Armenian Defense Chief Issues Stern Warning to Baku

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia will strike back harder if Azerbaijan again launches offensive military operations in Nagorno-Karabakh, Defense Minister Davit Tooyoun said in an interview published on Sunday, July 22.

Speaking to the Russian publication Echmil.com, Tooyoun warned Baku against a repeat of the April 2016 “aggression” against Karabakh which nearly degenerated into an all-out Armenian-Azerbaijani war.

He said the Armenian military has “drawn conclusions” from the four-day hostilities that left at least 190 soldiers from both sides dead. Those include unspecified measures that have “excluded the element of surprise” from the other Azerbaijanis might be, he said.

“I don’t want you to be left with the impression that Armenia is a solicitor of peace,” said Tooyoun. “I would advise the Azerbaijani side not to be so confident that it controls the issue of escalation of the military situation. It’s not that mediators will manage to convince the Armenian side to suspend retaliatory punitive actions if the Azerbaijani side resumes hostilities, especially if Baku conducts a military operation of limited scale.”

Cardinals Craftos Welcomes Nuncio to Armenia

ECHMIADZIN — On July 11, in the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians; received Archbishop José Avalino Bettencourt, Apostolic Nuncio to Armenia and Georgia, and Titular Archbishop of Aemona of the Roman Catholic Church.

The cardinals welcomed the Papal Nuncio, congratulated him on his appointment and wished him fruitful activity.

The Catholics of All Armenians stated that the relations between the Armenian Church and the Roman Catholic Church have improved and strengthened during his reign. In this regard, the cardinals reflected on the visits of Pope John Paul II and Pope Francis to Armenia, which testifies to the love towards the nation who first adopted Christianity as a state religion.

Karekin II expressed hope that the newly appointed Papal Nuncio will also make efforts to further strengthen the friendly ties between the two churches.

In turn, Archbishop José Avalino extended deep gratitude to the Catholics of All Armenians for the warm reception. The Papal Nuncio also conveyed the love and support of Pope Francis to the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin and the Catholics.

Attending the meeting were Archbishop Nathan Hovhannesian, director of the External Relations and Protocol Department of the Mother See and Very Rev. Fr. Shahe Asanyan, Director of the Ecumenical Relations Department of the Mother See.

HayPost Issues Stamp Dedicated to ‘Arshak II’

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia’s public radio station on July 19 HayPost CSCS has cancelled and put into circulation a postcard with one stamp dedicated to the Spendiany National Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet and the 150th anniversary of the first Armenian opera “Arshak II”.

The stamp has been issued with a print run of 500. The creator of the postcard’s design is the designer of HayPost CSCS David Dovlatyan.

The postage stamp depicts a fragment scene from the performance of Tigran Tchoukhadjian’s first Armenian opera “Arshak II”. The left part of the postcard depicts the Spendiany National Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet.

The postcard signing ceremony was attended by Deputy Minister of Transport, Communication and Information Technologies, Armen Arunyan, Director and Artistic Director of the National Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet, Konstantin Orbelian, HayPost CSCS Postal Branches Administration Area Manager, Lilit Tadevosyan, and President of the Union of Philatelists, Hovik Mousayyan.

Activist Academic Makunts Rethinks Armenian Ministry of Culture

WASHINGTON — Lilit Makunts was appointed as Armenia’s minister of culture on May 12. During a visit to the United States at the end of June she spoke about her background, the direction in which she wishes to steer her ministry, and her goals there, which in turn shed light upon the workings of the new Armenian government. The interview was conducted in English, which Makunts speaks fluently.

The 34-year-old professor previously was an associate professor at the Russian-Armenian University in Yerevan. She began teaching there in 2005 and in February 2018 became the head of the Department of International Cooperation at this university. Makunts received a master’s degree from the Faculty of Romance and Germanic Philology of Yerevan State University (YSU) in 2005 and the degree of candidate in Philological Sciences in 2014.

From her days as a student of linguistics and course at YSU (1999-2003) she was active in Armenian politics and worked for democratic change. She wishes to steer her ministry, and her goals there, which in turn shed light upon the workings of the new Armenian government. The interview was conducted in English, which Makunts speaks fluently.

By Aram Arkun

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**President Visits Burakan Observatory**

**YEGERAN (Armenpress) —** President Armen Sarkissian visited on July 21 the Republic of Armenia Academy of Science Victor Hambardzumian Observatory in Burakan, met with the employees, and familiarized himself with the ongoing activities of the Observatory.

Director of the Observatory Areg Khiladian provided information on the current works and programs, as well as international cooperation. During a candid conversation with the staff, opinions were exchanged on the vision regarding the development of the Observatory. The president stressed the importance of defining priorities and formation of a precise vision for the coming decades. “It is important to have a general vision, it is necessary to know where the Burakan will be for twenty years,” the President noted and suggested to define priorities and to present programs. He also expressed readiness within the scope of his capabilities to visit the Observatory.

The president also toured the observatory's scientific building and visited Hambardzumian’s house-museum, conversed with the staff who informed him that the museum, which has already received nearly 6,000 guests.

**Homeless Family Moves To Prime Minister's Personal Apartment**

**YEGERAN (Armenpress) —** Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his family have been living in their personal apartment in Yerevan to a homeless family after moving to their official residence. Hakobyan said that this family had approached him for a number of issues, including an accommodation issue.

“The family has a 23-year-old son with Down Syndrome. The family doesn’t have a [father]. It is just the grandmother, the mother and the children. The mother put her son on her lap. He says, ‘I want to live in the same place where you are living’,” Hakobyan said. He has been living in an apartment under the sponsorship of the Church, and the apartment’s owner decided to sell it. There was an urgent need to provide them with accommodation,” he said.

**President Hosts AGBU Summer Program Students**

**YEGERAN (Armenpress) —** The students who arrived to Armenia as part of the AGBU’s Summer Internship Program and the Musical Armenia Program were hosted today by President Armen Sarkissian.

The students and the president held a question and answer on various topics.

“I am here to also see my relatives. I am so attached to this country. I hope to come here many times,” said Lyudmila Avagyan, a young woman from Virginia, who has relatives living in Armenia. As this is the first visit to Armenia for many of the young people, some of them said this is also a good chance to discover the culture, history and people of their homeland.

The students were asking the president various questions ranging from the political situation up to the educational system. Sarkissian noted that the changes in Armenia will be continuous.

“Within the frameworks of the upcoming visit PM Pashinyan will depart for the US in September to participate in the UN General Assembly, and therefore on the sidelines of the conference the Congressmen find it appropriate to organize Pashinyan-Trump meeting: they launched a petition in the Congress for this purpose and address letter to President Trump. The issue has been raised by the Congressmen, and we assured that it is being discussed, the meeting is possible,” he said.

Mikaelian also commented on the details of Armenia’s withdrawal from the Millennium Challenge program.

“Quite a long time before our visit the World Bank changed Armenia’s rating from a country with low average income to high average income, but according to the criteria of the Millennium Challenge program, those states which meet several criteria, as well as didn’t reach high average, can be considered as possible partners. As a result of the rating change, Armenia thus became a country not being in accordance with this program. And now some US officials also don’t know how to deal with the current situation,” he said, adding that it’s necessary to think about a new mechanism through which the US will be able to provide its support to Armenia’s democracy.

In the video the first deputy PM also talked about the goals of his recent visit to the US. “The primary goal was to participate in the High-Level Political Forum Sustainable Development and introduce Armenia’s national voluntary report. Within the frames of this event two adjacent weekends were also scheduled which Armenia had undertaken to implement,” he said.

The Armenian delegation met with the top US officials during which the relations of the two countries were discussed. “We had meetings with the UNDP head, COAF [Children of Armenia Foundation] founder and director Garo Armen, attended the event organized by the AGBU and also met with the AGBU representatives. Thereafter, several bilateral meetings with quite influential Congressmen and Senators were held in Washington D.C. meeting took place with the US Assistant Secretary of State Wess Mitchell, as well as other officials. During these meetings we have introduced Armenia’s new political priority, the recent developments, the resolution, its values, in other words, we have presented all the new situation in Armenia to the American administration. We also had very serious discussions on deepening the ties between Armenia and the US, in particular, we discussed the US assistance provided to Armenia, the deepening of commercial ties, the possibility to increase direct investments and other issues beneficial for Armenia.”

**President Pashinyan and Trump Meeting May Happen**

**YEGERAN (Armenpress) —** First Deputy Prime Minister of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan commented on the possible meeting of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and US President Donald Trump via a video on Facebook.

“We respect previously established international obligations ranging from the political situation up to the homeland.

In a short statement, the Kremlin said Putin and Pashinyan touched upon “issues pertaining to the Eurasian Economic Union and bilateral cooperation.” It did not elaborate.

Pashinyan’s press office likewise said that they “exchanged thoughts on further development of integration processes in the EEU framework.”

The two men most recently held talks in Moscow on June 13. In his opening remarks at that meeting, Putin pointed to rapidly growing Armenian exports to Russia. He attributed it to Armenia’s membership in the EEU.

Pashinyan has opposed that membership in the past. According to him, he believes that the changes in Armenia will be continuous.

As this is the first visit to Armenia for many of the students, they are asking various questions ranging from the political situation up to the educational system. Sarkissian noted that the changes in Armenia will be continuous.

“To have at this stage our meeting with a United States President is itself a very important signal for us,” he said.

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“Within the frameworks of the upcoming visit PM Pashinyan will depart for the US in September to participate in the UN General Assembly, and therefore on the sidelines of the event various programs were hosted today by President Armen Sarkissian with staff at the Academy of Sciences Victor Hambardzumian Observatory in Burakan.

The president also toured the observatory’s scientific building and visited Hambardzumian’s house-museum, conversed with the staff who informed him that the museum, which has already received nearly 6,000 guests.

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**Correction**

An incorrect statement was used in a story in last week’s newspaper about Armenian prisoners in Azerbaijan. The correct statement is: The spokesperson of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delegation in Armenia said that in accordance with ICOR mandate and working modality, they are in a confidential bilateral dialogue with the concerned authorities with regard to the reported case. Currently, ICRC has visited two Armenian prisoners.

