Holding's office was invaluable.

"Whether you're in research, whether you're in marketing, whether you're running a business as a whole – which I'm interested in – I think that learning about how the political process works and influences those things is important," Boole said.

During his time in Holding's office, Boole managed daily communications between the representative and his constituents, attended and wrote memos about legislative hearings, researched legislation in which Holding could sponsor and gave tours of the US Capitol Building.

Katie Smith, the congress member's office manager, said the office has a couple of interns at any given time. She said the internship program comprehensively educates its participants about legislation.

"The congressman's interns are exposed to every step of the legislative process," Smith said. "The program is designed to offer students a firsthand glimpse into working on Capitol Hill and an overview of the legislative process."

During his internship with the Armenian Assembly office, Boole met with legislators to advocate for legislation regarding Armenian-American relations, kept up-to-date spreadsheets of members of the Congressional Armenian Caucus and researched daily news reports related to the organization's projects.

Armenian Assembly program director Joseph Piatt said the organization accepts about 20 interns every summer. He said the internship program is important in expanding their network of advocates and creating future leaders for the Armenian-American community.

"That's why we do this particular program – to build the new generation of leaders and our contacts in D.C. through positive work and connection," Piatt said.

Piatt said the Assembly promotes public awareness of Armenian issues and lobbies in Washington for national recognition of the Armenian Genocide, military parity funding for the conflict with Azerbaijan and other foreign aid funding for Armenia.

Boole, who is half-Armenian, said the program educated him on Armenian-American relations and allowed him to gain a deeper understanding of Armenian culture.



Taylor Boole, left, with Rep. George Holding

"Learning more about these issues and how to get recognition and how to fight them was a very interesting process," Boole said.

Boole said he could feel the tense political climate during his time in D.C.

"Especially with all the controversy of what Trump's doing, it just brings the stakes higher," Boole said. "You can tell by the way some people talk on the phone, constituents when they call you, they're either very happy about what Trump's doing or they're very concerned."

Despite his interest in politics, Boole still

plans on majoring in biology with a business minor to pursue healthcare consulting. He said he would encourage his peers to learn more about the political process, no matter what career path they are on.

"You get a different view of what it's like working in politics – what's really going on and how this legislation is developed and all the work that goes into actually passing it," Boole said. "Even if I'm not a political science major, I think it's just an invaluable learning experience."

## Armenian Assembly Co-Chairs Meet With Religious Leaders in Jerusalem

JERUSALEM, from page 5

the Tarkmanchatz Armenian School, Very Rev. Norayr Kazazian, who reported the number of students at the school has increased from 90 to 180 in recent years.

"This trip to the Holy Land was inspirational and eye-opening. Jerusalem is one of the important centers for us and we should all make an effort to visit the Holy Land and experience the richness of Armenian life unbroken throughout the centuries," Barsamian added.

their freedom of speech is protected in our blessed land. But it was abundantly clear that at least some of these racists, anti-Semites, and homophobes came to Charlottesville looking for trouble."

The Foreign Minister of Armenia, Edward Nalbandian, recently held high-level meetings with the Israeli Government as relations continue to expand. During his discussion with the Minister of Regional Cooperation of Israel, Tzachi Hanegbi, Nalbandian highlighted the





Armenian Assembly Co-Chair Anthony Barsamian with Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, Archbishop Nourhan Manougian

During his visit, Barsamian also met with Rabbi David Rosen of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and joined him in prayer at the West Wall, where they both reflected upon the need for peace and justice following the protests in Charlottesville.

AJC Chief Executive Officer David Harris wrote a letter to President Donald Trump, and stated: "What we witnessed in Charlottesville on Friday and Saturday was nothing short of horrifying. It was sickening enough to see people drawn together by the siren songs of white supremacy, the Ku Klux Klan, and neo-Nazism. But however repugnant their views may be, so long as they conducted themselves peacefully,

deep historical roots between Armenian and Jewish people, "which create a good basis for the development of inter-state cooperation." They also discussed holding consultations between the foreign ministries, enhancing their collaboration within international organizations, and increasing inter-parliamentary exchanges, as well as developing mutually beneficial cooperation in culture, science, and education.


"I welcome these encouraging trends in Armenia-Israel relations and extend my appreciation to our friends in the American Jewish community who support this development," Barsamian said.




### Knights and Daughters of Vartan

Public Presentation

GUEST SPEAKER



Donald J. Tellalian, AIA NCARB

Donald J Tellalian, AIA

Principal Architect, Boston Armenian Heritage Park

**"How we built the Park"**

**Tuesday, September 12, 2017, 7:00 PM Sharp**

St. Mary Armenian Church Cultural hall  
4125 Fessenden Street, NW, Washington DC  
Entrance Free- Desert Reception



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Knights of Vartan Donate to Artsakh's Ministry of Health

STEPANAKERT — Past Commander of the Knights of Vartan Ani Lodge of Washington, DC, Jake Bournazian, traveled to Artsakh with his son and daughter on July 17 to make a donation on behalf of Knights of Vartan. The \$10,000 donation was presented to Karine Atayan, minister of health of the Artsakh Republic, to contribute toward the costs of purchasing medical equipment for a new oncology treatment facility in Stepanakert.



Jake Bournazian, right, with Karine Atayan

## Bruce S. Melikian Approved for Judgeship by Massachusetts Governor's Council

By Marilyn M. Petitto Devaney

BOSTON — Recently Gov. Charlie Baker nominated Bruce Melikian to a judgeship on the District Court circuit. In accordance with the Governor's Council procedures, the council held a public hearing two weeks ago in the State House Council Chambers.

The Governor's Council holds its official hearings in the State House for every nominee presented by the Governor — judges, clerk magistrates, members of the Parole Board, Industrial Accident Board, (for injured workers,) Appellate Tax Board (an opportunity for citizen to challenge local real estate taxes,) commutations and pardons, vote on justice of the peace and notaries. Every week, in the Council Chamber, the Council also votes on the State warrant- all the expenditures incurred in that week.

At Governor's Council hearings, the nominee is invited to bring witnesses speaking in support. The agenda also allows people to speak in opposition of the nominee.

I met for nearly four hours with Melikian.

I am a lifelong resident of Watertown. I had dear friends in my life who were survivors of the Armenian Genocide. Melikian and I had similar interests and history concerning the Armenian Genocide. His grandfather lost all his family in the Armenian Genocide.

Bruce is highly qualified. Today in the State House, when I voted for his appointment I stated: "I will be voting in favor of the appointment of Bruce Melikian to the District court. I am pleased for the Governor's nomination of Bruce Melikian. The first attribute I look for is honesty and he has it. Attorney Melikian has thirty-three years legal experience as a practicing lawyer - in court on a continuing basis. He has all the attributes I look for in a judge- highly qualified, with experience, integrity, temperament, age, life experience, empathy and respect for people. In meeting him for nearly four hours - yes four hours- I clearly know the whole person who I am supporting. I thank Attorney Melikian for all his time to give me the opportunity to learn the personal and public person who will be sitting as a judge."

On Wednesday, August 23, Melikian received the unanimously support of the Governor's Council as associate justice of the District Court Circuit.

I invite everyone to attend the public Governor's Council hearings held year round in the State House Governor's Council Chamber on the third floor.

Council has no vacation- has no staff- have as many hearings in August as we do in December.

(Marilyn M. Petitto Devaney can be reached at her State House office at (617)725-4015x.)

Construction of the new oncology dispensary was recently completed, in May 2017, through funding from Vardan and Koharig Ohanessian in France. During his visit, Bournazian met with Atayan to discuss the major equipment needs to enable the dispensary to be operational. After the meeting, Bournazian and his family visited with the doctors and nursing staff at the current facility where patients are diagnosed, and then toured the new building of the oncology dispensary.

"The newly built oncology dispensary building needs more medical equipment, and this donation from Knights of Vartan will be used to help improve healthcare for cancer patients in Artsakh. Cancer rates have dramatically increased in the population in Artsakh over the past 10 years. Any support to improve the life of our compatriots is very much appreciated," said Atayan.

"It is great to see so many improvements in Artsakh today, but still there is much to be done.

I hope this example from our lodge will inspire others to follow," said Bournazian. The Knights of Vartan organization has been operating for the benefit of Armenian people in the homeland and in the diaspora—both directly and through its mission partners—for over a century. Today, there are 24 chapters of the Knights of Vartan throughout the United States.

In 2016, the Knight of Vartan opened its communication office in Yerevan to facilitate communication with its mission partners.



## ADL Supreme Council Meets Los Angeles Youth

LOS ANGELES — On Thursday, August 17, leaders of the Armenian Democratic Liberal (ADL) Supreme Council, including President Vartan Nazerian (seated, second from left), Vice President Edmond Y. Azadian (seated, third from left), and member Vartkes Kourouyan (standing at far left), met with a group of Los Angeles Armenian youth at the Tekeyan Cultural Association's Beshgetourian Center in Altadena, California to discuss various Armenian issues. ADL Central Committee member Kevork Haleblan is seated, first on the left. Representatives of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada present included President Azadian and Executive Director Aram Arkun (seated, fourth from left).

## Armenian Studies Program to Hold Two-Day International Conference on 'Armenians, Greeks and Kurds: A People's History of the Ottoman Empire'

CONFERENCE, from page 5

Ottoman Empire: The Aghtamar Catholicos Khatchadur III and the 1895 Van Massacre"; Varak Ketsemanian (Princeton University) "The Armenian Revolutionary Movement between Ideologies and Paradoxes: A Case Study of the Hunchakian Party Program (1890-1896)"; and Ümit Kurt (Harvard University) "The Breakdown of a Previously Peaceful Coexistence: The Aintab Armenian Massacres of 1895."

Following a coffee break the Conference will conclude with two more papers: Nilay Özok-Gündogan (Florida State University) on "Can One Save the Voices of the 'Ordinary' Kurds from 'the Enormous Condescension of Posterity?' Thoughts on Writing the Social History of the Kurds in the Ottoman Empire" and Janet Klein, (University of Akron) "Armenian Minorityhood in Ottoman and Russian History and Historiography?"

All sessions and the reception are free and open to the public.

For more information about the conference visit [www.fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies](http://www.fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies).



Dr. Ümit Kurt





## COMMUNITY NEWS

## Students from Sts. Tarkmanchatz Join St. Nersess Summer Conferences

STUDENTS, from page 5

Serena Karin Bush, whose father is German-American, hopes to be a psychologist, or work at the United Nations. "I want to make a difference in the world and help mankind advance in peace." Her mother's family is from Marash, Caesarea, survived the Genocide and came to Jerusalem through a long trek through Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine. In summer 2015, she traveled to Armenia "to see my homeland. It was extremely overwhelming. Artsakh was just beautiful and breathtaking, but anger brewed inside of me when I went because my people are getting killed over what is rightfully ours."

### Rekindling Faith

"Before coming to the St. Nersess program, 'my faith was not so strong,' confessed Bush. 'Here I have been going to my room, talking to God and feeling comfortable.' For her, 'it has been so refreshing, being more exposed to the outside world from the 'very traditional atmosphere' in Jerusalem. Though she still has questions, she has become 'more strong' in her faith."

For Demirjian, it has been an experience of "thinking out of the box, being more open. Everyone is so energetic, so enthusiastic, so Armenian. You can feel it. I have made so many friends." He said he had attended many programs before this experience at St. Nersess

that have helped him in life. This new exposure "will stay with me forever. I am now more confident, more social and more independent."

Hagopian, who had a "burning desire" to come to the St. Nersess summer program "to learn more deeply about Christianity," said the experience has "greatly strengthened" his faith. He plans to stay in Jerusalem

because he "wants to be helpful to the next Armenian generation in Jerusalem."

