

Pashinyan Rules out Change In Armenia's Policy on Iran

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia will maintain its close relationship with neighboring Iran despite renewed US sanctions against the Islamic Republic, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said on Tuesday, November 20.

“We need to develop relations with Iran very intensively and they must be mutually beneficial,” Pashinyan told reporters, commenting on the impact of the sanctions on Armenian-Iranian ties.

He said he sees “no need to make any changes” in Armenia’s policy towards Iran. “We should not only maintain the good level of our relations but also try to raise them to a new level,” he stressed.

Pashinyan said that the US administration “understands our situation and policy.” Having good relations with the United States is also “very important” to Armenia, he added.

A team of officials from the US state and treasury departments had visited Yerevan the previous week to explain the sanctions re-imposed by President Donald Trump earlier this year to Armenia’s government and private sector. No details of their meetings were made public.

The US Embassy in Yerevan said the “subject matter experts” from the US departments of state and treasury met with senior Armenian government officials as part of Washington’s efforts to “explain US



Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in September

sanctions policy against Iran to governments around the world.”

“They also met with the Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Armenia as well as with private banks, members of the American Chamber of Commerce in Armenia, and Armenian academics and think tank experts,” read an embassy statement.

“The delegation emphasized US efforts to change the Iranian regime’s malign

behavior through maximum economic and diplomatic pressure, while also outlining areas for cooperation with partners like Armenia,” it added.

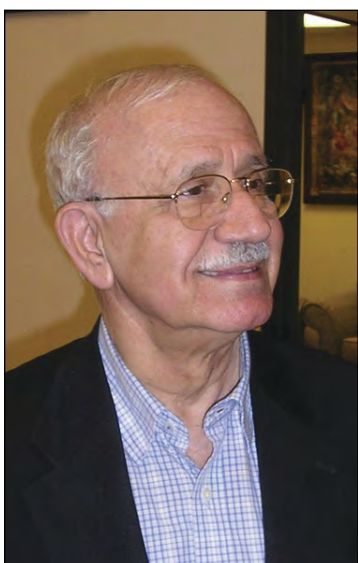
Armenian government bodies issued no statements on the discussions with the visiting US officials.

Iran was also high on the agenda of US National Security Adviser John Bolton’s October trip to Armenia. Bolton said he told Pashinyan that the Trump administration will enforce the sanctions “very vigorously.” Commercial and other traffic through the Armenian-Iranian border is therefore “going to be a significant issue” for Washington, he said.

Speaking in the Armenian parliament a few days after his talks with Bolton, Pashinyan made clear that his government will maintain Armenia’s “special” relationship with Iran.

The premier on Tuesday did not deny reports that some Armenian commercial banks have started closing the accounts of Iranian citizens, most of them Armenian descent, living in Armenia. He insisted that those private banks are not acting on his government’s orders. He suggested that they have commercial operations with the US and do not want to be sanctioned by Washington.

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TCA Mourns Loss of Former President Dr. Kevork Keshishian

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the loss of the prominent community leader and activist Dr. Kevork Keshishian, who passed away on Friday, November 16, 2018, in Los Angeles.

Dr. Keshishian was a community activist from his youth in Lebanon, taking his place among the ranks of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) and the Tekeyan Cultural Association.

He continued this role after moving to the East Coast of the United States. As a result of his dedication and commitment to the ideals of the AGBU, see KESHISHIAN, page 20

Alexis Ohanian Launches Shakmat Brandy

LOS ANGELES — What do you do after you make millions in tech, receives accolades as a model husband for one of the world’s top athletes, and father an adorable child? For Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian, the answer was to get into spirits. On Monday (11.12), Ohanian unveiled Shakmat, an Armenian brandy that he created in collaboration with Flaviar, a direct-to-consumer spirits club.

The Brooklyn-born Ohanian is the great-grandson of refugees from the Armenian Genocide in the early twentieth century. While visiting his ancestral home in 2010, he discovered the joys of the local distillate.

“Armenian brandy is something Armenians are really proud of, but outside of Armenia and the Armenian community, no one really knows it, which is a real shame — it’s legendary,” he said in a statement.