In addition, an incorrect photo was used with the story on the Petidian Caritas Church, written by Muriel Mirak-Weisbuch. The correct photo appeared online.
Armenian PM Stands by Criticism of EU

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The 43-year-old premier also stood by his government’s position that cooperation between the EU and Armenia’s previous authorities in Yerevan.

The EU pledged last year to provide up to €200 million in aid to Armenia over the next three years in line with the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) signed with the previous authorities in Yerevan.

US Embassy Brings Basketball Greats to Armenia for Training Camps

Pashinyan first voiced such complaints on May 19, 2016, in a news conference in Moscow following his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Pashinyan said that the EU should reward Armenia for its efforts to combat corruption and launching anti-corruption measures.

As a follow-up to Pashinyan’s talks with Juncker, Mathernova, arrived in Yerevan on a two-day mission from the EU to the effect that the EU is bewildered by the fact that in the territory of Armenia there are official EU policies that are not increasing its financial assistance to Armenia.

In order to set the record straight, I gave a “follow-up” to Pashinyan’s talks with Juncker, Mathernova, arrived in Yerevan on a two-day visit which the EU Delegation described as a “follow-up” to the EU’s visit to Armenia.

The Azerbaijani Defense Ministry was quick to react to Mushtakanian’s warnings, dismissing them as “absurd” and saying that its missile defense systems adequately protect domestic economic and military facilities. In a statement cited by the APA news agency, the ministry also said Baku itself has sophisticated missiles capable of destroying key Armenian facilities.

In any case, I am not sitting by to let the EU to sit down idly by.

“Paralyze Azerbaijan’s economy” with missile strikes if Baku provokes renewed hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian military said.

The Iraqi government did not take any reaction by the EU, the Armenian side not sitting idly by. Striking a similar bold tone, Karabakh’s top military commander said on Tuesday, July 24, that the Armenian military could “paralyze Azerbaijan’s economy” with missile strikes if Baku provokes renewed hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh.

That is definitely part of our tactical plans,” Lieutenant General Levon Mnatsakanian said at a news conference in Stepanakert.

In general, the art of warfare requires strikes on these facilities as well as military targets in case of a resumption of hostilities, which will damage the [enemy] economy and won’t allow appropriate supplies to the armed forces.”

“I see no need for that yet … But if there is a need to strike [those targets] we will not hesitate for a second,” he said.

Mushtakanian implied that a big hydroelectric power station near the Azerbaijani town of Mingachevir is one such potential target. A recent accident there caused major power outages in Azerbaijan.

Other Armenian political and military leaders have said in the past that Azerbaijan’s strategic oil and gas installations could also be targeted in the event of another Karabakh war. The Armenian military can hit them with ballistic missiles, including state-of-the-art Iskander systems supplied by Russia in 2015 or 2016.

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Before making such irresponsible statements, the enemy should think about the fact that in the territory of Armenia there are facilities the destruction of which would make it impossible to live there for centuries,” it warned in a clear reference to the Metamor nuclear power plant.

Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev threatened military strikes against “strategic” Armenian targets during a June 26 military parade in Baku. The parade featured Belarusian-made Polonez and Israeli-made LORA missiles which were supplied to the Azerbaijani army in recent months. They reportedly have a firing range of 200 and 300 kilometers respectively.

Mushtakanian said that the Armenian side has the capacity to shoot down these missiles. But he did not elaborate.

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ALEPPO Doctor Helps the Displaced With Career Training

By Constance Vilanova

ALEPPO (International La Croix) – Christians prayed together with the mayor of Face Aleppo, Syria, on Dec. 15, 2018. (Photo by AP)

As the situation in Aleppo improves, a medical doctor and the Blue Marists, a group of laywomen, laymen and brothers serving refugees in war-ravaged Syria, are offering help to displaced people in a bid to end dependency and enable people to look after themselves.

Doctor Nabil Antaki, who has worked with the most disadvantaged in Aleppo since 1986, wants to “train people to tackle life’s challenges.”

As bombs rained the city in July 2012, he launched the “Blue Marists” association together with his wife and Brother Georges Sablé, an Armenian Marist.

The emergency programs organized by the trio and 70 volunteers now provide milk, water and medical supplies for around 300 Syrian families.

Most are Christian and fled their neighborhood on Our Lady’s Hill, which was taken by the rebels on Good Friday five years ago.

“At the end of 2013, we realized that the displaced spent their time in hiding,” he said. “Their work tools had often been destroyed and they could no longer do anything.”

“We needed to train the young people to enable them to face up to life’s challenges,” he said.

Despite the bombs, Antaki began to develop a three day professional training program at the premises of the Marist Brothers in a Mahboula quarter.

The students, who were aged between 20 and 40 learned management, accounting, how to draw up budgets from specialists and members of the Blue Marists.

Longer training programs as space develops

In 2016, the security situation in Aleppo began to improve slowly. Following the expulsion of the armed groups, the city was liberated from Al Nusra terrorists.

Although missiles continued to fall daily in the western areas of the city, the Blue Marists decided that it was time to place “young people back on their feet” by providing them with the training to do so.

“They needed to move away from the food basket that they received each day to complete independence,” said Antaki, a gastoenterologist.

Since the beginning of July, the Blue Marists’ “microcredit” training program has been extended to three weeks. Experts will assist 1620 participants selected from 100 candidates to develop an action plan.

Rita Yaghjian, 30, an Armenian Christian who remained in Aleppo throughout the war, wants to open a stationary shop where she plans to offer graphic arts services.

She obtained her license in economics and graphic arts before the local university closed.

“Participating in this program was a new or never opportunity to learn to make a living from my own resources,” she told La Croix.

In a few days, she will present her project to a jury of six experts, hoping to be financed by the Blue Marists.

At the end of each training program, candidates make a 30-minute slide presentation explaining “the feasibility, profitability and sustainability” of their business plan.

Antaki and his team select a dozen of these projects to be financed for amounts ranging from 3,000 to 5,000 euros.

“We have already financed 50 and now there are 90 families who are able to live from their own resources,” Antaki said, before calling on Ahmad Neurendine and Mohamad Nour, two Muslim candidates, to tell their stories.

“Although most of the displaced are Christians, we are not only concerned for Christians,” he says.

Ahmad and Mohamad want to become partners in opening a workshop to repair fridges and air conditioning units.

“Electricity is now back on in Aleppo,” said Mohamad, who continued his economics studies during the war.

“Machines that have been abandoned will need to be repaired. We are the only ones able to provide this service,” he said.

Antaki admits that he cannot finance all the projects and that the choice is often difficult.

“These displaced people need to be able to work,” he said. “As the Christians remain in Syria, it is essential.”

Armenian Leaders Offer Condolences to Greece After Wildfire Deaths

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan offered condolences to his Greek counterpart Alexis Tsipras,

“More than 700 have been rescued from beaches, where people had fled from the wildfires.”

BERLIN (ESPN) – Turkey President Recip Tayyip Erdogan condemned the “unacceptable” treatment of Mesut Ozil by the Germany football federation on Tuesday.

Ozil, 29, withdrew from international football on Sunday, saying that “racism and disrespect” over his Turkish heritage and background. Every player, no matter his origins, has the right to be protected from abuse, discrimination and messages expressing hate.

“The TFF offers its full support to Mesut Ozil and Gundogan,” he said.

Mesut Ozil and Gundogan were set to represent Germany. Most of the criticism fell on Mesut Ozil’s hometown of Devrek. Photo by Gokhan Yilmaz/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

The TFF offers its full support to Mesut Ozil and Gundogan, who were set to represent Germany. Most of the criticism fell on Mesut Ozil’s hometown of Devrek. Photo by Gokhan Yilmaz/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

“Demn the treatment, threats and derogatory messages that he has received because of his heritage and background. Every player, no matter whether they are in the public eye or not, has a right to be protected from abuse, discrimination and messages expressing hate.”

“As the situation in Aleppo improves, a medical doctor and the Blue Marists, a group of laywomen, laymen and brothers serving refugees in war-ravaged Syria, are offering help to displaced people in a bid to end dependency and enable people to look after themselves.”

The students, who were aged between 20 and 40 learned management, accounting, how to draw up budgets from specialists and members of the Blue Marists.

“Participating in this program was a new or never opportunity to learn to make a living from my own resources,” she told La Croix.

In a few days, she will present her project to a jury of six experts, hoping to be financed by the Blue Marists.

At the end of each training program, candidates make a 30-minute slide presentation explaining “the feasibility, profitability and sustainability” of their business plan.

Antaki and his team select a dozen of these projects to be financed for amounts ranging from 3,000 to 5,000 euros.

“We have already financed 50 and now there are 90 families who are able to live from their own resources,” Antaki said, before calling on Ahmad Neurendine and Mohamad Nour, two Muslim candidates, to tell their stories.

“Although most of the displaced are Christians, we are not only concerned for Christians,” he says.

Ahmad and Mohamad want to become partners in opening a workshop to repair fridges and air conditioning units.

“Electricity is now back on in Aleppo,” said Mohamad, who continued his economics studies during the war.

“Machines that have been abandoned will need to be repaired. We are the only ones able to provide this service,” he said.

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Armenian leaders offer condolences to Greece after wildfire deaths

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan offered condolences to his Greek counterpart Alexis Tsipras.

“They needed to train the young people to enable them to face up to life’s challenges,” he said.

Despite the bombs, Antaki began to develop a three day professional training program at the premises of the Marist Brothers in a Mahboula quarter.

The students, who were aged between 20 and 40 learned management, accounting, how to draw up budgets from specialists and members of the Blue Marists.

Longer training programs as space develops

In 2016, the security situation in Aleppo began to improve slowly. Following the expulsion of the armed groups, the city was liberated from Al Nusra terrorists.

Although missiles continued to fall daily in the western areas of the city, the Blue Marists decided that it was time to place “young people back on their feet” by providing them with the training to do so.

“They needed to move away from the food basket that they received each day to complete independence,” said Antaki, a gastroenterologist.

Since the beginning of July, the Blue Marists’ “microcredit” training program has been extended to three weeks. Experts will assist 1620 participants selected from 100 candidates to develop an action plan.

Rita Yaghjian, 30, an Armenian Christian who remained in Aleppo throughout the war, wants to open a stationary shop where she plans to offer graphic arts services.

She obtained her license in economics and graphic arts before the local university closed.