He expressed a strong desire that Armenian-American youth also deepen their knowledge of the Armenian language. "In our history, we have fought for this. Christianity and our language are integral to our survival."



The four students from Jerusalem, Ike Demirjian, Hagop Hagopian, Sevana Hekimian, and Serena Karin Bush, with Rev. Mardiros Chevian and Archbishop Khajag Barsamian

## Holy Trinity Church's Trinity Family Festival, Opening of Church Schools to Be Held September 10

By Seta A. Buchter

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston's annual Trinity Family Festival will be held on Sunday, September 10, beginning at noon, on the grounds of the church at 145 Brattle St.

Co-chairing the Festival Committee are David Dorian, Jack Ekchian and Stephan Hovnanian, who invite everyone to come ready for a day of fun and fellowship. "Our Trinity Family Festival is always a wonderful afternoon as parishioners and friends come together to kick off the fall season with delicious food, great music, and especially the camaraderie that day offers as we reconnect with family and friends after the summer hiatus," state Dave, Jack and Stephan.

Delicious traditional Armenian food will be available throughout the afternoon as well as an a la carte menu, take-out meals, beverages, Armenian coffee and a variety of pastries and desserts. There will be activities for children including the popular Bounce



### Armenian Church of the Holy Translators invites you to the annual Armenian Food Festival



Come and enjoy a day filled with traditional Armenian food, music, dancing, and fun children's activities!

**Sunday, September 17 from noon – 5 PM**

**at The Armenian Church of the Holy Translators**

**38 Franklin Street, Framingham MA**

For further information, contact the church office: 508-875-0868.



Kevork Atinikian and his doener kebab

House all afternoon. The Greg Krikorian Ensemble featuring Greg Krikorian, oud and vocals; George Righellis, guitar and vocals; Bob Raphalian, violin; Charles Dermenjian, dumbeg; and Steve Surabian, tambourine, will perform.

The ancient tradition of the Blessing of the "Madagh" will take place at 4 p.m., followed by the raffle drawing for cash prizes. This year's raffle cash prizes are \$1,000, first prize; \$300, second prize; and \$200, third prize. Tickets are \$5 each, 6 for \$25 or 12 for \$50, and can be obtained by calling the Holy Trinity Church office, emailing [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org), or buying on the day of the Festival.

Holy Trinity Church's Armenian and Sunday Schools will kick-off the 2017-2018 year on the morning of Sunday, September 10, with registration for both schools at 10:15 a.m., in the Peter Adamian Hall of the church complex.

Sunday School classes, which will start on September 10, meet weekly from 10:30 a.m. to noon, in the Peter Adamian Hall. The Sunday School program, which ranges in grades from pre-school through 12, is open to all children and youth, ages 3 to 17. To be eligible for Sunday School, a child must be three years of age by September 1, and toilet-trained. Parents must register their child(ren) as a parental signature is required. For information regarding the Sunday School program, contact Yn. Arpi Kouzouian, Sunday School Superintendent, at [youth@htaac.org](mailto:youth@htaac.org), or call the church office.

The Armenian School program is for children ages 5 through 18, and meets weekly on Sunday mornings from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., for students registered in the Sunday School, and from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., for students registered in the Armenian School only. Classes are taught in Eastern Armenian in three grade levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced. Armenian School classes will begin on Sunday, September 17. For further information about the Armenian School program, contact Naira Balagyozyan, Armenian School coordinator, at [nairab3@gmail.com](mailto:nairab3@gmail.com), or call the church office.

Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York

# Save the Date



## Platinum Anniversary Gala

### Saturday, November 18, 2017

The Terrace at Biagio's  
299 Paramus Road, Paramus NJ 07652



*The Armenian*  
**Mirror-Spectator**

Celebrating  
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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# From Aznavour to Yerevan with Love

AZNAVOUR, from page 1

thought you could be. By taking you through the experience of one man and his music, the museum will show you what is possible if you allow love and your dreams to guide you."

Kristina Sarkisyan, CEO of the Aznavour Foundation in Armenia, recalled how she and

Sarkisyan previously worked with the Armenian Francophonie Summit. She had worked at various charitable organizations.

One slide projected showed his achievements in his ancestors' land. The statistics are amazing: 96,000 families helped from distribution of food or clothing, 86,6000 meals, 1,000 tons of

"[The] arts play a great role in the history of Armenia," Gregorian agreed.

Aznavour concurred, cautioning that "many great cultures have disappeared. It can happen to Armenia."

Gregorian recalled his early life as a student in the US and how Aznavour mattered to him back then, too. "Whenever I felt depressed in college, I would listen to Edith Piaf and Charles Aznavour. When you sang," he said, turning to Aznavour, "I felt, 'my God, I'm liberated. I felt 'Life is yours and they are with you.'"

He rattled off Aznavour's statistics. He has written more than 800 songs and recorded more than 1,200, in eight languages. He has sold more than 180 million records. And as Gregorian said, while apologizing to the two archbishops in the room, he is a "French pop deity." In addition, he is Armenia's permanent ambassador to Switzerland as well as its representative to the UN in Geneva.

Gregorian stressed that Armenians need to focus on building Armenia. "We have built the rest of the world, but not Armenia." And those communities either die or the buildings and lands are confiscated. He rattled off examples of communities in Istanbul, Jerusalem, New Julfa, Georgia, Ethiopia, Egypt, Syria, communities where once Armenians were numerous and prosperous, but which are now a shadow of their former selves.

Rachel Onanian Nadjarian, who is helping with the project, explained that the museum is not yet open but that it is in the process of gathering the material. She explained, Aznavour has recorded the story of his life so that visitors can listen to his lifestory in his voice.

In addition, the museum offers space for French language, cinematography and editing classes as well as a recording studio.

Martin Muradyan is in charge of designing the cinematography section. He previously worked at Eurovision.

Aznavour was in the US for the unveiling of his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on August 24.

He added, "I am very proud to be Armenian and to be French too," and noted, "a man who forgets his roots is not a man."

Present for the program were a host of representatives from the French and Dutch consulates.

For information about the museum, visit [www.aznavourfoundation.org](http://www.aznavourfoundation.org).



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian with Charles Aznavour



Charles Aznavour

her family had been helped by Aznavour's charitable efforts in Armenia in the wake of the earthquake.

"We didn't have electricity or hot water" and the two hours of electricity every day were because of him, she recalled.

medicine, 1,200 prostheses, 1.3 million people with electricity, 300 houses, one retirement home and 30 kilometers of drinking water and irrigation pipelines, among many others.

In gratitude for all his contributions, the government gifted him a large building at the top of the Cascade, in the heart of Yerevan.

It is this very building that Aznavour is now giving back to the country, as the Charles Aznavour Interactive Museum and Cultural Center.

Aznavour was accompanied by his son, Nicholas. He spoke with passion about his hopes for the museum.

"I want the youth to have the possibility of dreaming. The diaspora and Armenia must unite their efforts to make Armenian culture vibrant," he said. There are so many outstanding Armenian musicians around the world, he said, including Georges Garvarentz and Michel Legrand, to name but two. It is time, he said, for Armenia to showcase these talents, "and not just chess."

By crosspollination, the countries of both gain, he said.



Kristina Sarkisyan



Vartan Gregorian and Armenia's Ambassador to the UN Zohrab Mnatsakanyan



Ambassador Zohrab Mnatsakanyan



From left, Vartan Gregorian, Charles Aznavour and Nicholas Aznavour





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Ahead Of the Centennial

## Let Us Harmoniously Celebrate the Centennial Of Armenian Statehood In 2018

By Dr. Arshavir Gundjian

I have no doubt that the appeal expressed in the title of this article will not come as a surprise to any of the readers who follow the daily discussions concerning Armenian life in the press, be it in the Diaspora or in Armenia.

This article is the logical follow-up of my previous article which appeared in the July 9 issue of *Baika*, entitled “Let Us Celebrate the 1918-2018 Centennial of the Reestablishment of Armenian Statehood Without Falling Prey to the Temptation of Divisiveness.”

Soon after the authorities in Armenia announced recently that next year, in May 2018, the “Centennial of the May 1918 Days” will be celebrated, articles and proposals exhibiting a clear spirit of divisiveness started to appear in the Armenian press in the Diaspora and Armenia. Evidently the polemic was prompted by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF or “Tashnag”) press. Inevitably and quite understandably, responding articles appeared in organs of the nonpartisan press, such as *Aravod*, as well as *Baika*, a part of the partisan Ramgavar press.

The articles that appear, particularly in the Diaspora Tashnag press, clearly indicate a return to the self-centered Tashnag spirit evinced for over 70 years following May 28, 1918. During those long years, the ARF exhibited extreme bigotry. At the cost of ignoring its own published literature of the relevant period, it systematically claimed exclusive credit for the creation of the first Republic of Armenia. Quite unfortunately, the ARF has used both the first Republic and the tricolor flag of Armenia as symbols of intense and sustained destructive strife directed against every person, organization or undertaking in favor of Armenia, the Holy See of Echmiadzin, or any cultural, literary or scientific endeavors located in Armenia during those 70 years.

Unfortunately, today the Tashnag press is reverting to that same self-centered bigoted spirit without realizing that by now such an attitude is totally unacceptable. One particular manifestation of this behaviour appears in its current forceful promotion of the idea that in May 2018 a statue be erected dedicated to one of its leaders of the past century whom it would like to see adopted as an uncontested hero of the entire Armenian nation.

On the eve of the centennial that will be marked in May 2018, the ARF must realize that it is imperative for it to renounce such bigotry, which has led in the past to very serious and extremely destructive crises within the Armenian community. Instead, the centennial must be allowed to become an opportunity for pan-Armenian celebration of the reestablishment of Armenian statehood, following six centuries of stateless existence.

The indisputable starting point of the currently uninterrupted hundred years of Armenian statehood has been the heroic and victorious battle of Sardarabad, which was won by the united participation of the entire Armenian population. The victorious battle of Sardarabad was followed by the first, second and now the third Republics, without any interruption. During all three periods, significant achievements were realized, and to this date they continue to be realized. However, it is equally true that those same periods were marked, including the current one, by negative and destructive events for which the authorities of the corresponding periods are also responsible and accountable.

I will therefore repeat, we ought to “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s,” nothing more nor less.

In order to clarify further my thoughts, I shall enumerate in the rest of this article a number of facts all based on undeniable historic documentation, in the form of short

statements. Each and every one of those statements can easily be the subject of one or more properly documented articles. I am presenting these facts here in a highly summarized form in order to make them available as a basis for the continuing controversy on this issue.

The period of May 1918, and more particularly the events that took place during the last ten days of the month of May 1918, which coincided with the final phase of the First World War, were undoubtedly particularly difficult and confusing for Armenia. Day after day and even hour after hour, unpredictable and often contradictory developments were taking place. Those who during those days happened to be in a position of leadership of the Armenians were neither ready nor able to take action or make decisions based uniquely on considerations of Armenian supreme interests, as they were surrounded by enemies, and subjected to the latter’s intense military and political pressure. The simple reality is that until the end of World War One, which took place on November 11, 1918, Turkey had the upper hand in imposing its will on the political decisions taken by the three Transcaucasian Seim countries, and most particularly by Armenia. It is, therefore, evident that on and around the 28th of May 1918, it was none other than Turkey which was dictating its conditions to Armenia, including the imposition of the condition for it to declare its independence.