Shakmat is a blended, 23-year-old XO brandy, clocking in at 40 percent alcohol content. The spirit is grape based and utilizes a double distillation process involving both a continuous column still and French alembic stills.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

New Ambassador to US Presents Credentials to US Chief of Protocol

WASHINGTON — On November 15 the newly appointed Ambassador of Armenia to the United States Varuzhan Nersesyan presented the copies of his credentials to Ambassador Sean Lawler, Chief of Protocol of the United States.

Lawler congratulated Nersesyan on assuming his position and expressed confidence that the new Armenian Ambassador will further contribute to promoting friendly relations between Armenia and the United States.

Nersesyan thanked Lawler for his hospitality and underlined his willingness to make efforts towards expanding the Armenia-US political agenda.

During the meeting the two touched upon the prospects of enhancing cultural and economic cooperation, particularly emphasizing the importance of expanding bilateral trade and business ties and fostering investments, as well as deepening cooperation in the tourism area.

Azerbaijan Protests Karabakh Leader's Visits to US, France

PARIS (RFE/RL) — Azerbaijan has criticized the United States and France for allowing Bako Sahakyan, the Nagorno-Karabakh president, to again visit the two countries.

Sahakyan flew to Paris on November 14 to meet with pro-Armenian French lawmakers and leaders of the Armenian community of France. He also visited the local offices of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund as it began an annual fundraiser in Europe that will primarily benefit Karabakh.

Sahakyan proceeded to Los Angeles on Friday, November 16, ahead of the traditional Thanksgiving Day telethon, a key source of funding for infrastructure projects implemented by the pan-Armenian charity in Karabakh and Armenia.

Both Sahakyan and his predecessor have frequently made such trips to the US, France and other Western countries.

Azerbaijan’s Foreign Ministry said on Saturday that it has sent a note of protest to the French government. In a separate statement, the ministry also said Baku will “review” its relations with Paris because of what it called French support for Karabakh’s “occupation regime.”

“We believe that this move by France is casting serious doubt on its objectiveness and impartiality,” a spokeswoman for the ministry, Leyla Abdullayeva, told reporters.

Baku protested against Sahakyan’s trip to the US in a similar fashion. It questioned the “sincerity” of the US policy towards Azerbaijan, saying that by issuing a US visa to the Karabakh leader Washington is encouraging the “separatist entity.”

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Restoring Gyumri Priority, Pashinyan Says

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The restoration of the disaster zone in Gyumri is a priority for the government of Armenia, Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan told reporters during a press conference on November 20.

“In terms of the restoration of the disaster zone, a number of investment programs seem much more important, over which talks are underway and some of them are being implemented. And we are inclined that these investment programs create jobs in the disaster zone,” he said.

Touching upon the housing problems, the families who need apartments, the acting PM said this debate continues for a long time, but it must end one day. “We need to understand what volumes the talk is about, what part of these volumes is the state’s duty and in what timeframes the state must fulfill that duty,” Pashinyan said.

He added that there are several proposals for housing construction which suggest building new apartments in the disaster zone with the latest technologies.

Armenia Warns of Dangers of Regional Arms Race

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The regional arms race is a highly dangerous practice, Armenia’s Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Zohrab Mnatsakanyan told TASS in an interview on November 16.

“Our country is located in a very delicate region where an unresolved conflict exists, and reaching peace and stability, as well as the development of an atmosphere contributing to the establishment of peace, are highly important issues for us. In this conditions arms race is a highly dangerous [thing],” Mnatsakanyan said.

He emphasized that when Armenia is expressing concern to its partners over arms supplies to Azerbaijan, it stresses the fact that Armenia cannot treat the supplies simply as a usual deal. “These are weapons that take the lives of our countrymen, our soldiers and civilians,” he said. “Therefore, in this type of conditions arms race is very dangerous in our region. The Nagorno Karabakh conflict first of all relates to people, it is about the physical security of 150,000 people, and we will do everything possible to ensure their security,” Mnatsakanyan said.

He noted that no one can question the resolve and combat-readiness of the Armenian side in being the guarantor of security of Artsakh’s people. “At the same time I once again emphasize Armenia’s commitment for the exclusively peaceful solution of the conflict,” he said.