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There was no explicit mention of refugees in the planned schedule for the three-day meeting but sources said the White House was address- ing the “needs of displaced minorities.”

There was a range of religious freedom issues discussed at the beginning of the Ministerial, including Religious Freedom, including support and care to victims of religious or racial persecution, and the struggle of religious and ethnic minority communities,” a state department official said in a call to the Guardian.

The Trump administration capped refugee admissions for the 2018 fiscal year at a record low of 45,000 refugees, but with only three months left of the fiscal year, only 10,955 have been processed. That target has been admitted, according to State Department data from October 2016 to June 30, 2018, the US admitted 16,230 refugees.

Trump targeted the refugee program on the campaign trail, and in office has added extra security vetting to an already rigorous vetting process. In October 2017, refugee admissions were halted for 90 days for people flying “high-risk” countries.

In previous fiscal years, refugee admissions have shrunk to 10,955 in the first nine months of the fiscal year that began on October 1, 2017. In the same period from October 2016 to 30 June, more than 23,000 refugees were admitted. The drop in Christian refugees was a dramatic shift from the promises Trump made in his first week in office to help Christian refugees more than any previous administration.

In January 2017, Trump told the Christian Broadcasting Network it was “at least very true” that for Christian refugees to enter the US and claimed it was much easier for Muslims to enter compared to Christians.

“If you were a Muslim you could come in, but if you were a Christian, it was almost impossible,” Trump said, adding that the reason was so unfair, everybody was treated in all fairness, but they were choking off the heads of everybody but more so the Christians. “Trump said it was very, very unfair. So we are going to help them.”

Trump did not provide evidence that the two groups were treated differently.

Christians now make up the largest share of refugee admissions for any religious group, at 67% of the refugees allowed in. But the number of Christian refugees admitted still falls far short of previous years.

The number of Muslim refugees has fallen even farther, from more than 21,459 from the first nine months of the 2017 fiscal year to 2,421 in the first nine months of the 2018 fiscal year.

Ahead of Wednesday’s meeting, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) urged the US to increase refugee admissions, highlighting that the legal definition of refugee includes people fleeing persecution based on religion, race, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. The IRC cited new laws that may make it harder for refugees to receive robust refugee admissions are immaterial and far reaching in terms of those refugees left behind, families assuaging reunification with loved ones here in the US, refugees returning countries who continue to take on more than their share of the world’s refugee crisis. “In other words,” the IRC said in a statement late on Monday.

The state department official said the US had admitted more refugees than any other country in the world since 1975 and had provided more than $58bn in humanitarian assistance worldwide. The official said: “The United States will continue to reestablish the most vulnerable solution, reaffirming those who have fled religious, political persecution, while prioritizing the safety and security of the American people.”
**Eastern Diocese Leads 22 Youth Leaders on Holy Land Pilgrimage**

JERUSALEM—Twenty-two young adults from across the Eastern Diocese came together at Newark International Airport on June 5, 2018, to embark on a 10-day pilgrimage to the Holy Land as part of the Eastern Diocese’s Annual Young Adult Pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

The group extensively toured Jerusalem’s holy sites as well as historic Biblical areas such as Bethlehem, where Jesus was born; the Sea of Galilee, where Christ walked on water and prayed to his disciples; Nazareth, where Jesus grew up; Mt. Tabor, where the Transfiguration took place; and the Jordan River, where a blessing of water service was held near the place where Jesus is believed to have been baptized by John the Baptist.

For many of the young pilgrims, the journey awakened them to the vital role Armenians and their spirituality have played in the story of the Holy Land.

“I learned that the Armenians have a presence here for a very long time, centuries longer than I would have guessed,” said participant Emily Movsesian (of the St. Gregory the illuminator Church, Barberton, Ohio). “And that we have privileges in places like the Church of the Holy Sepulchre that are very special compared to other Christians.”

“Like generations of Armenian pilgrims before them, the Diocesan youth group was welcomed to the site. James Armenian Patriarchate, and had an audience with the current Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, Archbishop Nourhan Manougian.

The group was led by the Rev. Fr. Vasken Kouzouian, pastor of Holy Trinity Church in Cheltenham, PA. “Having the opportunity to unpack the Gospel in an intimate setting in the places where Jesus was born, performed his ministry, and died was truly transformational. This pilgrimage was a highlight of the trip,” said participant Emily Movsesian. “I learned many things on this pilgrimage, including facts about the Holy Bible and Jesus Christ’s path all the way to his death and rising,” she said. Alex Dolmecchio (Holy Martyrs Church, Bay Day, NY) “I also learned a lot about Jerusalem and the way of life here. I need to analyze the information I received when I go back home.”

Three times during the pilgrimage, the group participated in the celebration of the haudakar. During the group’s first full day of touring, Kouzouian celebrated the haudakar at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, at the birthplace of Christ. Later in the week, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the tomb of St. Mary near the Garden of Gethsemane in Jerusalem.

“Having the opportunity to unpack the Gospel in an intimate setting in the places Jesus was born, performed his ministry, and died was truly transformational. This pilgrimage has especially impressed me on the importance of Mary and the strength of her faith,” said Elizabeth Shahnasarian (St. Hagop Church, St. Petersburg, Fla.).

A highlight of the trip was an overnight visit at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where the group received an extensive tour of the numerous chapels and sites inside the church, including Golgotha (where Jesus’ cross stood when he was crucified) and the tomb of Christ (where his body was interred for three days). The visit culminated in an Armenian Divine Liturgy at 4 a.m., with all the pilgrims participating.

Reflecting on 10 days of spiritually-awakening experiences, Greg Norosian (St. George Church, Hartford, Conn.) noted the value of “being part of a community of like-minded people.”

“In America young adults are often faithless. But on this pilgrimage, having a chance to connect with all these people on a spiritual level was very moving to me.”

He added: “It’s something I’ll carry with me for the rest of my life.”

**By Armen Terjian**

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**Senator Appropriations Committee Ensures Continued Aid to Armenia**

WASHINGTON The Senate Appropriations Committee adopted the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill, which ensures continued funding to Armenia and supports humanitarian programs in Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) and reported the Armenian Assembly of America.

According to the bill’s report language, which was advanced by Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), “The Committee remains concerned with the prorogation of conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia and endorses the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minus Process, and supports humanitarian and helicopter programs for wounded, refugees, and victims of that conflict, including for regional rehabilitation centers to care for infants, children, and adults with physical and psychological disabilities.”

The overall bill also provides $3.4 billion for Migration and Refugee Assistance.

In its introduction, the Senate Appropriations Committee early this month, Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny urged, among other priorities, robust funding for Armenia.

The Armenian Assembly appreciates the Senate Appropriations Committee’s commitment to provide humanitarian aid to Artsakh and for supporting efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group to find a peaceful solution to the Nagorno Karabakh peace process,” stated Assembly Co-Chairs AnthonyBarsamian and Van Kreilorian. “That needs to include restor- ing the democratically-elected Nagorno Karabakh authorities as full participants in the Minsk Group process as well. With President Erdoğan and Prime Minister Putin pushing Turkey’s democratic facade about to be exposed yet again this weekend in elections, Turkey’s democratic facade about to be exposed yet again this weekend in elections, we also call on the Administration to decide whether the United States ought to reward Turkey for its egregious actions and are also deeply troubled by reports that Azerbaijan has fired “drugs and weapons to rebels for its military,” the cochairs added.

“In our recent travel to the region, concerns were expressed regarding Azerbaijan’s continued military buildup. The United States and the other co-chair countries need to be investing in confidence building measures and sending see APPROPRIATIONS, page 9.
NEW YORK – On July 15, at the invitation of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), a delegation of senior officials from Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s administration, during its first official visit to the United States, met with AGBU community members for an open dialogue in Manhattan. Speakers included three government representatives who had traveled to New York to attend the High-Level Political Forum at the United Nations on July 16 and 17 to present Armenia’s progress on the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDG): First Deputy Prime Minister Ararat Mirzoyan; Deputy Minister of the Diaspora Babken DerGrigorian; and First Deputy Minister of Transport, Communications, and Information Technologies Hakob Arshakyan.

Given the Pashinyan government’s stated intentions to reinvigorate diaspora-homeland relations, AGBU structured the dinner as the first step in giving the diaspora a seat at the table of ideas and strategies, as the new government formulates a bold agenda for Armenia as input for crafting the partnership during the SDG Innovation Lab—a space for citizen engagement, experimentation, collaboration and analytics to help unlock Armenia’s development potential and accelerate the implementation of the 2050 sustainable development goals. Three industry sectors critical to Armenia’s economic development were identified—Tourism, Information Technologies and Agriculture.

For the Armenia delegation, the evening was conducive to an open discussion as well gauging the immediate feedback to the ideas presented, allowing them to return to Yerevan with a clearer understanding of the aspirations for the next phase of co-equal nation building in a free and open society.

After the event, Berge Setrakian, president of the AGBU, expressed his satisfaction with the progress made in the three hours of conversation in the small group setting. "AGBU has time and again stressed the idea that for both Armenia to succeed as a nation and for the diaspora to flourish as a community, we must think and act as one global nation. With the hopes of Armenia’s citizens raised since the Velvet Revolution’s peaceful transition in 2018, we are encouraged to continue growing in the right direction," he said.

Koutoujian Participates in Roundtable Hosted by House Bipartisan Heroin and Opioid Task Force

WASHINGTON – Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian represented the National Sheriffs’ Association before the House Bipartisan Task Force on Heroin and Opioids during a roundtable discussion in Washington, D.C focused on medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for incarcerated individuals. The task force, chaired by Representatives Annie Kuster (D-NH) and Tom MacArthur (R-NJ), is comprised of over 110 members of the U.S. House of Representatives from across the country.

“I want to thank the chairs and members of the task force for the opportunity to participate in today’s discussion,” said Sheriff Koutoujian. “Everyday sheriffs from across the country are innovating in an effort to address the opioid epidemic which is crippling families and communities from Massachusetts to Ohio, and beyond.”

Koutoujian presented on the Middlesex Sheriff’s Office Medication Assisted Treatment And Directed Opioid Recovery (MATADOR) Program which is one of the longest running MAT programs in the country.

Speaking on behalf of the NSA, he underscored the importance of flexibility to custom programs that meet the needs of diverse communities across the country and ensures that federal funding gets to the local level without unnecessary restrictions that can impede participation.