During those nightmarish days of May 1918, the Turkish regular army was advancing on the Caucasian front towards Yerevan aiming at the complete occupation of Armenia. It was at that fateful moment of life and death that Armenians as a whole stood up and created a turning point in Armenian history. Indeed, intellectuals, villagers, clergymen, partisans and non-partisans, Armenians from all walks of life, responded to the call for general mobilization that was heralded by the ringing bells of Holy Echmiadzin. With a heroic effort, they miraculously succeeded in stopping and defeating the Turkish army at what is known as the Heroic Battle of Sardarabad. This turning point, the event that led to the declaration of Armenian independence, is commemorated on May 25 as the Pan-Armenian Heroic Victorious Battle of Sardarabad.

The days that followed Sardarabad were still literally nightmarish for Armenians. Indeed, while a small part of Armenia had been saved from the grip of Turkey, Armenia had neither the means nor an army or any infrastructure which would allow it to become an independent nation. Under such circumstances, all those who were responsible for the destiny of Armenia, including Tashnags, Hentchags, and other parties which would eventually join and form the ADL, such as Joghovrtagans, and Ramgavars quite desperately wanted to remain within the Transcaucasian Seim. No one wished to declare independence.

However, on May 26, Georgians declared independence and the Seim was dissolved. Azerbaijan followed by declaring independence on May 27. Armenians had been left alone, subjected to the pressures imposed by Turkey. Even though no alternative was left, there were still different views within every group, including within the ARF. Within the latter, Avedis Aharonian was against while Simon Vratzian was in favor of declaring independence; the latter’s argument was that “there is no alternative left for Armenia.”

After lengthy hesitations, from May 28-30, finally Armenia was forced to declare independence. At the time, this was not considered an opportunity for joy and cause for celebration. Simon Vratzian’s recorded expressions of thoughts on this subject are self-explanatory.

Nevertheless, May 28 was accepted as the date of Armenia’s independence. Armenia became legally an independent nation. Consequently, May 28 is an important date in the history of Armenia that deserves to be commemorated. However, it is clearly evident that May 28 was not earned by any particular group or party. Simon Vratzian’s statement that independence was imposed by Turkey has to be kept in mind.

At that time, all Armenians, everywhere, and not only Tashnags, stood up to support the newly independent first Armenian republic, in spite of their very limited resources. Unfortunately, during the following two years Tashnags consistently maneuvered to push the representatives of all other Armenian political groups out of the governing structures. In spite of this Tashnag bigoted attitude, Armenians of all different political tendencies extended a helping hand. When Aleksander Khadisian went to Egypt on a fundraising campaign, Ramgavars and the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) gave full support and organized many successful events. Furthermore, Ramgavars even succeeded in negotiating with the British, and raised funds to acquire twenty military planes for Armenia under those rather highly unusual international political times...

During the following two years, defeated Turkey recovered. It resumed unperturbed its policy to occupy what was left of Armenia. It was at such time that with the help of communist Armenians, Armenia became a Soviet Republic on November 29, 1920, thus establishing the Second Republic of Armenia.

During the following 70 years, Armenia took full advantage of being able to exist finally within secure borders. Undeniably, during those seven decades Armenia has lived through an unprecedented period of developments, achievements and creativity in every and all fields of national inter-

est, such as in the areas of industry, economy, science, culture and literature. Armenians were also subjected to the known excesses and brutalities of a communist regime.

Finally, in 1991, following unprecedented international developments that were way above and beyond the means of Armenians, the Soviet Union collapsed. Once more, due to external circumstances, Armenia was left to itself and therefore declared its new independence. Thus, on September 21, 1991 the Third Republic of Armenia was created.

This rather quick review of our nation’s last hundred years history shows that whereas on May 25, 1918, the Armenian people were able to achieve the turning point major event of the Sardarabad heroic victorious battle by their own means and efforts, as a matter of fact, the following three important stages of May 28, November 29 and September 21, and the corresponding Republics, were not achieved, after all, through victories of Armenian armies. Of the latter three only the November 29 event was obtained with the participation of Armenian armed forces.

One hundred years is a sufficiently long period of time for us to appreciate and value the independence that we currently enjoy. We fully wish that today’s Third Republic will last for many years to come thanks to the full support and participation of all Armenians, and that it will be marked with continuing achievements and progress.

Before concluding, let us refer back to that one other issue that is being raised by the ARF in the context of the marking of the Centennial. On the scale of historical time periods, one hundred years is still a relatively short period for it to try to press for one or another personality to be recognized as an unquestionable pan-Armenian hero who would deserve to have his statue erected on a major square in Armenia. This is another subject that is currently prone to cause controversy and discord.

Indeed, if the ARF proposes that statues of Aram Manougian or Dro receive such honor, one could easily propose the alternative of General Antranik Ozanian as a candidate who enjoys unquestionably much more universal admiration among Armenians. In this latter case, however, we would expect a strong Tashnag objection and resistance...

If it is really necessary to erect a statue on the occasion of the Centennial, let it then be the statue of Tigran the Great as the undisputed symbol of a powerful Armenian statehood...

To conclude, I return to the heading of this article in expanded form: “Let Us All Agree to Refrain from Self-Aggrandizing Efforts, Such That We May Celebrate in May 2018, The Centennial Of the Armenian Statehood in A Pan-Armenian Harmonious Spirit Of Unity.”

It is essential to avoid at all cost any effort and initiative that leads to bigotry and divisiveness.

*The author, Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, is an internationally known scientist and university professor, who in parallel with his professional activities has played a leadership role in major Armenian organizations.*

*After obtaining his PhD in the field of electrical engineering from the University of Pennsylvania in 1965, he moved to Montreal, Canada. In the following years and for a duration of half a century, in parallel with his research activities, resulting publications, several patents and teaching at the well-known McGill University, Dr. Arshavir Gundjian has played an unusually active and singularly productive leadership role within the Armenian community, participating in and contributing not only to Canadian-Armenian community life but also to the Armenian Diaspora in general and towards the establishment and maintenance of solid and healthy relations with Armenia.*

*Dr. Arshavir Gundjian is one of the founders as well as the first chairman of the Diocesan Council of the Armenian Church of Canada. He is the founder of the first Canadian-Armenian school, the Montreal AGBU Alex Manoogian School, which he has served, on a volunteer basis, in the positions of president and general director for forty years. He was one of the closest collaborators of the well-known benefactor, the late Alex Manoogian. He was elected a member of the AGBU Central Board for thirty years. and served as AGBU vice president for eight years.*

*More particularly, Dr. Gundjian is recognized as being one of the most active and influential leaders of the Armenian Democratic Liberal (ADL) or Ramgavar Party. He was elected member of the ADL Central Board for twenty consecutive years from 1975 to 1995. He was the chairman of the ADL Central Board for ten years, especially during the critical eventful years of the independence of Armenia in 1991. He is currently a member, as Senior Advisor, of the ADL Supreme Council.*

*He is also a founding member and vice chairman of the Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of US & Canada. He is one of the founders of the Azg newspaper of Armenia, and the Abaka weekly of Montreal.*

*In recognition for his services and exceptional contributions, he has been named Honorary Chairman of the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of Canada. and also Emeritus Member of the AGBU Central Board of Directors.*



# Arts & Living

## 'Forbidden Journeys' Film Event to Celebrate Legacy Of J. Michael Hagopian

LOS ANGELES — In 1967, a group of Armenian-Americans organized by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) were among the first to travel to Historic Armenia to find traces of their roots the Turks had left behind. On Sunday, October 1, portions of J. Michael Hagopian's documentary film of that landmark journey will be screened along with Ani Hovannisian-Kevorkian's short documentary on the vanishing traces of Historic Armenia, shot nearly 50 years after Hagopian's footage.

The October 1 program, "Forbidden Journeys," will present segments of Hagopian's 1967 film Historic Armenia and of Hovannisian-Kevorkian's current documentary on the disappearing vestiges of Historic Armenia, followed by a panel that includes Marc A. Mamigonian, director of academic affairs at NAASR, Dr. Carla Garapedian of the Armenian Film Foundation, Dr. Richard G. Hovannisian, Professor Emeritus of Modern Armenian and Near Eastern History at UCLA, and Hovannisian-Kevorkian. UCLA Professors S. Peter Cowe and Sebouh Aslanian will make opening and closing remarks.

"Forbidden Journeys" will be the first program in the J. Michael Hagopian Film Discovery Series jointly presented by the Armenian Film Foundation (AFF) and NAASR. It will focus on the pioneering legacy of J. Michael Hagopian — his impact as an advocate for Armenian Studies and as a filmmaker.

The 1967 trip was the first of NAASR's "Armenian Heritage Tours." The Armenian-Americans who set out on this journey were



J. Michael Hagopian in Hussenig

the earliest such group to travel to historic Western Armenia. For some, it was a trip back to the places of their birth. Among the travelers was Hagopian, NAASR's first West Coast director and co-founder of the Armenian Film Foundation. Himself a native of Kharpert and a survivor of the Armenian Genocide, Hagopian shot film on this path-breaking trip, capturing in many cases for the first-time post-Genocide images of the Western Armenian homeland. The film has not been screened for over three decades.

Fast forward to 2013, when Hovannisian-Kevorkian was traveling through Western Armenia and discovered a lone Scottish explorer/photographer who has spent 30 years quietly uncovering and documenting the vanishing traces of this lost world. Since then she has been filming with him, digging beneath the modern map, encountering stories and physical remnants and revealing the hidden map of Turkey's forbidden past.

Co-sponsored by the Richard G. Hovannisian Chair in Modern Armenian History at UCLA, the Narekatsi Chair in Armenian Language and Literature at UCLA, and the Ararat-Eskijian Museum, the October 1 program will take place at 2 p.m., at the James Bridges Theater, Melnitz Hall, UCLA. This program is free and open to the public. A reception will immediately follow the program. Parking is available in Lot 3, 215 Charles E. Young Drive North (at Hilgard Avenue).



Levon Hovsepian

## Music of Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine Together

BOSTON — A program showcasing the rich musical heritage of three ancient cultures — Armenian, Ukrainian, and Georgian — will take place at Christ the King Ukrainian Catholic Church in Jamaica Plain on Friday, September 15 at 7:30 p.m. and at First Armenian Church in Belmont on Saturday, September 16, at 5 p.m. Talents of the World, an international concert organization, is starting a series of such cultural bridges, hoping to travel the world with these programs. Such performances' mission is to share the uniqueness and beauty of the Armenian vocal and instrumental music with a wide audience, and partner with other communities,

to spread the idea of music transcending all political borders. During the performances, representatives of different cultures are able to show off the gems of their own musical heritage and turn the event into an experience of friendship and artistic excellence.

Talents of the World has performed on every continent and engages world-class singers and instrumentalists, who have performed at some of the most prestigious theaters and concert halls: Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, New York City Opera, Carnegie Hall, Covent Garden, et al. Its founder and president is David Gvinianidze, a renowned baritone and a recipient of the United Nations Medal for promoting arts and culture in the world.

Levon Hovsepian, a pianist and one of the project's organizers, said: "I always felt that it was my privilege, love and obligation to perform Armenian music for the Boston community. Music by Komitas, Babajanian, Khachaturian and others have always been

received very well by the audiences. It connects deeply to the ancient roots of our culture.

The program, entitled "Our Songs, Our Legacy" will display extraordinary talents of seven musicians, who represent the three regions.