Acting Foreign Minister Meets with COE Human Rights Commissioner

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Acting Foreign Minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, who was in Strasbourg on a working visit, met with Council of Europe (CoE) Commissioner for Human Rights Dunja Mijatovic on November 20.

The two referred to the agreements reached during the Yerevan visit of the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights in September and the results, recording with satisfaction that the regular meetings give an opportunity to discuss the developments in the sphere of human rights in Armenia, the cooperation with the Commissioner’s office and the prospects for joint projects.

Speaking about the upcoming early parliamentary elections in Armenia, Mnatsakanyan emphasized that the organization of free and fair elections in line with international standards is an important priority for the government of Armenia.

Mnatsakanyan and Mijatovic also referred to the international efforts aimed at the prevention of genocides and crimes against humanity.

Mnatsakanyan introduced to Mijatovi the approaches of Armenia for the peaceful settlement of Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

Pashinyan Rules out Change In Armenia’s Policy on Iran

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Pashinyan met with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani when he visited New York in September to address a session of the UN General Assembly. The two leaders discussed ways of expanding Armenian-Iranian trade and reaffirmed their support for joint energy projects planned or already implemented by the two states.

With Armenia’s borders with Azerbaijan and Turkey closed due to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Iran as well as Georgia serve as the sole conduits for the landlocked country’s trade with the outside world. Armenia also imports Iranian natural gas and other fuel.

“Obviously, we don’t want to cause damage to our friends in the process,” Bolton said in an interview in October. “So I think conversation between the government of Armenia and the United

States is going to be very important.”

Speaking in the Armenian parliament a few days later, Pashinyan said he made it clear to Bolton that his government will maintain Armenia’s “special” relationship with Iran. “We respect the national interests of any country, but the Republic of Armenia has its own national and state interests which do not always coincide with the interests and ideas of other countries,” stressed Pashinyan.

Bolton tweeted after his visit that Armenia is an “important friend” of the United States.

Accordingly, both the current and former Armenian governments have supported a 2015 multilateral accord on Iran’s nuclear program that led to the lifting of the US sanctions. Trump unilaterally pulled out of that deal earlier year.

Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan commented on the move’s possible impact on the Armenian-Iranian relationship in an interview with the Russian TASS news agency published on Friday.

“For us, this is a highly sensitive issue because Iran is an important partner of Armenia with which we have ... a bilateral agenda extremely important to Armenia,” said Mnatsakanyan.

US officials have yet to publicly say which Armenian-Iranian commercial operations, if any, could be affected by the renewed sanctions.

According to official Armenian statistics, Armenian-Iranian trade stood at \$263 million last year. Pashinyan and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani discussed ways of expanding it when they met in New York in September.

Armenian President Visits Italy for Talks

ROME – President Armen Sarkissian, who is in Italy on a working visit, on November 20 met with the President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella.

President Mattarella welcomed his colleague’s visit to Italy. In a cordial and warm atmosphere, the Presidents discussed issues related to the strengthening of the Armenian-Italian relations.

It was noted that high level visits considerably contribute to the deepening of the bilateral ties and give a new impetus to the development of cooperation of the two friendly states in all areas.

Sarkissian informed the counterpart on the meetings and agreements reached in the framework of his working visit to Italy. Stressing that wide opportunities exist for cooperation in the economic, cultural, and scientific areas, the Presidents underscored the importance of a full utilization of the existing potential. President Armen Sarkissian, who is in Italy on a working visit, on November 16 had a working meeting with Alessandro Profumo, chief executive director of the Italian Leonardo company which is a leading company in the area of military equip-



President Armen Sarkissian met with the President of Italy Sergio Mattarella

ment production.

At the meeting, the parties held an engaged discussion on the opportunities with the Company in the areas of education and high technologies.

President Sarkissian invited Profumo to conduct a visit to

Armenia.

The Leonardo Company specializes in the production of defense and security aerospace related equipment, broadly applying high technologies.

The company has more than 45,000 employees and manufactures helicopters, aircrafts, aero systems, land and sea electronics, defense, security and information systems. It exports its production to dozen countries.

Leonardo maintains considerable industrial presence at the internal markets of Italy, Great Britain, US, and Poland and cooperates strategically at the major international markets.