"America’s sheriffs are proud to take part in this important discussion and they are well represented by Sheriff Koutoujian,” said NSA Executive Director and CEO Jonathan Thompson. “We are excited to share with Congress the impactful solutions law enforcement brings to the opioid crisis, including the Sheriff’s MATADOR Program.”

Launched in late 2015, MATADOR is a voluntary program for those with opioid use disorders returning to the community following incarceration. MATADOR, which uses an insect-based form of naloxone, is a multi-faceted program that combines enrollment in health insurance with navigation services and critical casework follow-up.

Since its inception more than two years ago, 82 percent of those who completed six months in MATADOR have not succumbed to a fatal overdose post-release. And while a comprehensive evaluation spearheaded by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health showed nearly all incarcerated individuals are 120 times more likely to die from an opioid overdose than the general population, as of June 2018, 96.2 percent of MATADOR participants—regardless of whether they completed six months—have not succumbed to a fatal overdose post-release.
Southern California Developer Finds Big Opportunity for Solar on Megamalls

By Kathie Zipp

LOS ANGELES — Solar Optimum is celebrating a decade of residential and commercial solar installations. One key to its success is embracing new market opportunities.

Several years ago, the company was contracted for a solar project on a large shopping mall. Ara Krikorian, president and CEO of the company, said the project was part of the company’s mission to diversify its customer base. The company now works on projects ranging from small residential projects to large commercial projects.

“We’ve been doing green projects for nearly every large mall from the Central Valley through Southern California,” he said.

Krikorian said the company has many projects under way in Southern California and large malls are not an exception. Malls have high cooling and lighting costs, Solar Optimum is able to offer them significant savings as well as providing environmental benefits that can bring malls some positive PR.

“Operating expenses are factors that every business deals with, and if you have a practical and economical way to decrease these costs, any business will do so,” he said. “Solar’s value exists; articulating it well enough for executives to understand is all that’s needed to bridge the gap.”

Although traditional malls in many parts of the country have struggled to stay open, California malls have been able to adapt by moving away from enclosed buildings and toward more mixed-use, open space areas. No matter the design, malls offer plenty of room for solar on roofs or parking structures. Adding solar to decrease operating costs gives malls a fighting chance to compete against the increasing online shopping market.

But these projects don’t come without challenges.

“You have tens of thousands of customers entering and exiting these facilities daily, dealing with a thorough engineering endeavor, having multiple interconnections thoroughly tied up, navigating the logistical nightmare of staging and coordinating utility shutdowns and backup power,” Krikorian said. “Safety for both our personnel and retail patrons is paramount, and most of the industry doesn’t think about our personnel and retail patrons is paramount, and most of the industry doesn’t think about this.”

Despite the hurdles, the company has shown an increasing trend of large retail centers.

“Finding markets that are underserved, understanding what value you can bring them and scaling to further grow that value is what’s necessary for any company,” Krikorian said. “Large malls aren’t our core business, but it’s definitely a market that we serve well.”

AIWA Chicago Affiliate Hosts Luncheon Meeting, Gains New Members

CHICAGO — The Chicago Affiliate of the Armenian International Women’s Association (AIWA) held its annual membership luncheon meeting on Saturday, June 16, at Maggiano’s Restaurant in downtown Chicago. The keynote speaker for the meeting was Oscar Tatosian, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Armenia.

Greta Doumanian-Harley, who served as the mistress of ceremonies, welcomed Tatosian and the other 45 members and guests in attendance. To commence the meeting, Deacon Narek Garabedian sang the national anthems of the United States and Armenia, accompanied by Rebecca Boelman on viola. Following the anthems, Father Tarot Boyajian of Saints Josaphat and Anne Armenian Apostolic Church gave a blessing before lunch was served.

After lunch, Doumanian-Harley introduced AIWA Chicago President Shaghig Daniell Galian, who spoke about how she was inspired to join the organization after learning about AIWA’s programs in Armenia, particularly the Women’s Support Center, which offers services and support to victims of domestic violence. Galian introduced Tatosian, who discussed the Honorary Consulate in Chicago and its focus on promoting trade between Armenia and the United States in the following areas: agricultural products, technology, tourism and wine. Tatosian encouraged AIWA Chicago to set its priorities for the year ahead and reach out to the consulate in order to achieve shared goals. A lively and informative question-and-answer followed Tatosian’s presentation.

At the conclusion of the program, Prof. Ann Leousin, a lifetime member of AIWA, presented Tatosian with a book about ancient Armenia on behalf of the Chicago Affiliate.

AIWA Chicago’s luncheon resulted in the addition of 14 new members. The AIWA Chicago Affiliate was founded in October 2012 by lifetime member Sonja Doumanian, who gathered several young professional women in her home to launch the new group. For more information about AIWA, visit aiwainternational.org.

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Amazon’s Three-Year Investment in Wisconsin Brought $1 Billion to Economy

KENOSHA, Wis. (Milwaukee Independent) – Between 2014 and 2017, Amazon’s investments contributed more than $1 billion into Wisconsin’s economy, indirectly creating 5,500 additional jobs on top of the 4,000 the company employs directly. For 2018, Amazon will celebrate its third year fulfilling customer orders from Wisconsin and surpassing the milestone of 4,000 full-time employees in the state with job opportunities for people with all types of experience, education and skill levels—from human resources, engineers and facilities technicians, to those seeking entry-level positions and looking for on-the-job training.

"Since our first day at the Kenosha facility, we’ve received amazing support from the community and we couldn’t be prouder to be part of the Wisconsin family," said Mark Stewert, Amazon’s Vice President of North America Customer Fulfillment. "We’re honored that our team of more than 4,000 in the Badger State have picked Amazon as their employer of choice and innovate on behalf of the customer, raise the bar on our operational excellence, and provide outstanding customer experiences—every day."

Amazon’s 1-million-square-foot fulfillment center in Wisconsin opened in 2015 with a team of 1,000 full-time employees. In addition to the Kenosha fulfillment center, Amazon has also opened a Prime Now hub, an Amazon Fresh site, a sortation center, and a delivery station in the Badger State. The average hourly wage for Amazon’s more than 4,000 full-time employees in Wisconsin, including cash, stock, and incentive bonuses, is over $15.50/hour before overtime—twice the state’s minimum wage. Wisconsin is also home to Shopbop, the global online retail destination for style inspiration and discovery, employing hundreds of full-time employees. BOP LLC, headquartered in Madison, was acquired by Amazon.com, inc. in 2006, enabling Shopbop to expand its services to enhance the customer experience. This expansion has resulted in Amazon investing millions of dollars into Wisconsin’s economy, both in fulfillment infrastructure and compensation to its 4,000 current employees. Amazon’s investments in Wisconsin from 2014 through 2017 resulted in an additional $1 billion to the state’s economy. Using Input-Output methodology and multipliers developed by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Amazon’s investments in the state have created an additional 5,500 indirect jobs on top of the company’s direct hires.

"Reaching more than 4,000 full-time, permanent employees is an incredible milestone for Amazon and Wisconsin," Governor Scott Walker said. "The fact that Amazon more than tripled its initial job-creation projections in Wisconsin is a monumental success story. Thanks to Amazon for its continued commitment to our state and our people. The Wisconsin Comeback is real!"

We appreciate Amazon's investment in Kenosha, which has created thousands of jobs and opportunities for our residents at the two fulfillment facilities in the city," said Kenosha Mayor John Antaramian. "We are pleased to see Amazon finding success in our community."

"Amazon in Wisconsin by the numbers: 2 fulfillment facilities in Kenosha, 3 locations in Milwaukee city proper: a Prime Now hub, an Amazon Fresh site, and a delivery station. A Shopbop headquarters building located in Madison. 4,000+ full-time employees across Wisconsin. 5,500+ estimated indirect jobs created as a result of Amazon’s investment between 2014 and 2017. 14,000+ Wisconsin-based small and medium-sized businesses are growing and reaching new customers. 30,000+ new customers are added to Amazon each year. More than 1,500,000 sq. ft. footprint for the two fulfillment facilities. Amazon's statewide impact can be seen in the local and small and medium-sized businesses it empowers. For example, Sherri Yikel is a Wisconsin resident and founder of Big Dot of Happiness, an independent, woman-founded brand that sells bespoke party decorations for once-in-a-lifetime celebrations. Big Dot of Happiness uses Fulfillment By Amazon, a service that enables small and medium-sized businesses to use Amazon's resources to sell directly to customers. "Selling on Amazon has been a complete game changer. We love creating new products for all of life's celebrations and Fulfillment By Amazon allows us to get our product to customers FAST. When we started selling on Amazon in 2012, we had 40 employees now: we proudly employ 83 people and are all growing strong! Amazon has allowed us to be the company we've always want- ed to be."

In addition to competitive wages, full-time fulfillment center Amazon associate positions include comprehensive benefits package, including healthcare, 401(k) and company stock awards starting on day one. Associates also offer employees educational opportunities for employees and parent leave benefits and access to innovative programs like Career Choice, which is full-pay unlimited tuition for courses related to in-demand fields, regardless of whether the skills are relevant to a career at Amazon.

"Career Choice made it extremely easy for me to get my EMT certifications and Amazon worked with me to adjust schedules so I could make my classes," said Mike Fina, an associate at Amazon’s fulfillment center in Kenosha. "It’s an amazing benefit and having classes onsite saved me a lot of money and time. Amazon also took care of tuition ahead of time, which is great because a lot of people don’t have the money to pay out-of-pocket and wait to get reimbursed later. I’m now taking the commercial driving license class."

Since the program’s launch, more than 16,000 employees have pursued degrees in game design, nursing, IT program, and radiology, to name a few.

Senator Appropriations Committee Ensures Continued Aid to Armenia

APPROPRIATIONS, from page 6

Payment message to Aliyev that killing more Christian Armenians will not go unpunished. Azerbaijan continues to violate the ceasefire agreement it signed with Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh, including the targeting of civilians and kindergartens. This is unacceptable and we urge the United States and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) co-chairs to hold Azerbaijan accountable. Armenia’s commitment to democracy has been proven yet again, and the United States needs to start calling balls and strikes more fairly and consistently with American values,” they con- cluded.