### Armenia

Levon Hovsepian started his early studies at the Sayat-Nova Music School in Yerevan, Armenia. Later he continued his education at the Tchaikovsky Special Music School for Gifted Children. He graduated from the Komitas Conservatory with honors, receiving his master's degree. He has performed throughout Armenia, Estonia, Moldova, and appeared as a soloist with the Yerevan Symphony Orchestra and on Armenian National Television. After attracting major critical attention in

see CONCERT, page 14

## Armenia Fund USA Partners with Pegasus: The Orchestra for Debut Concert

PARAMUS, N.J. — Pegasus: The Orchestra will partner with Armenia Fund USA in presenting its debut concert, which combines an exhilarating one-hour music experience with unique artwork placed throughout the venue followed by a champagne reception. The featured artwork includes Michael Aram's Pegasus Sculpture and various paintings by Hakob Hakobyan. The proceeds from the concert will benefit the Artsakh Housing Project, an initiative that builds new homes for large families living in difficult social conditions in Artsakh.

"This is a very exciting collaboration for Armenia Fund USA, being able to use music to bring awareness to one of our important projects. Since the launch of Artsakh Housing Project, 16 families have been provided with brand-new homes, and currently 16 more homes are under construction. For centuries, the Armenian culture survived through music. Music is the key to the soul, and hopefully this concert will touch everyone's soul," said Lisa Stepanian, Armenia Fund USA executive director.

"We are thrilled to collaborate with Armenia Fund USA on our opening concert. It's an honor to contribute through our music towards such a meaningful cause benefiting the Artsakh Housing Project. As Cultural Program Advisor of Armenia Fund, I have been fortunate to implement a number of cultural and community initiatives and could not be more pleased for this wonderful partnership," added Karén Hakobyan, Pegasus: The Orchestra founder and artistic director.

The concert features the principal string players of Pegasus: The Orchestra along with Karén Hakobyan at the piano with a program that takes the listener from the traditional to the innovative, displaying their dexterity and enthusiasm. The program begins with the world premiere of Hakobyan's spiritually uplifting, complex piano sextet Cras Es Noster (Tomorrow, Be Ours) followed by two special arrangements of five songs by Komitas Vardapet and the Scherzo of Debussy's String Quartet Op. 10. The climax of the evening comes in the form of Mendelssohn's thrilling Piano Sextet in D-major, Op. 110.

From Mendelssohn's 1824 piece to Hakobyan's new composition written this year, the music of the ages fits together with the contemporary artwork creating an enhanced concert experience and memorable social gathering.

Members of the group include Eiko Kano on violin, Stani Dimitrova on violin, Angela Pickett on viola, Eddie Pogossian on cello and Pawel Knapik on double bass.

The concert will take place on Friday, October 13 at 8 p.m., at Cary Hall at DiMenna Center, 450 West 37th St., New York. Tickets can be purchased at [PegasusTheOrchestra.eventbrite.com](http://PegasusTheOrchestra.eventbrite.com)

Pegasus: The Orchestra is a non-profit professional orchestra in Residence at Mana Contemporary with a mission to empower rising musicians with artistic freedom and promote innovative repertoire in an environment of creative thought and expression.



Karen Hakobyan



Narine Babadjanian



# Music of Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine Together

CONCERT, from page 13

Armenia, he was invited to study at the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, Mass. After receiving his Artist Diploma and master's degree with honors, he continued his intense performing and teaching careers. He made his New York debut in 1994 and became known for his compelling interpretative style and expansive technique.

Hovsepian was a prize winner at the Arlington Concerto Competition, has appeared as a soloist with Salem Philharmonic Orchestra and New England Philharmonic Orchestra. His "Favorite Piano Masterpieces" CD was played

return to the Chautauqua Summer Voice Program as a guest artist. In 2018, he will be performing Sparafucile in Opéra de Montréal's production of "Rigoletto."

Pianist Narine Babadjanian studied at the Tbilisi State Conservatory. She performed all over the world and with cellist Yo-Yo Ma. A very active performer since a young age, she was an award recipient in numerous competitions including the Competition of Young Performers in Yerevan, Armenia, the Young Performers Competition in Moscow, Russia, and the Young Performers Competition in Tbilisi, Georgia.

gogy and Artist of The Chamber Ensemble, Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts, Ukraine; Bachelor Degree and Specialist Diploma in piano performance, Odessa Music Conservatory, Ukraine

### Georgia

David Gvinianidze, baritone, is the recipient of the U.N. Medal for promoting arts and culture in the world; soloist of Batumi Opera.

Merab Ebralidze, piano; winner of several

piano competitions, teacher at The New York conservatory.

Program will include the most beloved melodies, such as *Song about Kiev* by I. Shamo, *Tbiliso, Ov, Siroon, Siroon, Yerebuni, Nightingale's Romance* by A. Kos-Anatolsky, *Sabre Dance* by Khachaturyan, songs and piano works by Babadjanian, Bilash, Bortkiewicz, et al.

For tickets, please visit [www.TalentsOfTheWorld.tix.com](http://www.TalentsOfTheWorld.tix.com); Info: [lisovska1@aol.com](mailto:lisovska1@aol.com).



Vartan Gabrielian

on WGBH Radio, Moscow and Yerevan Radio Stations. He was the guest artist at the reception honoring the President of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrosian and Sen. Edward Kennedy.

Vartan Gabrielian, Canadian-Armenian bass-baritone, is a rising young talent based in Philadelphia. Hailing from Toronto, he attends the Curtis Institute of Music under the tutelage of Marlena Kleinman Malas, and Armen Boyajian in pursuit of a bachelor's degree in vocal performance.

Gabrielian is a 2017 Career Bridges Grant winner and a 2016 Gerda Lissner Lieder/Song Award winner. He was most recently featured as a guest artist in the annual Opera Index Spring Luncheon Gala in New York City.

Future engagements include Gabrielian's

Babadian has performed in festivals all over the world including the International Music Festival in Moscow, Russia, the Days of Russian Music in Amsterdam, Holland, the International Chamber Music Festival in Telavi, Georgia, and the Days of Georgian and Russian Music in Yerevan, Armenia. Ms. Babadjanian performed as a soloist with various orchestras throughout Russia, Georgia, and Holland.

### Ukraine

Olga Lisovska, soprano, studied at Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris, France. She was the winner of several vocal competitions. She is a soloist with Commonwealth Lyric Theater.

Pianist Galyna Kryvanich, piano. She has a master's degree in piano performance, peda-

## 'Voskan Yerevantsi': First Armenian Bible Printing

LONDON – Thousands of Armenian manuscripts were written prior to the 15th century, when Gutenberg's invention of the printing-press provided a technological breakthrough for the future progress of mankind. Armenians at that time were not free, but they were able to harness the new technology to print books thousands of miles away in Europe. In 1512, Hakob Meghabard set up the first Armenian press in Venice. Half a century later, Abgar Dbir, who came to Rome to seek support for the liberation of his homeland, developed the notion of "book - homeland" – a national identity sustained through print. Printing became a means of Armenian national rejuvenation.

The film, "Voskan Yerevantsi," is about this epic struggle to produce Armenian books in the 16th-17th centuries. The central character of the film is Voskan, who became the first Armenian publisher of the *Bible*. He set on his mission at Saint Sarkis Monastery of Ushi in Aragats (in present-day Armenia) and ended up in Rome, Amsterdam and Marseilles.

One of the results of these endeavors was the spread of Armenian presses into Ottoman Turkey and Persia, predating those of Turks and Persians.

The printing of the *Bible* in Armenian, between 1666 and 1668, raised the standing of Armenians to that of other powerful nations in the world. A magnificent illustrated copy of the book was sent as a gift to the

Sun King, Louis XIV of France.

Voskan Yerevantsi will premiere at the Soho Hotel, Screening Room 1, London, W1D 3DH, September 5.

For tickets contact [info@agbu.org.uk](mailto:info@agbu.org.uk)



Voskan Yerevantsi

TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF DETROIT

PRESENTS

TCA MHER MEGERDCHIAN THEATRICAL GROUP OF GREATER NEW YORK

PLAY BY PERCH ZEYTUNTSYAN

ADAPTED & DIRECTED BY GERALD PAPANIAN

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by Agatha Christie

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OCTOBER 28 & 29





## ARTS &amp; LIVING



# Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian

## Armenian Potato Salad

### INGREDIENTS

5 medium white potatoes  
1 medium red onion, diced  
1/2 medium green bell pepper, thinly sliced  
1/2 cup flat leaf parsley, chopped  
1/2 cup green onions, chopped  
1/4 cup Kalamata black olives, diced (optional)  
1/2 teaspoon each fresh chopped (or dried) mint and sweet basil  
Sea or Kosher salt, black pepper, paprika, Aleppo pepper  
Olive oil, fresh lemon juice

### PREPARATION:

Boil and drain the potatoes. When cooled, dice the potatoes and combine with the remaining ingredients. Toss with olive oil and lemon juice, and season to taste. Toss again, cover, and chill.

Sprinkle salad with paprika or Aleppo pepper and garnish with green onions, if desired.

Serves 4-6.

## Groom Is in the Heart – Again

BOSTON – They say good things come in pairs – and the sequel to the hit “Where Is Your Groom? (Pesad Oor Eh)” is no exception.

After a two-year tour with sold-out performances in eight cities across the country, America’s favorite Armenian family returns in this humorous, smart, and culturally relevant play that ties together elements of the Armenian-American experience.

We last saw Lara celebrating with her overjoyed family when she finally found her “pesa,” but as we find out, her elation quickly diminishes as both sets of parents want to plan the wedding their way. Meanwhile Yaya’s online dating site has taken off, but she’ll have to contend with her new competition, Marie the Matchmaker. As if there wasn’t enough drama, Lara’s “odar” ex-boyfriend plants seeds of doubt, fan-favorite Artem continues his quest for a “hars” on the Bosporos, and Lara’s brother Saro keeps trying to “find himself” as he dodges even more “hars lists.”

“Where Is Your Groom? (Pesad Oor Eh) Part II” will perform for the Boston Armenian community on Saturday, November 11 at 7 p.m. at the Mosesian Center for the Arts, (321 Arsenal Street, Watertown) and promises a night of laughs and entertainment while taking a closer look at Armenian-American life in the diaspora. Says Nora Armani, actress, filmmaker and artistic director of Rated SR Film Festival, New York, “Such insight and talent of keen observa-



Playwright Taleen Babayan

tion, but most of all the capacity of putting it all into funny words and situations. We need more of these comedies that shed light on the way we live, and hold a mirror to ourselves.”

To see a teaser of the play, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78xEZqkg248>

Tickets are available at <http://www.mosesianarts.org/index.php/shows/visiting-productions/where-is-your-groom>



# Sponsor A Teacher

## In Armenia and Karabagh

# 17th Anniversary

Since its inception in 2001, TCA's Sponsor a Teacher program has raised over \$607,000 and reached out to 6,027 teachers and school workers in Armenia & Karabagh.

☐ Yes, I want to sponsor teachers in Armenia and Karabagh to continue helping them to educate the children, our future leaders. I would like to have the teacher's name and address.

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

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Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to: Tekeyan Cultural Association - Memo: Sponsor a Teacher  
Mail your check with this form to:

TCA Sponsor a Teacher  
5326 Valverde, Houston, TX 77056

Your donation is Tax Deductible.

## 'The Promise' Screened for Foreign Diplomats Accredited to Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES – The Consulate General of Armenia in Los Angeles on Sunday held a screening of the film “The Promise” at the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA) for accredited diplomats in Los Angeles.

As the press service of Armenia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs told Panorama.am, the event brought together large number of diplomats, members of international human rights organizations, intellectuals, lecturers, as well as representatives of the Promise Institute for Human Rights established at the UCLA School of Law.



In her welcoming remarks, Consul Armella Shakaryan pointed out that significant progress has been registered in the international recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide thanks to the joint efforts of Armenia and the Diaspora, with the Armenian-American community contributing greatly to the matter.

Asli Bali, director of the Promise Institute, noted that the institute aims at bringing the vision of the film “The Promise” into life by preparing generations of human rights lawyers committed to justice and accountability.

Welcoming the initiative of the film screening, representatives of the University of California Kate Parker said she is proud of such a wonderful opportunity of screening the film at the university, enabling to see and feel through it what happens when a human being turns away from another one and to realize it is impossible to always neglect the past.



ARTS & LIVING

C A L E N D A R

MASSACHUSETTS

**SEPTEMBER 10 — Trinity Family Festival, 12-5 pm, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston,** 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Delicious Armenian food – shish, losh, chicken and Kevork’s doener kebab - paklava, khadaif, and more with take-out available. Armenian music for listening and dancing, featuring the Greg Krikorian Ensemble with Greg Krikorian, oud and vocals; George Righellis, guitar and vocals; Bob Raphalian, violin; Charlie Dermenjian, dumbeg; and Steve Surabian, tambourine. Lots of activities for children including the Moonwalk. Blessing of the Madagh at 4 p.m., followed by raffle drawing for cash prizes. For further information, log on to [www.htaac.org/calendar/event/448/](http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/448/), contact the Holy Trinity Church office, 617.354.0632, or email [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org).

**SEPTEMBER 17 — Sunday Afternoon at the Park for Families and Friends.** 2-4 p.m. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Cindy Fitzgibbon, WCVB-TV5 is emcee. Enjoy the Greg Krikorian Ensemble. Hoodies! At 2:30 pm meet Wally the Green Monster and his sister, Tessie. RSVP appreciated [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**SEPTEMBER 17 — Armenian Church of the Holy Translators annual Armenian Food Festival,** to be held at the church (38 Franklin Street, Framingham, MA), Noon – 5 P.M. Traditional Armenian food menu includes Shish, Losh, & Chicken Kebabs, dinners, beverages and pastries. Entertainment includes live Armenian music, dancing and children’s activities. Church hall is available for unwanted weather conditions. For further information, contact the church office: 508-875-0868.

**SEPTEMBER 20 — Meet and Greet the Doctors of the Muratsan Chemotherapy Clinic of Yerevan State Medical University,** 7-9 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. All are invited to meet Dr. Gevorg Tamamyan and Dr. Liana Safaryan of the Chemotherapy Clinic for an informative evening to learn more about the wonderful work they are doing at this Clinic that treats children dealing with cancer from all over Armenia. Light reception. For further information, contact Cynthia Kazanjian, 339.222.9900.

**SEPTEMBER 21 — Welcome Reception for New Citizens following the Naturalization Ceremony** at Faneuil Hall. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Funded by the Anna & Noubar Afeyan Endowed Fund. For information, email [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**SEPTEMBER 22 — St. James Hye Café.** Join us for delicious food and fellowship, and live musical entertainment! Enjoy Kebab, Falafel, Imam Bayeldi, and more. Doors open at 6:15 p.m. For more information visit [www.stjameswatertown.org](http://www.stjameswatertown.org). St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown.

**OCTOBER 4 — Wednesday, Sts. Vartanantz - Hye Point Golf Outing @ Butter Brook Golf Club, Westford.** \$150 includes Golf, Lunch, Dinner, and 20 Raffle Tickets. 10:00 a.m. shotgun start. Registration desk on October 4 open at 9:00 a.m. Contact: Mark at 508-633-7447; Steve, 978-808-2820; or email [StsVGolf@earthlink.net](mailto:StsVGolf@earthlink.net). Proceeds to benefit scholarships for Diocesan youth programs.

**OCTOBER 10 — Reducing and Managing Stress: Walking the Labyrinth.** 5:30 p.m. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway in partnership with Hollister Staffing. HUBweek program. Networking Reception follows at Hollister Staffing, 75 State Street. RSVP appreciated at HUBweek or [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**OCTOBER 13-14 — St. James 70th Annual Bazaar.** Delicious Armenian Food and Pastries! Silent Auction, Attic Treasures, Booths and Vendors. Raffles, Children’s Activities and more! Details to follow. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more information contact 617.923.8860 or [info@stthagop.com](mailto:info@stthagop.com) or visit [www.stjameswatertown.org](http://www.stjameswatertown.org).

**OCTOBER 11 — Geometry as Public Art: Celebrating the Immigrant Experience.** Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. 5:30pm. HUBweek program. Reception hosted by The Bostonian Hotel. RSVP appreciated at HUBweek or [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**OCTOBER 14 — Armenian Friends of America, Inc. Present HYE KEF 5 Dance Featuring: ONNIK DINKJIAN.** 7 p.m. – Midnight, 123 Old River Road • Andover. AFA room rates until 9/16/17 • Call 978-975-3600. Ticket Prices Include Buffet and Dance • Cash Bar Only. \$55 if purchased

before 9/1/17 • \$65.00 after 9/1/17. \$50 for Students 21 and under. Continuous Buffet 7:30 – 9:30 pm. Advance tickets only. John Arzigian - 603-560-3826, Lucy Sirmaian - 978-683-9121, Peter Gulezian - 978-375-1616, Sharké Der Apkarian - 978-808-0598, To Benefit: The Armenian Churches of the Merrimack Valley (St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church of N. Andover, The Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe, Haverhill, Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church of Chelmsford, Ararat Armenian Congregational Church of Salem, NH) [www.ArmenianFriendsofAmerica.org](http://www.ArmenianFriendsofAmerica.org). John Berberian / Oud, Mal Barsamian / Clarinet, Ara Dinkjian / Keyboard, Ron Tutunjian / Dumbeg

**OCTOBER 19 — The Battle of Bash Aparan. Lecture by Dr. Dikran Kaligian.** Presented by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research and the Armenia Tree Project. At NAASR, Belmont, Thursday, 7:30 p.m.

**OCTOBER 22 — Annual Banquet of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston,** Celebrating the 56th Anniversary of the Consecration of Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Sunday, 12:30 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Save the date; details to follow.

**OCTOBER 26 — Annual Fall Dinner and Drawing sponsored by the Friends of Holy Trinity 1000 Club,** 6:30 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. All are invited, and you don’t have to be a member of the 1000 Club to join us for a delicious losh kebab and pilaf dinner; \$9.99 per person; tickets on sale at the door. Regular monthly raffle drawing at 8 p.m., plus five \$25 door prizes. “One-time” numbers will be sold on the night of dinner; special offer: purchase five “one-time” numbers for \$20, save \$5. For further info, contact the Holy Trinity Church office, 617.354.0632, or email [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org).

**SEPTEMBER 30 — Concert by famous Istanbul-Armenian singer, Sibil Pektorosoglu** ([www.sibilmusic.com](http://www.sibilmusic.com)), at the Ellsworth Theatre at Pine Manor College, Chestnut Hill. Sponsored by the Armenian International Women’s Association. Details to follow.

**NOVEMBER 2 — Thursday, Symposium with the participation of International media** representatives, dedicated to the Armenian Mirror-Spectator’s 85th Anniversary. Details to follow.

**NOVEMBER 3 — Friday, 85th Anniversary Celebration Banquet of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator Newspaper** the first English Language Armenian Newspaper in the United States @ Newton Marriott Hotel Banquet Hall. 85 Years and Beyond. Details to follow

**NOVEMBER 10 — Benefit dinner for Armenia Tree Project’s 100th anniversary living memorial to General Dro and the Battle of Bash Aparan,** presented by the Armenia Tree Project and the Kanayan family. Armenian American Social Club, Watertown. Details to follow.

**NOVEMBER 12 — From Armenia to Boston for the first time. Beloved singer RUBEN SASUNCI,** live in concert with the Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston (SNDC). Sunday, at 4 p.m. at Shaw Auditorium - Watertown High School, 50 Columbia St. Tickets: \$45 and \$35 to be reserved from front to back, in the order calls are received. For tickets and info, please call Mike Demirchian (617) 240-8266 or Vrej Ashjian at (339) 222-3429.

**NOVEMBER 18 — Armenian Women’s Welfare Association Luchon/Auction** will be held on Saturday, at the Oakley Country Club in Watertown.

**NOVEMBER 19 — The Westin Waltham Boston Hotel, Project SAVE will celebrate** with a Thanks Giving brunch event to honor Founder Ruth Thomasian’s vision and 42 years of service and to acknowledge the many volunteers, photo donors and supporters who have contributed to Project SAVE. An event for the community to come together and celebrate as we look ahead to the future. For more information call 617-923-4542 or email: [archives@projectsave.org](mailto:archives@projectsave.org) .

MICHIGAN

**OCTOBER 8 — Sunday, 3 p.m., the Tekeyan Cultural Association will present a live stage play** “All Rise, the Court is in Session” at the Lawrence Technological University Mary Marburger Science and Engineering Auditorium. The play is a drama by one of Armenia’s prominent playwrights, Perch Zeytuntsyan, performed by the TCA MHER Megerdchian Theatrical Group from New

York. Adapted and directed by Gerald Papasian from Paris. The play recounts the trial proceedings of Soghomon Tehlirian who avenged the extermination of his nation and family by assassinating Talaat Pasha in Berlin on March 15, 1921. The play will be in Armenian with English subtitles so all can enjoy. For reservations and other questions, you may contact Eventbrite or: Karine Koundjakian at 248-761-9844; Shoushan Minassian at 248-762-4641; Pamela Coultis at 248-646-7847; Noreen Masropian at 248-376-0899; Doris Krikorian at 734-464-7973; Yvonne Korkoian at 248-254-3209; Diana Alexanian at 248-334-3636

NEW HAMPSHIRE

**SEPTEMBER 30 — Shish Kebab supper at the historic Ararat Armenian Congregational Church in Salem NH.** 4:30 - 7. Delicious meal with shish kebab, pilaf, vegetables, salad and dessert! Adults \$15; children 12 and under \$7.50

NEW JERSEY

**OCTOBER 7 — Kalfayan Orphanage of Istanbul Charity Fund Event.** Please save the date for the Gala banquet celebrating the 150th anniversary of the orphanage at St’ Leon’s Armenian Church, Fairlawn. Held under the Auspices of Archbishop Khajag Barsamian (Primate), Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern).

**NOVEMBER 18 — Save the date. Gala banquet celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Tekeyan Cultural Association.** At the Terrace at Biagios. 299 Paramus Road, Paramus. Featuring Elie Berberian and his band from Montreal.

NEVADA

**NOVEMBER 10-12 — Association of Armenian Church Choirs,** 2017 Convention & Assembly, Las Vegas. Saint Geragos Armenian Apostolic Church, Contact: website: [www.aaccwd.com](http://www.aaccwd.com) • email: [events@aaccwd.com](mailto:events@aaccwd.com). The AACCD is an organization of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America.

PENNSYLVANIA

**SEPTEMBER 23 — Sayat Nova Dance Company** of Boston is headed back to Pennsylvania to celebrate Armenian Independence Day, with its 30th anniversary production of “The journey continues...” At Centennial Hall of Haverford School, 450 Lancaster Ave., Haverford. Saturday, 7 p.m. Doors open at 6 p.m. Tickets are going fast so please reserve your seats ASAP. For tickets, call Ana Torcomian at 610-659-7839, Alina Ashjian at 617-8521816 or email [sayatnovadancecompany@gmail.com](mailto:sayatnovadancecompany@gmail.com). Tickets are \$30, \$40 and \$50 with discounted rates available for groups of 20 or more.