The bill restates the traditional exceptions to Section 607 of the Freedom Support Act, while the report language maintains military parity between Armenia and Azerbaijan, recommend- ing $25 million for International Military Education and Training and $1 million for the Foreign Military Financing Program for each country. The Senate report language also rec- ommends the same funding for Armenia con- sistent with last year’s level: $17.633 million through the Assistance to Europe Eurasia and South Central Asia (AEECA) account and $1.5 million for International Narcotics Controls and Law Enforcement.

The bill allocates $25 million for programs to promote and protect international religious freedom. In addition, the bill provides $6.5 mil- lion for the Ambassador-at-Large for Religious Freedom, and $2 million for the Special Envoy to Promote Religious Freedom in the Near East and South Central Asia.

Earlier this week, the House Appropriations Committee approved the FY 2019 SFOPS bill on a vote of 30-21.
**Activist Academic Makunts Rethinks Armenian Ministry of Culture**

**CULTURE, from page 1** dramatically declared, in a recent interview (https://www.evnreport.com/raw-united-aid-makunts-reflection-cultural-engagement), conducted by Maria Titzian for EVN Report, “I was in my third year of teaching when I decided to leave the direct political arena in order to teach youth in civil society how to work for social change. She declared to the Mirror-Spectator, “I was taking part in the elections, and I was at the polling stations, and I would witness that unless we change ourselves, unless we change as citizens, we are not going to witness any change in the political arena.”

Makunts was able to do her political activity while teaching at the Russian-Armenian University in Yerevan. She said there because it was one of those universities where professors, teachers and students had the most freedom.” For example, during the 2008 presidential elections, YSU expelled a number of professors and students for their political activities, unlike her university, where she did not worry as much about the effects of her actions. She said, “I was never limited with my opponents because I also had political activities. I could get another one. Probably this was the reason that I felt free… Fortunately, I had the luxury and I had the opportunity of not being confined to one job.”

She studied at the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict (ICNC) Summer Institute (also known as the Fletcher Summer Institute for the Advanced Study of Nonviolent Conflict, at Tufts University, https://www.nonviolentconflict.org/fletcher-summer-institute-2015/) in the summer of 2015 and was an ICNC Curriculum Fellow from 2016 to 2017, meaning according to the ICNC website, she received support for her writing, coursework development and implementation of new curricula on civil resistance in universities and high schools around the world. Since 2016, she has been a contract special-ist for the American Peace Corps. She also works at the Zohrab Center’s (The Living in Istanbul in 2013-2014, he conducted ethnographic fieldwork involving the local Armenian community. In 2017 he returned to Istanbul, having developed his dissertation with me and the community: the Armenian Minority, Tradition, and Secularism in Turkey,” and he received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. Dr. Sheklian was most recently a Marine, Civil, Community Engagement and Peace Studies at the University of Michigan, where he was affiliated with the Department of Anthropology and taught a course called “The government is going to give subsidies that the Anthropology of Ritual and Sound.”

**NEW YORK — The Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) announced recently the hiring of a new direc-**

**Diocese Names Dr. Christopher Sheklian as New Director of Zohrab Information Center**

**Dr. Christopher Sheklian**

Dr. Christopher Sheklian is an associate professor of political science at the University of Chicago. He is a specialist in the field of political science, with a focus on the Middle East and North Africa. He is the author of several books and articles on the subject, and he has served as a consultant to government and non-governmental organizations in the region. He is a former member of the council of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, and he has been a fellow at the Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. He is a visiting scholar at the University of California, Berkeley, where he teaches courses on political science. He is a member of the American Political Science Association and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He is married with three children. Dr. Sheklian is a native of the United States, and he has also lived and worked in the Middle East and North Africa. He is fluent in Arabic and English, and he is an active member of the Armenian community in the United States. Dr. Sheklian’s research focuses on the role of non-governmental organizations in the Middle East, and he is particularly interested in the effectiveness of these organizations in promoting democratic values and human rights.

He continues to pursue his research related to secularism, religious minority rights, and the role of emotion and the senses in religious life. As the Zohrab Center director, Sheklian looks forward to continuing to foster the center’s engaging series of lectures and presentations, and is currently organizing such events for the fall season. He is also working on the goal of developing resources and program-ming that engage both academic and church audiences. While the center is still in its early stages, it is already making an impact in the community, and Sheklian is excited about the potential for the center to grow and develop in the future. He is looking forward to working with a team of dedicated and passionate people throughout the larger community.
COMMUNITY NEWS

Knights and Daughters of Vartan Host Annual Convocation in Michigan

DEARBORN, Mich. – The Knights of Vartan’s 100th Annual Grand Convocation and the Daughters of Vartan 75th annual meeting was held July 11-14 here at the Edward Hotel with over 150 Knights and Daughters and their family members in attendance. The local Knights and Daughters got together for a series of innovative workshops, meetings, discussions, city and cultural tours and elegant evening events. It was also a time to acknowledge and present awards to individuals and lodges for outstanding service to the Armenian community.

The Knights and Daughters of Vartan, Nareg-Shavarshian Lodge #6, and Zabelle Otyagy (Lodge) #12, hosted the 100th Grand Convocation. The Convocation Committee was led by General Chairman Past Matron Gloria Karoian, Co-Chairman Past Commander Kazar Tetterian and coordinated by Knights and Daughters from Nareg-Shavarshian Lodge and Zabelle Otyagy (Lodge).

Wednesday, July 11 included a city tour of Detroit with visits to the Motown Museum, St. John Armenian Church and the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum. On Thursday, July 12, Dr. Taner Akçam was invited as a special guest to speak about his recently published book, The Killing Orders: Talat Pasha’s Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide, which provides undeniable proof that the Young Turks intended to exterminate the Armenian people. For the evening guests enjoyed dining and entertainment in the revolving hotel Rotunda with the singing group “Detroit All-Stars” who took everyone back in time for a Motown experience. Those in attendance had wonderful time with exceptional food, singing and dancing.

Thursday evening, July 13 was a gala Banquet with Knights and Daughters present as well as many other guests who enjoyed the beautiful dances performed by the Detroit Hamazkayin Dance Group and the breath taking music of violinist Gary Hovakimian.

The closing event of the Centennial Grand Convocation was the Grand Commander Dr. Gary Zamanigian presenting one of the 2018 Persons of the Year award (Photo credit by David Medzorian of Ararat Lodge).

The Grand Commander Dr. Gary Zamanigian led a number of business meetings regarding the past years accomplishments and achievements and about future projects. The Knights of Vartan appropriated financial support for certain key charitable initiatives: the Fuller Center for Housing Armenia NGO in honor of the late Past Commander Rev. Djaj Davidian, a good friend of Fuller Center; Scholarships for Armenian American Students; and Scholarships for Students in Armenia who attend the American University of Armenia, Yerevan State University and the National Polytechnic University of Armenia.

In addition, the following projects will continue to be funded: Partnership with CASP (Children of Armenia Sponsorship Partnership with CASP (Children of Armenia Sponsorship Program) to benefit needy children in Tavush; the Armenian University and National Polytechnic University of Armenia.

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Students; and Scholarships for Students in Armenia who encourage Armenians in leadership positions and honor them. The Knights of Vartan appropriated financial support for certain key charitable initiatives: the Fuller Center for Housing Armenia NGO in honor of the late Past Commander Rev. Djaj Davidian, a good friend of Fuller Center; Scholarships for Armenian American Students; and Scholarships for Students in Armenia who attend the American University of Armenia, Yerevan State University and the National Polytechnic University of Armenia.


The Grand Lodge has seven officers, including Grand Commander, and during 100th convocation the re-elected officers were: Lieutenant Grand Commander Howard Natanian, Grand Chaplain Garry Javadian, Grand Recorder Deacon Richard Norsigian, Grand Treasurer Ed Bedikian, Grand Master of Ceremonies Deacon George Boyagian, and Grand Sentinel Ray Bosojian.

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The Grand Lodge is an organization of women whose members are committed to the intellectual, personal and leadership development of Armenian women and families around the world, while also practicing the Armenian heritage and Christian values through its 19 chapters across the US.
YMCA Features Armenian National Institute Exhibit On American Humanitarians During First Republic of Armenia

WASHINGTON – The YMCA welcomed the April release of a special digital exhibit developed by the Armenian National Institute (ANI) exploring the role of two exceptional individuals, who volunteered to stay in Armenia during the catastrophic year of 1918 when fellow American relief workers were withdrawn in view of the intensification of warfare in the region.

The ANI exhibit profiles the two Americans, John Elder and James O. Arroll, sent to Armenia by the YMCA, and explains their numerous contributions towards relieving the humanitarian crisis in April and May 1918 when the armed forces of Ottoman Turkey invaded the country. Based on John Elder’s photographs and testimony, as well as additional material from the YMCA Archives, the exhibit pays tribute to the extraordinary efforts of these two men, whose achievements were widely recognized at the time.

Ryan Bean, Reference and Outreach Archivist at the YMCA Archives, who supported the project, remarked: “The Armenian National Institute has done a fantastic job telling this story. It is both tragic and heartbreaking on the one hand, and inspiring and humbling on the other. The timeliness of this exhibit is very appropriate, and I believe we could all learn a lesson from Elder and Arroll.”

In its April 24 posting on its Facebook page, where the exhibit could be viewed, the YMCA Archives, extended “Congratulations! To Dr. Reuben Adalian and the Armenian National Institute on the release of the digital exhibit ‘The YMCA’s Role in Armenia: A Century Ago.’ This exhibit both illuminates a tragic humanitarian disaster as well as highlights the capacity of the human spirit to persevere and do good in the face of a seemingly hopeless situation.”

YMCA Europe, which encompasses 43 countries, also highlights the exhibit titled “American Relief in the First Republic of Armenia, 1918-1920: John Elder and James Arroll in Yerevan, Gyumri, Sevan & Etchmiadzin”, on its website.

Varden Hambardzumian, who heads the YMCA in Armenia and presently serves as Executive Secretary of YMCA Europe, wrote that he was “very grateful to ANI for disclosing so eloquently the story of the YMCA in the Republic of Armenia back in 1918.”

Elder and Arroll were in Armenia when the critical Battle of Sardarabad was waged in May 1918 securing the independence of the country. Working in Yerevan, Elder and Arroll focused on caring for orphans and refugees. Their contributions were recognized as critical under the circumstances, and their personal heroism, taking the risks that they did by remaining at their posts, was widely appreciated by Armenians. Celebrating their special role, a memorial postcard was issued in Yerevan featuring the two young Americans.

John Elder recorded the hair-raising news he reported: “Alexandropol has fallen. The railroad on both sides of Alexandropol, which means we are cut off from funds.” On May 21, he gloomily wrote: “The storm clouds are rapidly approaching. Not 5 miles away in Turkish hands, so things look desperate.”

WASHINGTON – During his recent trip to Washington, in connection with the Armenian Folklife Festival in the American capital, President Armen Sahasian of Armenia voted Roosevelt Island. He honored the legacy of the 26th president of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919), and his support to the Armenian people during the tragic days of our history.

“The Armenian massacre was the greatest crime of the war...” Roosevelt wrote in a letter to Cleveland Hadley Dodge in May of 1918 after he left the White House and was residing at his house in Oyster Bay, NY. Dodge, along with US Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, oversaw the creation of the American Committee for Armenian and Syriac Relief, later to be renamed Near East Relief.

“The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt,” published by Harvard University Press in the 1950s, included the above-mentioned document. Roosevelt, who was historically known for his energetic and straight forward policy, was against Washington’s initial attempts to remain somewhat neutral during World War I. As is well known, even though World War I started in the summer of 1914, the US joined the war later, in April of 1917, first against Germany and later against the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In his aforementioned letter, Roosevelt continued as follows:

“The Armenian horror is an accomplished fact. Its occurrence was largely due to the policy of pacifism this nation has followed for the last four years. The presence of our missionaries, and our failure to go to war, did not prevent the Turks from massacring between half a million and a million Armenians, Syrians, Greeks and Jews – the overwhelmingly majority being Armenians.”

In 1909, in his book called A Strenuous Life, which technically was a collection of Roosevelt’s earlier speeches and essays, he referred to Armenia on several occasions, this time criticizing Europeans for not going into war against the Ottomans.

“The great blot upon European international morality in the closing decade of this [i.e. 19th - H.N.] century has been not a war, but the infamous peace kept by the joint action of the great powers, while Turkey inflicted the last horrors of butchery, torture, and outrage upon the men, women, and children of despoothing Armenia. War was avoided; peace was kept; but what a peace! Infinitely greater human misery was inflicted during this peace than in the late wars of Germany with France, of Russia with Turkey.” Roosevelt wrote referring to the Hamidian massacres of the 1890s.

Interestingly, four years later, during a meeting with the Armenian delegation at the White House, when presidential adviser James Bronson Reynolds (1861-1924) said that “since 1885, more men, women and children have been massacred see ROOSEVELT, page 13

President Theodore Roosevelt and the Armenians
By Haykaram Nahapetyan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

William Saroyan House-Museum to Have Grand Opening in Fresno

FRESNO — The William Saroyan House-Museum will open to visitors on Friday, August 31, on the 110th anniversary of the birth of the writer. To celebrate this occasion, a grand opening celebration will be held at the Satellite Student Union at Fresno State on August 31. Doors to the Satellite Student Union will open at 6:30 p.m. with an exhibition devoted to Saroyan’s life. At 7 p.m. the formal program will begin with a movie about the Saroyan House. This will give an opportunity for several musical performances. The event will conclude with a reception.

Entrance is free for the grand opening, but registration is required, by going to the website: http://saryoynhouse.com/ and clicking on the subscribe button.


Saroyan was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1946. New York Drama Critics’ Circle award, and in 1943 won the Academy Award for Best Story for the film adaptation of his novel “The Human Comedy.”

The house at 7229 W. Griffith Way, in Fresno, where Saroyan spent the last 17 years of his life, will serve as his permanent address.

The museum is full of interactive and innovative exhibits, thus making it unique in the region. Due to the newest technologies, William Saroyan will be “revived” and his hologram will greet visitors.

The House Museum will feature a large digital archive on William Saroyan, including exclusive pictures, examples of his graphic work, and examples from his works.

In addition, according to William Saroyan’s will, a research area will be created within the house, where researchers, students, scholars and other interested individuals can benefit from the vast heritage which William Saroyan left.

It will begin with a movie about the Saroyan House-Museum, and will be followed by a grand opening celebration.

A young William Saroyan
President Theodore Roosevelt and the Armenians

ROOSEVELT, from page 12

In Armenia by the Turkish soldiers and their auxiliaries than were killed on both sides in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870." Roosevelt interrupted him, saying: "You are quoting from my own book The Strenuous Life. In what I who first made that statement." The President was obviously referring to his statement we cited earlier.

Reynold's presence at this meeting was not accidental. In 1901 he edited a book called Two Thousand Years of Armenian History. This publication featured the history of Christianity at a prominent educational establishment, also conveying the stories of overseas missionaries that far, the most favorable to the Armenians as well as Armenia." Republican Armenians were also planning to send a representative to Washington, DC, to meet the President.

In December 1904, in his State of Union statement, the president mentioned: "In Turkey our difficulties arise less from the way in which our citizens are sometimes treated than from the indignation inevitably excited in seeing such fearful misrule as has been witnessed both in Armenia and Macedonia."

In this important annual address, the president also mentioned that Americans "ought to express to their horror on occasion of the massacre of Jews in in the town of Kishinev and also on the cruel and oppressive treatment of which the Armenians had been the victims.

Following his reelection, Roosevelt received a telegram from the then Catholicos of Armenians Mürkî Khramian, known also as Khramian Hayk. "I pray Your Excellency accepts my profound respects and heartfelt thanks for the very kind reception accorded to my delegates, the two Archbishops, who were commissioned to plead the cause of the suffering Armenian people in Turkey. I cherish the hope that the powerful voice of Your Excellency's Government will eventually aid in bringing peace and justice to the people of unfortunate Armenia," Catholicos Khramian wrote. As the message implies, President had met high-ranking Armenian members of the clergy in Washington earlier.

US Sen. Carl Schurz is known for his saying: "My country right or wrong; if right to be kept right, and if wrong, to be set right." After his retirement, Schurz was living in Northwest Bay on Lake George, New York, where in September of 1905 Roosevelt sent a letter in which he raised his concerns in regards to what was happening to the Armenians. This time, Christians were being attacked in the Caucasus by local Muslims, later to be known as Azerbaijanis. On September 14, Schurz got back to the president, saying, "admitting all you say of the Armenian atrocities -- have faced the fact that the Powers stood by without lifting a hand, although they were armed to the teeth!"

In September 1915, when the Armenian Genocide was in process, the current president of Armenia, Armen Sarkissian, visited Roosevelt Island and laid a wreath at the former's monument to show his respect and gratitude. (See a video on www.mirrorspectator.com about the visit.)

According to other sources, Roosevelt was knowledgeable on Armenian history. In 1912, during an interview granted to Armenian students he said: "I want Armenians to be able to bear arms just as they did in the days of King Tirganes, so that in the next generation no one can say that the Christian population of Turkey cannot fight." According to another bit of research, Roosevelt wrote in his correspondence shortly before his death: "I am doing everything I can, and shall continue to do everything I can for the Armenians."

In 2015, the American Political Science Association ranked Roosevelt as the fourth greatest American president, leaving only Lincoln, Washington and Roosevelt's nephew Franklin Delano Roosevelt ahead of him. The New York Times's Presidential Greatness Ranking from February 2018 confirmed these results. In the 1920s, Roosevelt was chosen to appear on Mount Rushmore, California as one of four iconic American presidents.
Recipe Corner
by Christine Vartanian Datian

Grilled Eggplant, Tomato and Cheese Salad

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 pounds eggplant, cut into (1/2-inch-thick) slices (about 2 medium)
- 5 Roma or medium tomatoes, cut into 1/4-inch slices or 12 cherry tomatoes halved
- 4 medium red, yellow, green or mixed bell peppers, cut into thick slices or wedges
- 3/4 pound Jack or Mozzarella cheese, cut in 1/4-inch slices or wedges*
- 1 medium head Romaine or red leaf lettuce, washed and separated, or choice of arugula, Belgian endive, kale, butter lettuce or spinach
- 1/4 cup loosely packed fresh basil leaves
- 1/2 cup chopped flat leaf parsley
- 1 small bunch green onions, washed and chopped
- Sea or Kosher salt, black pepper, red pepper, crushed red pepper flakes
- Sprigs of fresh mint and fresh lemon wedges
- 1/4 cup toasted pine nuts, optional
- 1/4 cup garbanzo beans, washed and drained, optional

PREPARATION

Arrange eggplant slices on a rack set over a large tray and sprinkle both sides with salt. Let drain for about one hour, turning once. Pat eggplant slices dry and browned. Remove from grill to a plate. Grill bell peppers and onions until lightly browned and remove to a plate.

Grill eggplant for 5-6 minutes and turn and grill for 5-6 minutes or until eggplant is tender. Grill for 5-6 minutes and turn and grill for 5-6 minutes or until eggplant is tender. Grilled eggplant with Ginger Lemon Vinaigrette and place on an oiled rack to grill.

GARLIC LEMON VINAIGRETTE

3/4 cup olive oil
4/5 tablespoons red wine or balsamic vinegar
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
3 large cloves garlic, crushed
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon granulated sugar
1 teaspoon fresh lemon zest
Sea or Kosher salt and black pepper

Mix all ingredients and pour over salad. Garnish with fresh basil leaves, parsley, green onions, olives and sprigs of mint, and sprinkle with salt, pepper, red pepper, and crushed red pepper flakes.

Serve with a rustic French, garlic or pita bread and fresh lemon wedges.

Serves 6.

Marinara sauce is best made just before it is to be used. Whisk all ingredients together. Mix in 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese. Place in a greased baking dish and bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes. Serve over pasta or with bread.

*Instead of using Jack or Mozzarella cheese for this recipe, you can top salad with crumbled Feta or blue cheese, if desired.