RHODE ISLAND

**SEPTEMBER 13, 2017-MARCH 14, 2018 — Armenian Film Festival “The Nation’s Past & Present”** Sponsored by Cultural Committee of the Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church, in Hanoian Hall, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence. New exclusive showings of : “Cultural Genocide” Wednesday, September 13, , at 7 pm, “Country of Armenian Kings - 1” (Van, Diarbekir, Tigranakert) Wednesday, October 11, , at 7 pm, “Garni, Geghard” Wednesday, November 15, 2017, at 7 pm, “Armenia” (Yerevan, Echmiadzin, Khor Virap, Zvartnots, Sevan, Dilijan, Lori) Wednesday, January, 24, at 7 pm “Country of Armenian Kings - 2” (Ani, Kars, Edesia, Musaler) Wednesday, February, 21, at 7 pm, “Country of Armenian Kings - 3” (Cilicia, Kharbert, Adana, Zeytoun) Wednesday, March, 14, 2018, at 7 pm. All presented in English, donation of \$10.

**OCTOBER 22 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church & The Rhode Island Orthodox Clergy Fellowship** presents - Spiritual Music Festival, 6:00 p.m., Sanctuary of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence.

*Calendar items are free. Entries should not be longer than 5 lines. Listings should include contact information. Items will be edited to fit the space, if need be. A photo may be sent with the listing. Items should be sent no later than Mondays at noon.*





## COMMENTARY

## COMMENTARY

# Realistic Expectations from Sixth Armenia-Diaspora Conclave

By Edmond Y. Azadian

While many Armenians in the Diaspora snub the Armenia Diaspora conclaves, whose sixth session will take place on September 18-20, 2017, 1,700 Armenians from around the world have registered to participate. This means that large numbers find a value in holding and in participating in those gatherings. Therefore, the truth lies somewhere in between.

Those who have contributed to the homeland in substantive ways seldom appear at these conclaves – benefactors who contribute to the tune of millions, technology experts, successful entrepreneurs who have set up projects in Armenia, respected writers, people in the creative and performing arts who have achieved fame around the world, people of Armenian origin who hold government positions in foreign countries and famous newscasters and anchormen in the foreign media.

The goal of the organizers, perhaps, should be to target that category of people rather than holding an open forum for every participant to feel important. But certainly, the participants do talk about the areas outlined above – and they talk a lot. Doers are not there but talkers are there in abundance.

We do not intend to tackle the issue with sarcasm, because we appreciate the cognitive value of the endeavor. Since the collapse of the Soviet Empire, Armenians around the world and in Armenia have been engaged in a diligent effort to get to know each other and thereby create a common level of understanding and cooperation in helping the homeland and using that homeland as a resource to preserve and to regenerate their identity. That is why the organizers of the conclave have adopted a motto which translates to: “Mutual confidence, unity and responsibility.” This goal certainly implies that there still is room for improvement in developing mutual trust.

The two-day gathering proposes an ambitious program which is well-structured with the following specialized areas:

I. Major goals for Armenia’s development. This topic includes foreign investments, promoting tourism and cooperation in business.

II. Security concerns in the face of modern challenges – the emphasis is on Armenia’s defense and the violability of border towns and villages.

III. Armenia’s foreign policy, on whose agenda the major issues are Karabakh conflict and the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

IV. Preservation of the Armenian identity through language, literature and culture.

It is imperative that Diaspora Armenians develop awareness of the issues plaguing Armenia, although in helping overcome the challenges, the diaspora is in a position to contribute meaningfully. Thus, the defense issue is a matter of life and death for Armenia, yet the diaspora lacks the means to contribute to the immense need through its limited resources.

As far as the foreign investments are concerned, the ball is in the court of the Armenian government. Because since Armenia’s independence, many Diasporan Armenians, inspired by patriotism, have rushed to start businesses or invest in the local economy, only to be frustrated and burned. Every successive admin-

istration has pledged to improve the situation, to no avail. Corruption, cronyism, unfair taxation and outright robbery have rendered Diaspora Armenians’ patriotism into a farce.

Foreign capital or investments do not recognize patriotism. If a level playing field is offered to all, and no party remains above the law, then not only patriotic Armenians can contribute and invest but foreign capital would also gravitate towards Armenia.

Unfortunately, the issue of investments has frustrated so many people that it will remain a sore point for a long time to the detriment of Armenia’s economy.

All the above issues may be debated, analyzed and perhaps some positive outcome may emerge in those areas at the conclave.

As far as Armenia’s foreign policy is concerned, the diaspora should and can contribute if it is organized and politicized. Armenians have measurable resources in Western countries which have not yet been utilized. Armenia may help to provide direction but the main responsibility remains on the diasporan leadership to get its act together.

But the measure of success will come when the gathering can find solutions to two essential issues: developing a government policy to halt emigration and forming a pan-Armenian council including representatives from Armenia and the diaspora to chart a realistic course to develop mutual trust and cooperation for Armenia’s future. It defies logic: why would a soldier sacrifice his life on the border of a territory whose population is leaving in droves?

Turkey and Azerbaijan have blockaded Armenia and are waging a war of attrition, to scare off the population. And the government is inadvertently contributing to the hemorrhage by failing to develop an effective policy to encourage its citizens to stay and hope for a more promising future. If a border guard is expected to put his life in harm’s way, or if the diasporan Armenian decides to invest in the economy, it must be incumbent upon the government functionary to refuse to take bribes, to eliminate unfair taxation and to restore rule of law in the country.

The enemy is only bent on destroying Armenia and if the government on all levels fails to take drastic action to implement a viable policy, Armenia cannot avoid depopulation and destruction. The situation is deadly serious.

The other crucial issue is the formation of a pan-Armenian council to regulate relations between Armenia and the diaspora.

Thus far, Armenia’s awareness of diasporan powers and values has been very shallow and hope has been pinned on the wrong individuals and organizations. The real movers and shakers in the diaspora may not be found among the participants of the conclave, but it is the responsibility of the Armenian government to identify them and to enlist their support and participation.

The power sharing of the current coalition is based on wrong assumptions and premises. If the same measures and values are used forming the pan-Armenian council, it would be a recipe for failure. The key idea is inclusiveness; all parties and groups must feel comfortable that they are not in a popularity contest, nor are they prey to facile choices.

Traditionally these conclaves run parallel to lavish receptions, regalia and entertainment. As long as the entertainment part is not confused with actual work and progress, then the conclave can assume that it has hit a milestone.

# Mirror Spectator



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# Assad’s March East Compounds West’s Syria Dilemma

By Tom Perry and Suleiman Al-Khalidi

Syria’s war has entered a new phase as President Bashar al-Assad extends his grip in areas being captured from Islamic State, using firepower freed by Russian-backed truces in western Syria.

Backed by Russia and Iran, the government hopes to steal a march on US-backed militias in the attack on Islamic State’s last major Syrian stronghold, the Deir al-Zor region that extends to the Iraqi border. Damascus hailed the capture of the town of al-Sukhna on Saturday, August 12, as a big step in that direction.

The eastward march to Deir al-Zor, unthinkable two years ago when Assad seemed in danger, has underlined his ever more confident position and the dilemma facing Western governments that still want him to leave power in a negotiated transition.

The war for western Syria, long Assad’s priority, has shifted down several gears thanks to the ceasefires, including one organized by Moscow and Washington in the southwest. But there is no sign of these truces leading

to a revival of peace talks aimed at putting Syria back together through a negotiated deal that would satisfy Assad’s opponents and help resolve a refugee crisis of historic proportions.

Instead, Assad’s face has been printed on Syrian banknotes for the first time, and his quest for outright victory suggests he may retrain his guns on rebel pockets in the west once his goals in the east are accomplished. Attacks on the last rebel stronghold near Damascus have escalated this month.

US President Donald Trump’s decision to end CIA support to rebels further weakened the insurgency in western Syria, while also depriving Western policymakers of one of their few levers of pressure.

They can only watch as Iranian influence increases through a multitude of Shi’ite militias, including Lebanon’s Hezbollah, that have been crucial to Assad’s gains and seem likely to remain in Syria for the foreseeable future,

sealing Tehran’s ascendancy.

Assad’s opponents now hope his Russian allies will conclude he must be removed from power as

the burden of stabilizing the country weighs and the West withholds reconstruction support.

With hundreds of thousands of people killed and militias controlling swathes of the country, Assad’s opponents say Syria can never be stable again with him in power.

“There is little doubt that the Russians would like a political solution to the war. The war is costly for them, and the longer it lasts, the less it will appear to be a success for Putin,” said Rolf Holmboe, Research Fellow at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute and former Danish Ambassador to Syria.

“But the Russians want a solution on their terms, which is one where Assad stays in power,” he said.

“The ceasefires do two things. They allow the Russians to take control of the political negotiations and look good internationally.

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COMMENTARY

# Analysis: Turkey Seeks Iran ‘Alliance’ against Kurds as US Pull Wanes

By Suraj Sharma

The symbolism was huge, as was the message that followed: the highest level talks in almost 40 years between Turkish and Iranian military commanders, then an announcement by Turkey’s president of a new “alliance.”

After Hulusi Akar and Mohammad Hossein Bagheri met last week, Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has traded barbs with the Iranian leadership over “sectarian” meddling abroad, suggested the time was right for military cooperation.

It was yet another swift about-face by big players in the Middle East, and one that may have huge implications for the region. So why now, and how far can such an alliance go?

At the moment, we have an agreement to cooperate against the PKK and its offshoots. This is perfectly in line with developments Huseyin Bagci, a professor of international relations at Ankara’s Middle East Technical University, told the Middle East Eye that the developing relationship was based on countering the “Kurdish threat” across the region.

“At the moment, we have an agreement to cooperate against the PKK and its offshoots. This is perfectly in line with developments, especially in Syria and Iraq. It is difficult to say where it will lead to in the future,” he said.

Hakki Uygur, deputy director of the IRAM think-tank, which focuses on Iran studies, concurred, saying there is now a growing synergy between the two country’s foreign policies. “What we have now is a very short-term and very specific alliance to combat the PKK, YPG and to an extent the issue of the referendum in northern Iraq,” he said. “The potential for expanding this alliance is strong though, when regional developments, including the Gulf crisis, are considered.”

## The Kurdish Question

Ankara is alarmed by developments in northern Syria and the gains being made by the Syrian-Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) and its armed wing, the YPG, and especially by the possibility of creating a corridor along the Turkish border through linking cantons under its control.

Turkey views the PYD and YPG as extensions of the PKK, which it has fought for more than 30 years and lists as a terrorist group, as do the US and EU.

Concerns have reached such levels that Ibrahim Karagul, a writer known to reflect the view from the president’s palace, wrote in the pro-government Yeni Safak newspaper that Ankara should consider letting the past go and start cooperating with the Bashar al-Assad government in Damascus to tackle the Syrian Kurdish threat.

The ongoing US military support for the YPG, with scant regard for its old ally’s most existential concern, has the Ankara government questioning the value of its alliance with Washington, and by association NATO.

Turkey has also found some success in its efforts to bring a measure of calm to war-torn Syria by working with the Russians and Iranians.

The fallout from Syria’s Idlib province, on the Turkish border, also has Ankara concerned. The US wants the province cleared of the now al-Qaeda-dominated rebel forces and is in

talks with both Russia and Turkey.

According to Bagci, Turkey indicated a change in its Syria policy after Binali Yildirim became prime minister. And, he said, it is a consequence of that policy change and the Astana process to bring peace to Syria that has led to more proactive engagement with Iran.

“Turkey and Iran never identify the other as an enemy. It is always the word rival instead of enemy that is used. Territorial integrity has become a keyword for both countries, whether it is Iraq or Syria, and is drawing them even closer together,” said Bagci.

The most recent tensions began coming to a boil after the Massoud Barzani-dominated Kurdistan Regional Government in neighboring northern Iraq announced an independence referendum for late September.