**Christine's recipes have been published in the Fresno Bee newspaper, Sunset magazine, Cooking Light magazine, and at http://www.thenarmeniankitchen.com/
Dr. Helen Evans Appointed Nikit and Eleanora Ordjanian Visiting Professor at Columbia for Fall Semester

NEW YORK — Dr. Helen Evans, the Mary and Michael Jaharis Curator for Byzantine Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, has been appointed the Nikit and Eleonora Ordjanian Visiting Professor in the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies at Columbia University for Fall 2018. She will be teaching a course titled “Origins of Armenian Art: Creating An Identity,” which will be oriented around the Metropolitan Museum’s upcoming major exhibition “Armenia.”

The exhibition, which will feature more than 140 objects, most of which will be on view in the United States for the first time, was organized by Evans. It will open on September 22 and run through January 13, 2019, and will explore the arts and culture of the Armenians from their conversion to Christianity in the early 4th century through their leading role on international trade routes in the 17th century. The course will use the works in the exhibition to examine how a tradition of Armenian art came to be defined, its character and its connections to the arts of other cultures.

This seminar-style course (MDPS GU4347, Section 001, Call # 228800) will be taught on Fridays from 10:10 a.m. – 12 p.m. at the Metropolitan Museum and is open to auditors as well as matriculating students. Registration for auditors begins on August 25 and classes begin on September 5.

In addition to the course, Evans will be a lecturer at the Metropolitan Museum, as part of the MetSpeaks series, on October 18 at 6:30 p.m. in the Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, on the expansion of Armenian art and culture from the 4th century near Mt. Ararat westward through the 17th century to the newly established towns, monasteries and kingdoms reaching the Mediterranean. Tickets for the lecture start at $30 and can be obtained by going online at www.metmuseum.org/tickets.

Evans received her PhD from New York University’s Institute of Fine Arts. She co-curated the previous blockbuster exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum, “The Glory of Byzantium,” and co-edited the accompanying book. In addition, she co-curated the Morgan Library’s exhibition, “Treasures In Heaven: Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts From American Collections.” She has taught, lectured and published widely on Armenian art and has been a previous Nikit and Eleonora Ordjanian Visiting Professor at Columbia University in 2000, 2007 and 2014.

The Ordjanian Visiting Professorship program at Columbia is made possible by an endowment established by the late Dr. Nikit and Eleonora Ordjanian in 1988. Previous Ordjanian Visiting Professors have included Levon Abrahamian, Varden Azatyan, Peter Balabanian, Melissa Bilal, George Bournoutian, Bata Bagdovan, Roberta Ervine, Rachel Goshgarian, Arman Grigoryan, Robert Henss, Armen Marsoobian, Khatchig Movsesian, Ara Sarafian and Khatchig Toothyan.

The Ordjanian Visiting Professorship is one of several programs of the Armenian Center at Columbia, the organization that raised the initial funds to establish a Chair of Armenian Studies at Columbia in 1979 and which continues to provide funds for scholarships, library acquisitions, academic publications, lectures, conferences and symposia.

There will be a full-day symposium in conjunction with the “Armenia” exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum on November 3 which will begin at 10:30 a.m. The symposium will be free of charge and open to the public. More information about the symposium and reservation forms will be forthcoming and will be available on the Metropolitan Museum’s website at www.metmuseum.org.

YMCA Features Armenian National Institute Exhibit on Armenian Humanitarians During First Republic of Armenia

YMCA, from page 12

On May 26, he jotted down a different kind of news: “Well you never can tell what may happen. Just as the end seems at hand the pendulum swings the other way and the terrible Turk is in full retreat...After a two day battle at Sardarabad the Turks have been completely routed.”

With the establishment of peace, Elder witnessed the momentous event of the restoration of government, which he appreciated for its historic importance, recording on August 11: “I had the thrill of attending the opening session of the Parliament of the Republic of Armenia. What an exciting time it was. A free and independent Armenia for the first time in 600 years or more! There was a great crowd present, and through an interpreter I gave an address of congratulations on the historic occasion. After more than a year of strenuous effort, the Armenian Genocide...”

All of the digital exhibits posted on the ANI website are freely downloadable, and are provided to the public in high resolution to be readily printable anytime and anywhere from standard-size up to poster-size.

The letter from the YMCA to Arroll and Elder

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One of the tapestries at the exhibit
YEREVAN – At this year’s “International Young Women’s Peace Award” ceremony, Armenian Heritage Mirror-Spectator (AHMS) honored Zabel Yessayan. This year, the winners of this award are: Human rights activist Rikh Omar (Burma), photo-journalist Adriane Ohanesyan (US), and human rights activist Mine Babulak (Cyprus) were awarded the prize for their exceptional work in the field of peace and human rights. Yessayan was quoted as saying, “Literature is not an ornament, it is a useful pastime. A writer uses literature for many purposes, it can be a weapon to struggle against injustice.”

During the event the special diplomas were awarded to Catherine Berecz (Belgium) “for her work on the Women’s Support Center in Yerevan” and Hanganak Khin Omar (Burma), photo-journalist Adriane Ohanesyan (US), “for human rights and peace journalism.”

The French Ambassador, Jonathan Lacôte, also spoke at the ceremony about Zabel Yessayan’s legacy in France. Yessayan studied and wrote while at the Sorbonne in Paris. In 2017, Paris Mayoral Anne Hidalgo renamed an alley in honor of Yessayan.

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Many people cannot locate the village of Panik in the Shirak Region of Armenia. It is a small community on the outskirts of Gyumri, where Russia’s 302nd military base is located. A seemingly insignificant incident brought to a head an uneasy situation that had been brewing for some time between Armenia and Russia.

The village of Panik almost overnight became a mini-Sarajevo with global ramifications.

On July 17, the nearby air base decided to hold unannounced military exercises, frightening the residents of villages in the vicinity. Although the commander of the base issued an apology to the population of the area, it seems that it was not enough for the government of Armenia, which raised the issue, with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan characterizing the incident as a violation of Armenia’s sovereignty in a harsh statement.

Many observers were already suggesting that political tensions between Armenia and Russia were rising. Therefore, the Panik incident proved to be the straw that broke the camel’s back. It turned out that an insignificant event became the tip of the iceberg as the divide between Moscow and Armenia was widening.

The exercises were certainly designed to shock by Moscow. Azerbaijan is not a strategic ally of Russia and it can freely associate with Europe, the US and even with Georgia, Moscow’s nemesis in the region, but Russia continues its normal relations with Baku.

But Russia will not tolerate deviance from the political script where Armenia is concerned. In plain terms, Moscow is determined to protect its role in the region, indirectly messaging that Yerevan must not expect any better treatment than its political clout allows, ally or no ally.

Armenia is a strange bed as a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) military alliance, two of whose members have close relations with its enemy; Armenia’s strategic allies Russia and Belarus have been supplying Azerbaijan with modern armaments and another ally, Kazakhstan, has a historic common cause with Baku as a Turkic nation. Thus, Armenia is ensnared in a web of contradictions as a member of an organization that should make it suspiciously feel secure.

Once Armenia began courting Europe, Moscow started to show its irritation. Although there has been no official pronouncement from Kremlin, sources close to the power centers have been extremely critical of Armenia’s move, despite assurances from Pashinyan that Armenia will continue to treat Russia as its strategic ally and that there will not be any sudden changes in its foreign policy. That approach leaves open the possibility that gradual changes may be in the offing. And Russia is already anticipating such changes, leading to increased unease towards Armenia.

A political analyst close to the Kremlin circles, Stanislav Tarasov, speaking with the news outlet Regnum, criticized Pashinyan’s reaction to the Panik incident as “unfriendly politics.” Other articles have also appeared in the same vein in Lenta.ru, Gazeta.ru and other news outlets.

The Russian media criticism of Pashinyan has shifted from the Panik incident to his visit to a 302nd military base in Brussels. He has also been criticized for Armenia’s participation in the upcoming NATO military drills in Georgia.

At the same time, Russia had sent a delegation to Azerbaijan to participate in a forum titled “Azerbaijan is Russia’s only strategic ally in the Caucasus.”

As if that were not enough, the members of the delegation visited Lele Tepe, the piece of strategic territory which Azerbaijan took from Armenian forces during the surprise attack of April 2016.

One of the participants of the forum was a fanatical nationalist, Alexander Dugin, who gave an extensive interview to the First News outlet (Arachin Lratvakan) where he made revealing statements on Moscow’s anger over Armenia’s recent moves. He stated that Serzh Sargsyan had almost given up return to Azerbaijan from the seven regions under Armenian control and following the Velvet Revolution, that understanding does not seem to be valid any longer, adding, “Azerbaijan’s importance has been enhanced recently, and also Russian-Turkish relations have taken a positive turn.”

When asked whether he visited the territory occupied recently by Azerbaijan from Armenia, Dugin answered that he considered Lele Tepe part of Azerbaijan and as a matter of fact, all of Karabakh is considered part of Azerbaijan by Moscow.

He further encouraged the Armenian side to cede peacefully the five regions seized to Azerbaijan, which in return would yield some economic advantages, along with Baku’s good offices to improve relations between Armenia and Turkey and help lift the blockade.

Whatever Armenia agrees to give in terms of territory can only be taken by bloodshed and whatever the Turkish-Azeri side is willing to offer is easily reversible.

For instance, an analyst, Garnik Gevorgyan, writing in the First News outlet, said that while some analysts close to Pashinyan’s administration have been verbally that shift policy to make it audible to Moscow.

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In fairness, Russian concerns are there for a reason. Armenia is not only giving subtle signals about its foreign policy shift, but some analysts close to Pashinyan’s administration have also been verbalizing that policy shift to make it audible to Moscow.

For instance, an analyst, Garnik Gevorgyan, writing in the First News outlet, said that while some analysts close to Pashinyan’s administration have been verbalizing that shift policy to make it audible to Moscow.

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In fairness, Russian concerns are there for a reason. Armenia is not only giving subtle signals about its foreign policy shift, but some analysts close to Pashinyan’s administration have also been verbalizing that policy shift to make it audible to Moscow.
ATP Pays Tribute to the Inspirational Life and Grassroots Work of Fr. Dajad Davidian

WOBURG, Mass. — The Armenian world lost one of its pillars with the passing of Rev. Fr. Dajad Davidian, who passed away on July 14, 2018. Fr. Dajad served as Pastor of St. James Armenian Church in Watertown from 1969 to 1999, and was known for his faith, eloquence, sense of humor, and down to earth style that endeared him to many.

Fr. Dajad, whose baptismal name was Arthur, was the husband of the late Yeretzgin Carolyn Mugar. “We will identify a program that best exemplifies his unique qualities and deeds. We are grieving the loss of such a great friend and committed activist who continued his powerful legacy,” said Carolyn Mugar.

In his memory, the Vagharshapat Armenian School and the Armenian School of Woburn have established scholarships in the names of Carolyn Mugar and Rev. Fr. Dajad Davidian, with funds raised through a GoFundMe page.

“[Fr. Dajad] could easily connect the dots from the simple yet profound teachings of Jesus to St. Augustine to a writing of an obscure Armenian Church father to “why is all that important to 17 year old me today, here?” Our memories are filled with countless stories of his wisdom, support, and love for everyone who knew him. He was a true friend, a mentor, and a spiritual leader who will be deeply missed.”

The Armenian Church of Woburn, in honor of Rev. Fr. Dajad Davidian, will be holding a celebration of life ceremony at St. James Armenian Church on Saturday, July 28, 2018. The ceremony will begin at 10:00 am and will be followed by a luncheon at 12:00 pm. All are welcome to attend.

Fr. Dajad leaves us with an eternal inspiration for growth. We are grateful that he has designated Armenia Tree Project as a place that we can now invite people to remember him and also participate — in the thrust of his life’s work,” stated ATP founder Carolyn Mugar.

The Davidian family has requested that in lieu of flower memorial donations be made to St. James Church or to Armenia Tree Project. ATP is exploring various projects in Armenia that would best reflect Fr. Dajad’s interest in supporting Armenia’s youth and the most disadvantaged populations in rural areas.

“We know there are countless youth he engaged by listening and sharing, and loved us all fully,” he could give us a true friend’s comfort as well as a wise man’s advice. It was tough advice to hear sometimes, but we all knew that as much as we came from his vibrant mind and life experience and was worth thinking about and applying, it also came from a place of love, always from his heart. Applying it to my profession, he was the model for how to actively listen to a client, or parties in mediation.

His teachings, advice on life, modeling a life of serving others and his just being there for people were as much a factor for me to go to Boston College and work on a Ph.D. that reminded me of him — Fr. Robert Drinan, dean of the law school and later a Congressman at the time — was there, to write, starting with the church youth group’s Golden Cross monthly magazine, to later go to seminary and serve the community, later on to pursue being a lawyer (at the age of 33), and then think about how to better serve others as a lawyer (at the age of 55). The thousands of people he touched, the families we raised, the friendships we engaged in fully, the involvements in our respective faith communities, and the pros- ections through which we have worked to serve others have all benefited from a community in a lifestyle of gift and blessing. The presence in our lives of this one man, our pastor and friend, Fr. Dajad — back then, now and always.”

(Michael Zeytoonian is an attorney in Woburn, Mass.)
Azerbaijan Organizes Its Own Diaspora To Compete With The Armenian Diaspora

For many decades, the Turkish government has had an inflamed image of the Armenian Diaspora, describing it as a giant worldwide force. In recent years, Azerbaijan has been infected with the same fear of the global Armenian Diaspora. President Ilham Aliyev has described the Armenian Diaspora as a group of “savage individuals” that is well below the market value.”

Its aim is to move to former Soviet countries, Europe and the United States in order to enlarge its Diaspora.

To the Editor:

(Nazim Ibrahimov, Chairman of Azerbaijan’s State Committee for Work with the Diaspora, recently announced that “the establishment of coordination centers for world Azerbaijanis continues and that this affair is one of the top priorities of President Ilham Aliyev’s priorities.” The state of Azerbaijan has created massive financial conditions for this. Upon the president’s order, we offer our support to our diaspora organizations around the world. On account of this activity, the Armenian Diaspora not only responds to the Armenian lobby scarcely, but also overpowers them at times.”

“I informed the Armenian Prime Minister, Vazgen Aliyev, about our readiness to support the Diaspora, and they are always ready to support us in any way. It is not with tea or coffee but with the obligatory mulberry cocktail for breakfast by the Arpa River in Yegheknadzor, chopped down trees all over the city for heating, all apartment windows and the thousands of Ararat and beautiful Yerevan for the first time, but almost everyone that I met in Karabakh had

Ararat and beautiful Yerevan for the first time, but also the malware pipe chomps sticking out from all apartment windows and the thousands of chopped down trees all over the city for heating and cooking purposes.

We were on a long journey to Karabakh, six people including two young soldiers going to the front, all crammed into a small Niva. We stopped for breakfast of bread, cheese, and tea with coffee but not with the obligatory mulberry berry cocktail, tut ulghi in Armenian. We left Coriss and entered Karabakh through the Lachin corridor, we could see the violence of the war all around us, the burnt houses as well as hundreds of destroyed tanks thrown by one end of the road. One of the Himnadram engineers who knew the hero commander Melkonyan explained how Monte changed the course of the war when Armenians won the war against the Azeris by using the captured Azeri tanks instead of destroying them, and won the war against the Azeris by using Azeri tanks against the Azeris and the enormity of the victory, one should visit two sites in Shushi, Karabakh. The beautiful white church that was used as an army depot by the Azeris on the assumption that Armenians would not fire on their own church. The Azeri controlled Shushi, which is situated on high cliffs literally on top of Stepanakert, enabling the Azeris to target and rain heavy fire down on the Armenians, a move that they wished to destroy. But Armenian commandos accomplished the impossible, climbed the almost vertical cliffs in Shushi, climbed to the top at night, and gained control of Shushi, which proved the way to victory.

The Armenians went on the highway construction project joining Armaica to Karabakh, known as the Goris-Stepanakert Highway, which became a lifeline and replaced an almost unpassable mountain road. I witnessed the decision made at Congress Ararat, which was attended by all members of the Armenian Diaspora, which is situated on high cliffs literally on top of Stepanakert, enabling the Azeris to target and rain heavy fire down on the Armenians, a move that they wished to destroy. But Armenian commandos accomplished the impossible, climbed the almost vertical cliffs in Shushi, climbed to the top at night, and gained control of Shushi, which proved the way to victory.

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In the western world, a sign of respect or care is: ‘Please, walk behind me’…. I doubt if any engineering contract in the western world has a tender item making the contractor responsible to detect and clear land mines along the project route.

We went to northern Artsakh near Sarsang Reservoir, to provide preliminary engineering and cost estimate for another water project. The flowers were budding in the beautiful spring weather, and we picked up some of them. The village leader and his three-year-old grandson greeted us. When the little boy, Armen, saw the flowers in our hands, he started calling ‘Ruba, baba’, leading us and his grandfather in a cursive direction. Curiously, we followed him and his grandfather, until we reached a homemade cemetery with a tombstone covered by flowers. In tears, the grandfather explained that his son, Armen’s father, was recently martyred in the war, and every day the grandson and Armen would bring flowers to the grave. The grandfather had two sheep, and he offered to slaughter one of them for us so that we can have dinner together, basically offering half of his entire assets as a donation or present to us for bringing water to his village.

We also went into Aghdam with my Himnadram engineer buddies. Aghdam is the third largest city before the war. In a calculated stage of his diplomatic career.

The Diocese has not officially issued any circular or report to the public about this issue up until the present. Unofficially the word was that Armenian lady from California with us to Aghdam. She was in her 80s and in a wheelchair, but very lively and determined to see Karabakh, as she had donated substantial sums to Himnadram. We stopped at the Aghdam museum as some of the engineers wanted to climb the minaret to see the entire city from up above. This lady told us that she also wanted to go into the mosque. Our objections that it may be unsafe or difficult to take her in a wheelchair were to no avail, and she insisted that we carry her into the mosque. We had no choice but to comply. Once inside, she knelt, lifted her skirt, and urinated. And she said: “Now I can die in peace.” She told us her story, that she was an orphan of the 1915 Armenian Genocide, and most of her family was put to the sword by the Turks who had urinated on the dead Armenians.

Armenians of Armenia and Artsakh have paid and continue paying a high price for Karabakh/Artsakh but it is worth it, for many survival reasons – strategic, military, economic, and last but not least, historic.

Reception in Honor of Foreign Minister Of Armenia Held in New York

NEW YORK — On July 20, a reception in honor of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan was held in the Ceremonial Hall of St. Vartan Cathedral.

UN officials, ambassadors accredited in New York, members of the diplomatic corps, religious leaders of the Armenian Apostolic Church, leaders and representatives of the community structures were present at the reception.

Vartan Gregorian, president of Carnegie Corporation of New York in his opening remarks noted that it is an opportunity not only to welcome the newly appointed Foreign Minister of Armenia, but also to bid farewell to the representative of Armenia to the UN. Highly appreciating the efforts of the Minister Mnatsakanyan in presenting Armenia in this multifaceted platform, Vartan Gregorian wished him all the success during his next, most responsible stage of his diplomatic career.

In his opening remarks, Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, the Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, underscored that our Republic is not limited only to certain geographical borders. It also is a culture, a civilization, a vibrant and demanding youth both in Armenia and the Diaspora.

The Primate of the Diocese conveyed his best wishes to Mnatsakanyan as well as to the new government of Armenia in their efforts towards establishing justice for the Armenian people and, for our example, for all the peoples of the world.

Expressing gratitude to the attendees for effective cooperation and support provided for years, Zohrab Mnatsakanyan underlined that by assuming the post of the Armenian Foreign Minister, he is ready to share the great political responsibility for the processes in the country, which are based on the broad mandate and trust of the people.

“And our actions based on this very mandate are clear to ensure that the justice, democracy, rule of law prosper in our country. This was the history of our country during these past two months, and this process will continue.”

Extraordinary Petition Requests Special Session of Eastern Diocesan Assembly On Cathedral Complex Proposal

PETITION, from page 1

Community, including that part of the Diocesan land as well as air rights were being sold, and the Diocese had never been the ultimate sale of the complex.

Organizations such as the Knights of Vartan, the developer Abgurear 1st St, the Cathedral more than 50 years ago, recently weighed in the controversy and objected to any sale or lease of any part of the Diocesan complex (see letter this issue). Questions have been raised by others about the overall state of Diocesan finances which has led to the present situation.

The Diocese has not officially issued any circular or report to the public about this issue up until the present. Unofficially the word was that