## Barzani, the Least Worst Option

The Barzani clan is the least repulsive of Kurdish political movements for Erdogan and his government.

The vast trade ties and Islamist conservative nature of Barzani’s Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) mean a relationship has developed between the two sides, evidenced in the relatively fewer stinging rebukes from Ankara since the referendum was announced.

However, it does not mean Turkey is enamoured in the slightest by even the thought of an independent Kurdish state, considering the potential impact on its own sizeable Kurdish population.

Here, too, like in northern Syria, Ankara holds a grudge against the US. The only intervention thus far has been a telephone call by the US secretary of state, Rex Tillerson, to Barzani.

Barzani brushed off that conversation in a recent statement saying all he had promised Tillerson in regard to the planned referendum was to communicate more intensively with the central government in Baghdad.

James Mattis, the US defence secretary, also met Barzani on 22 August as part of a regional tour in which he also visited Ankara.

For Iran, Barzani’s KDP represents a bigger Kurdish threat. It was Barzani’s father, Mustafa, who headed the armed wing of the short-lived Kurdish Mahabad Republic of 1946 in current day Iran’s territory.

Tehran is none too fond of the KDP-dominated KRG’s close ties with the US in present day Iraq either.

“There is nothing Turkey and Iran can do about this referendum. It is in Barzani’s hands,” Bagci said. “What are Iran and Turkey going to do. Declare war?”

Erdogan, who also had an audience with the visiting Iranian chief of staff, Mohammed Hossein Bagheri, on 21 August said Tehran and Ankara were discussing joint military operations in northern Iraq and along their own borders against the PKK and its Iranian affiliate PJAK.

This would represent a soft starting point for increased military cooperation in the future. In the past, Iran and Turkey have had limited coordination, if not cooperation, in anti-PKK and PJAK operations.

## Breaking Points Aplenty

The US is unlikely to be pleased to see Turkey, with NATO’s second-biggest army, working with a regime it considers its sworn enemy.

The first visit by an Iranian chief of staff since the revolution in 1979 is not the only sign of growing ties between Tehran and Ankara, in spite of the symbolism attached to it.

A major energy deal among Turkish, Iranian and Russian firms was announced on 15 August.

Tehran and Ankara, in recent years, seem to have agreed on a policy of permitting regional bickering but refraining from any domestic criticism, Uygur said.

The Turkish government kept silent in the face of the brutal crushing of the 2009 pro-democracy protests in Iran. Tehran was one of the first governments to voice support for Erdogan’s government as a coup attempt was underway last July.

Yet, Erdogan has on two public occasions within the past six months attacked Tehran for engaging in what he termed “Persian nationalism” in the region and of resorting to sectarian policies to advance its expansionist ambitions.

Tehran in turn warned Ankara that its patience was not infinite in the face of such accusations.

The referendum in northern Iraq might be what brings Ankara and Tehran urgently together at the moment, but it is also Iraq that could put an end to any alliance between the two.

Ankara has a long and meaningful relationship with NATO and is not looking for an excuse to end it

Ankara is dismayed to see the growing influence Iran has exerted over Iraq through its Shia connection and irregular military involvement. Barzani’s regional government, despite its Kurdishness, is Sunni.

It represents one of the few meaningful avenues left through which Turkey can maintain influence in Iraq.

The ideal situation for Ankara would be if either Tehran or Washington steps in to thwart the referendum process, allowing Turkey to maintain cordial ties with Barzani and its connection to Iraq.

The depth of the US-Turkish alliance is such that while Washington will watch Turkey and Iran with concern, it is unlikely to do so with trepidation for the moment.

Washington still holds the trump card. Ending its military support for the YPG would have a grateful Turkey fully back in its camp, irrespective of other issues affecting the relationship.

“An alliance with Iran is Turkey’s plan B and plan C,” Uygur said. “Ankara only resorted to that option after the US started supporting the YPG.

“If that were to change, Turkey would go back to its alignment with NATO policies in both Iraq and Syria.

“Ankara has a long and meaningful relationship with NATO and is not looking for an excuse to end it.”

(This article originally appeared in the Middle East Eye on August 24.)

# Assad’s March East Compounds West’s Syria Dilemma

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But more importantly, they allow Assad and the Iranian-backed militias to free troops to grab the territory that Islamic State is about to lose.”

The eastwards advance has on occasion brought government forces and their Iranian-backed allies into conflict with the US military and the forces it is backing in a separate campaign against Islamic State.

But the rival campaigns have mostly stayed out of each other’s way. Government forces have skirted the area where Kurdish-led militias supported by Washington are fighting Islamic State in Raqqa. The US-led coalition has stressed it is not seeking war with Assad.

Bisected by the Euphrates River, Deir al-Zor and its oil resources are critical to the Syrian state. The province is entirely in the hands of IS except for a government stronghold in Deir al-Zor city and a nearby air base. It is also in the crosshairs of the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

SDF spokesman Talal Silo told Reuters on Wednesday there would be an SDF campaign towards Deir al-Zor “in the near future,” though

the SDF was still deciding whether it would be delayed until Raqqa was fully captured from Islamic State.

But questions remain over whether the government and its allies, or the US-backed militias, have the required manpower. IS has rebased many of its fighters and leaders in Deir al-Zor. The Syrian army is drawing on the support of local tribal militias in its advances, local tribal figures say.

A Western-backed Syrian rebel with detailed knowledge of the area said Deir al-Zor would be a tough prospect. “Deir al-Zor tribes are more intertwined with those of Iraq,” the rebel said, describing them as religious hardliners.

Andrew Tabler, a Syria specialist at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy think-tank, said Assad hoped to regain international legitimacy through the campaign against IS.

FILE PHOTO: A man walks along a deserted street filled with debris in Deir al-Zor, eastern Syria February 14, 2014.Khalil Ashawi/File Photo

“They believe that by doing so they can get reconstruction money, and they believe that things are going to go back to the way they

were before. That’s just not going to happen,” he said.

There has been no sign that Western states are ready to rehabilitate Assad, accused by Washington of repeatedly using chemical weapons during the war, most recently in April. Syria denies using chemical weapons.

### RULING ‘ATOP RUINS’

The April attack triggered a US missile strike against a Syrian airbase. But the US response was calibrated to avoid confrontation with Moscow, and has not resulted in further such action.

Trump’s decision to shut down the CIA program of support meanwhile played to Assad’s advantage and came as a blow to the opposition. Rebel sources say the program will be phased out towards the end of the year.

Damascus has been pressing ahead with its strategy for pacifying western Syria, pursuing local agreements with rebellious areas that have resulted in thousands of rebel fighters being sent to insurgent areas of the north.

But significant areas of western Syria remain in rebel hands, notably Idlib province in the northwest, a corner of the southwest, an area

north of Homs, and the Eastern Ghouta of Damascus.

In the southwestern province of Deraa, one of the areas in the US-Russian truce, the government is seeking investment in reconstruction, the provincial governor told al-Watan newspaper, saying the “shelling phase” was over.

Shunned by the West, the government hopes China will be a major player in the reconstruction. Seeking to project an image of recovery, Damascus this week will host a trade fair.

“The regime is quite keen to imply by signals that it doesn’t care, that ‘we are fine, we are really utterly prepared just to sit atop ruins, and to speak to friends who will help us with our project,’” said a Western diplomat.

Mohamad Hage Ali, director of communications at the Carnegie Middle East Center, said the Assads have been “masters of the waiting game”. Time is on their side, he said. “But they have two challenges: political normalization with the world, and the economic challenge, which is significant.”

(This column originally appeared on Reuters on August 17.)





## COMMENTARY



## My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Azerbaijan Forces Bulgaria to Fire Reporter Who Exposed Arms Shipments to Terrorists

Last month, I wrote about Bulgarian journalist Dilyana Gaytandzhieva's revelations that Azerbaijan's state-run Silk Way Airlines had shipped under diplomatic cover 350 planeloads of heavy weapons and ammunition to terrorist groups in Syria and many other countries in the last three years.

On August 24, Dilyana tweeted: "I just got fired for telling the truth about weapons supplies for terrorists in Syria on diplomatic flights."

Dilyana posted on her facebook page that she was fired due to pressure on the government of Bulgaria by Azerbaijan, as she was about to leave for Syria to continue her investigation.

In an interview with Armenpress, Dilyana said that before her firing she was called by the Bulgarian Special Security Agency and asked about her sources of information for her revelations. She replied that her source was the website of the Embassy of Azerbaijan which was hacked, but she would not provide any further details. Two hours later, she got a

phone call from her newspaper, Trud Daily, telling her that she was dismissed.

After she published her article, Dilyana revealed that the Azeri Embassy urged the Bulgarian government to investigate her; as a result, she was fired from her job.

The daring Bulgarian journalist, however, refuses to remain silent! She told Armenpress that no one can stop her from continuing her investigation: "They couldn't stop me two months ago; they couldn't stop me yesterday to speak out. I just posted on social media. They can't force an independent journalist to keep silent. I'm not obliged to anybody. I'm obliged to tell the truth to the people, this is my job."

Dilyana stressed that Bulgaria was well-informed about these illegal weapons' shipments since she had all the documents proving that the Bulgarian government, several European countries, the United States, and many others had given their approval for this secret and illegal operation.

The Bulgarian journalist urged the United Nations to launch an investigation against Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and other countries. In addition, Dilyana appealed for support from independent journalists and the public at large. She emphasized: "I am not the first and last journalist to be fired for doing their job. I don't have high expectations from the mainstream media, because they have their political agenda, their objectives and their policy. What I expect is to be able to spread this information worldwide not by the mainstream media."

Dilyana also revealed that Azerbaijan paid Bulgarian journalists to publish articles favorable to Baku. "I can give you a fact obtained from the leaked documents after the cyber-attack on the Azerbaijani Embassy. The Azerbaijani Embassy pays money to journalists for articles in favor of Azerbaijan or articles ordered to be published by Azerbaijan."

Dilyana insisted that she is determined to continue her work: "I'm going to set up my own on-line media, because no one in Bulgaria will now agree to publish my investigations. I will not be offered a job in the Bulgarian media. So, I think about establishing my own media; this is the solution."

Confirming Dilyana's revelations is an article by Thierry Meyssan, in the *sott.net* website, reporting that Operation Sycamore involves at least 17 states and represents several tens of thousands of tons of weapons: "Over the last seven years, several billion dollars' worth of armament has been illegally introduced into Syria.... Numerous documents attest to the fact that the traffic was organized by General David Petraeus, first of all in public, via the CIA, of which he was the director, then privately, via the financial company KKR with the aid of certain senior civil servants.... New elements now show the secret of Azerbaijan in the evolution of the war [in Syria].... While Bulgaria was one of the main arms exporters to Syria, it received help from Azerbaijan."

Meyssan, in his article, quotes Sibel Edmonds — ex-FBI translator and founder of National Security Whistleblowers Coalition — revealing that "Azerbaijan, under Pres. Heydar Aliyev, from 1997 to 2001, hosted in Baku the number 2 of Al-Qaida, Ayman al-Zawahiri. This was done at the request of the CIA. Although officially wanted by the FBI, the man who [was] then number 2 of the international jihadist network travelled regularly in NATO planes to Afghanistan, Albania, Egypt and Turkey. He also received frequent visits from Prince Bandar ben Sultan of Saudi Arabia."

The Armenian-American community should invite the distinguished Bulgarian journalist Dilyana to the United States in order to publicize through lectures and press conferences her sensational revelations about Azerbaijan's illegal weapons' shipments to terrorists.

# Complex Ties between Russia and Armenia

By Lilit Vardanian

In the last five years, Armenia has experienced major upheavals both in its political life and in the geopolitics around its borders. During that time, the country has gone through periods of socio-political turmoil, changes in its constitution and political regime, the hosting of thousands of Armenians from Syria as war refugees, the commemoration of the Centenary of the Armenian Genocide, the redirecting of its strategic foreign priorities and the rekindling of the Nagorno-Karabakh war. Let us try to explore mutual representations and to review the stakes at work today in Armenia's relations with its oldest strategic ally, Russia.

In spite of choosing a multidirectional or so-called "complementary" foreign policy, Armenia is almost always considered and presented by the international community as a loyal "satellite" of Russia. However, that labeling, much disliked by Armenians themselves—as indeed by any post-Soviet country similarly tagged — is very simplistic and shows a profound lack of understanding of what is at stake in Russian-Armenian relations.

Without running through the whole history of cultural ties between the two countries, let us say that in contrast to their South-Caucasus neighbors, Armenians have never felt hostile towards Russians despite some controversial periods in their common history. On the contrary, the image of "savior Russia" has long been rooted in Armenian minds. To this day, Russia and its military bases in Armenia are still presented as the only safeguard of the country's security, in particular opposite militaristic Azerbaijan, which has cast Armenians as an enemy, and an increasingly nationalist Turkish regime, more intolerant and unpredictable than ever.

This type of representations is often based on the assumption that the little Republic of Armenia having no natural resources, it is of no real interest to Western countries — not even as a transit zone along the South Eurasian corridor since its Eastern and Western borders are closed by the Turkish and Azeri blockade — whereas Armenia is more valued along the North-South axis, i.e. for Iranian and Russian interests. In the light of Russia-Western world confrontations, one could see here a resurgence

of the South-Caucasian "geopolitical cross" which had lost in importance after the "relaunch" of Russian-American relations of 2010 and the relative opening of Iran. But that view is often contradicted by supporters of a breakup with Russia, a country they accuse, sometimes with blind anger, of being responsible for Armenian "misery." They generally blame Armenian authorities for compromising the future of their country by leaving it "open to the greed" of Russia, in particular when it comes to the sale of strategic national companies to Russians, such as ArmRus Gazprom, now Gazprom Armenia. They insist that integration with European structures, as did Georgia, would be a much better solution for Armenian interests.

It should be noted however that these two conflicting views are now minority standpoints for, among the people as well as the political and intellectual elites of Armenia, there is an overwhelming national desire and will to develop balanced political and economic foreign ties. And as regards the bleak socio-economic situation of the country, if the Turkish-Azerbaijani blockade does play a part in it, Armenian nationals are also well aware of the inner political issues that cripple their country's economics and drive some of them to emigrate. Deterioration of Russia's Protective Image

This nuanced set of representations is in part the result of the deterioration of Russia's protective image among Armenians. An active segment of the new generation, in Armenia as well as in the Diaspora, has already drawn some wisdom from Armenian history by moving beyond the past of persecutions and genocide to claim for reparations and for a strong Armenia. Patriotic, smart and multilingual, they are demanding citizens who will not stand being disappointed. However, Moscow has often neglected that generation as it has preferred to work exclusively with the authorities, using all the economic and political levers at hand. Consequently, the frequent street demonstrations that rocked Yerevan in the last years have often been interpreted by Russian experts as provocations by Western NGOs trying to prepare a "color" revolution as in Georgia and Ukraine. But although the workings of those demonstrations are still difficult to analyze, reducing them to Western provocations as most Russian experts bluntly do shows their refusal to understand the problems of the country.

The greatest disappointment came from the

arms sales and strategic partnership of Russia with Azerbaijan. As President Serzh Sargsyan aptly summed it up, being attacked by Russian weapons posed a psychological problem to an Armenian soldier. On their part, Russians tried to reassure Armenians by presenting three major arguments: that it was only business, that with its S-300 missiles, Armenia will keep its strategic edge, and that Russia will be able to better control the use of this armament since it will be in charge of its maintenance and supply. It was only after the introduction of those weapons during the Nagorno-Karabakh war in April 2016 that a debate emerged in Russia to reassess the goals and effects of that sale.

Another tragic event that happened in January 2015 has even further damaged the image of Russia: the mass murder of the Avetisyan family by Valeri Permyakov, a serviceman from the 102nd Russian military base in Gyumri. The massacre triggered spontaneous demonstrations in Yerevan and Gyumri demanding that the murderer be tried in Armenia. Consequently, the Russian military base of Gyumri found itself in the limelight—when its lease had been renewed during President Dmitry Medvedev's State visit in August 2010, to last until 2044, although the terms of the contract make it clear that the Russian military forces in the country are there only to defend the security of Armenia and not of Nagorno-Karabakh. The ambiguity lies at the heart of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the armed body of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), of which Armenia is a member with Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. But although supposed to warrant the security of its members against the attacks of other countries, the CSTO often remains silent in front of the repeated Azerbaijani shelling of Armenian villages such as the many provocations of 2014 and 2015. It was not until late December 2016, after an Azerbaijani attempt at trespassing into Chinari (Tavush Province), that former Secretary General of CSTO Nikolai Bordyuzha, in that position since 2003, issued a communiqué that condemned the aggression. The clear-cut, long-awaited statement which was hailed by Yerevan, was finally only issued at the very end of his long term in office.

Then, Bordyuzha's succession generated a deep crisis within the CSTO. It was decided that, like the presidency of the organization,

the position of Secretary General should also be rotating in order to let member countries alternate in that capacity. After the decision was implemented in January 2017, Armenia, coming first by alphabetical order, was to be the first country to fill that position. Armenia's former Minister of Defence, Seyran Ohanyan, was even rumored to be appointed, which he later denied. But the lack of consensus about an Armenian appointment can be explained by the staunch opposition of Belarus and Kazakhstan, due to the very close relations of friendship to Lukashenko and Nazarbayev with Azeri President Ilham Aliyev. Although they are partners with Armenia within the Eurasian Economic Union, the two countries keep triggering open hostilities with Armenia—such as Belarus's decision to extradite Israeli-Russian blogger Alexander Lapshin to Azerbaijan—and making declarations of friendship to Azerbaijan, which is not a member of those strategic alliances. This generates indignation in Armenia and questions the eligibility to such coalitions of countries which Russia largely initiated.

In front of this situation, some voices rose in Russia to call the authorities and experts for caution. Essentially coming from Russian foundations and organizations in the public diplomatic field (The Gorchakov Fund, Creative Diplomacy), these specialists are actively working in Armenia and becoming increasingly aware of the real challenge that sooner or later Russia will have to face. However, following a persuasion tactic, which is still a far cry from the soft power described by Joseph Nye, the message that Moscow is trying to bring across is that post-Soviet societies share the same traditional values with Russian society and have a common history, not only from the times of the USSR but going back to the Czarist Empire. This clearly shows a will to cultivate a sense of belonging to the "Russian world" among post-Soviet societies by underlining their difference with the "Western world" in order to prevent their shifting towards "rival propaganda."

Stakes of Armenian Membership in Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)

Thus, the accumulation of the above-mentioned factors has damaged Armenia's trust in Russia, with unforeseen consequences in the long run. Paradoxically, popular consciousness is adjusting to these disappointments. Displaying pragmatism, the authorities are

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# Complex Ties Between Russia and Armenia

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trying to maneuver within the limit of what is possible to ensure the country's security and development. In 2013, Armenia had made a pragmatic and strategic choice by refusing to sign the Association agreement with the European Union as part of the Eastern partnership, favoring instead economic integration with Eurasian structures. Today, looking back on those events and in particular on developments in Ukraine, we observe that that choice probably was the best solution to come out positively of the delicate situation Armenia was in at the end of 2013, caught as she was in its conflicts of interests and contradictory claims between Russians and Westerners. The situation seemed all the more absurd that Russia and the EU accused each other of not leaving signatory countries any alternative options. Thus, European officials would talk about the pressure exerted by Moscow on Armenian and Ukrainian leaders to pull them towards economic integration of Eurasian structures. To which Moscow replied that it had to protect its own market and local producers. In fact, at the time, the Kremlin and its Eurasian partners feared that cheaper European products would swamp the market of the soon-to-be Eurasian Economic Union via Ukraine and Armenia, if the latter two countries signed the Association Agreement with the EU. But although this seems quite

logical, there was much more at stake for Russia than its economic interests: it was above all about preventing Western encroachment into its vital space.

Indeed, the emblematic side of Russian representations of post-soviet space, which includes South Caucasus, is often underestimated at the expense of its vested economic and security interests. However, the constant search for Russian identity after the fall of the USSR and its yearning to recover the former might of the Czarist Empire and the Soviet Union are just as important in defining Russian geopolitical choices as are its need for a strong economy and security. We should remember that at the beginning of his first presidential mandate, in 2000, Vladimir Putin's main concern was the recognition of the status of Russia as a great power—that it should be respected and considered as an equal by world powers. This ran counter to the “Western-prone” stance of Boris Yeltsin's first administration, who had favored a rapprochement with NATO and the United States. The Community of Independent States (CIS) had found itself subjected to the primary goal of the new Russian power: to join the “civilized nations” of the world. But that exclusive westward orientation had not produced the desired result. Not only was Russia no longer considered a power as in the Soviet era, but to make things worse, it was brushed aside in the

political and economic processing of the post-Soviet era. So Moscow quickly revised its strategy by placing the “foreign periphery” at the heart of its external policy. Stepping up these claims to power even further, Vladimir Putin and the Russian authorities later opted for the concept of Eurasian power in order to underline the double identity of Russia, both European and Asian.

In contrast with the years 2000 to 2008 when the Kremlin was trying to assert its status by opposing the great Western political trends and advertising itself as a viable alternative to American power, today, the Kremlin is proud of its achievements on the international scene and sells itself as one of the poles in a multipolar world. And the first demonstration of that power was displayed in South Caucasus, upon its military intervention in Georgia in August 2008. Since then, Russia has also multiplied Armenian-Azerbaijani talks under its aegis, along with the works of the Minsk group. The annexing of Crimea, the

adoption of counter-sanctions against European countries and the United States as well as its military engagement in Syria also participate in that logic of demonstration of power.

After the fall of the USSR and its declaration of independence, Armenia has always sought as much as possible to balance out its political economic and military relations between Russia, the EU, the United States and Iran. But the geopolitical turbulence of South Caucasus and the demands made by Moscow to express “loyalty” did not leave Yerevan much room for maneuver and imposed choices in foreign policy dictated primarily by the country's security concerns. As a result of this inextricable situation compounded by the hazardous treatment reserved by Russian policy, Armenia's trust in its traditional strategic ally has gradually deteriorated, creating a major challenge for Russia itself.

(This commentary originally appeared in the repairfuture.net website.)

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## Iowa Adopts Armenian Genocide Recognition

IOWA, from page 1

6 million Jews, and resulted in the decimation of other targeted racial and religious minorities.

The document recounts the cycle of subsequent genocides of the 20th and 21st centuries, specifically mentioning the 2016 Congressional condemnation of the Islamic State genocide against Middle East Christians, Yazidis and other minorities. It concludes with the assertion that by “recognizing and consistently remembering the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust and all cases of past and ongoing genocide, we help protect historic memory, ensure that similar atrocities do not occur again and remain vigilant against hatred, persecution and tyranny.”

Armenia welcomes Iowa state recognition of the Armenian Genocide  
Armenia's Foreign Ministry released a statement welcoming the move.

“We welcome Iowa's recognition of the Armenian Genocide by Proclamation of the Governor of state of Iowa, United States,” reads the message posted on the country's MFA official Twitter account.

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