On November 14, Sarkissian participated in the Digital Geopolitics: New Borders, Growth, and National Security Conference.

The conference was attended also by the Minister of Defense of Italy Elisabetta Trenta, executive director and president of Elettronica Group Enzo Benigni, a member of the Administration of Barack Obama, Alec Ross, as well as representatives of scientific and expert communities.

At the conference, Sarkissian delivered an address, in which he spoke about globalization and the changing world. “The world is changing faster and faster by day. We are witnessing the indications. And those, who appreciate that fact, will become tomorrow’s leaders. Globalization has changed from macro to micro: companies, individuals are now unstoppable,”



President Armen Sarkissian speaks at the Digital Geopolitics Conference.



ARMENIA

Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and His Wife, Anna Hakobyan, Visit Veterans' Center

Armenia Honors its Fallen War Hero Robert Abajyan

YEREVAN — Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his wife Anna Hakobyan visited the Fatherland Defender's Rehabilitation Center – a military clinic – to take part in the celebration of 2016 April War fallen soldier Robert Abajyan's birthday, on November 16.

Junior Sergeant Robert Abajyan was 19 when he was killed during the April Four Day War of Artsakh in 2016. After fierce and heavy battles during the April 1-2 combat, Abajyan sacrificed himself by detonating a hand grenade as enemy troops infiltrated his position and saved the lives of the backup forces. He was posthumously awarded the title of Hero of Artsakh, the highest state award of the country, and the Golden Eagle Order.

Abajyan's parents and grandparents were also in attendance of the birthday event.

The war hero's brothers-in-arms, as well as other patients of the clinic, prepared a bar-beque together outside in the clinic's yard, and later celebrated their friend's birthday around a dinner table with Pashinyan, Hakobyan and the family and friends of the soldier.

"Today is the birthday of our beloved Robert Abajyan, a Hero of Artsakh. I propose to drink a toast in honor of Robert with this glass, a toast to his heroism and a toast to all our fallen and living heroes. Let's drink that we, with our lives and actions, be worthy to their heroism, their sacrifices, that they have done for their fatherland, for the Armenian people, for all of us. I hope that we will be able and will manage to live worthily to this action, regardless what it is that we are doing," Pashinyan said, thanking Abajyan's parents for their son's services to his country.

Patients of the clinic chatted with Pashinyan and spoke about their successes and activities after treatment.

Pashinyan then toured the facility and viewed the new building of the clinic that is under development.



A toast to soldiers and fallen comrades



Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan presents flowers to the mother of the late soldier, Robert Abajyan.



Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his wife, Anna Hakobyan, arrive at the medical clinic.

Armenian Parliament Rejects Pro-Church Bills

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Deputies from Serzh Sargsyan's Republican Party (HHK) walked out of the Armenian parliament on Friday, November 16, after failing to push through bills meant to protect the supreme head of the Armenian Apostolic Church against physical threats.

The HHK drafted the two bills after Catholicos Karekin II faced calls for his resignation following this spring's "Velvet Revolution" in Armenia.

An obscure Armenian group launched a series of protests against the catholicos in June, accusing him of corruption and close ties with the country's former government. Dozens of its members partly occupied his Echmiadzin headquarters in July. Some of them also physically confronted Karekin II when he subsequently travelled to a medieval monastery in the southeastern Vayots Dzor province.

Police waited for several days before forcing the protesters out of the Mother See of the Armenian Church. This prompted strong criticism from the HHK and other conservative

critics of the newly elected Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. They accused the government of showing contempt for "traditional Armenian values."

One of the HHK bills would ban any demonstrations inside church premises. Pashinyan's cabinet spoke out against the bill last month. Only 43 members of the 105-seat National Assembly voted for it.

Citing this summer's incidents, HHK lawmakers also drafted separate legal amendments that would obligate the state to provide Karekin with bodyguards on a permanent basis. Some of them seemed to imply that the summer protests against him were provoked by other, non-traditional religious groups active in the country.

"We want to protect the Catholicos against sexual and religious minorities that are financed from abroad and fight against the Armenian statehood and Armenian faith," the HHK's Hakob Hakobian said during a heated

parliament debate.

"Our church is an inseparable part of our national security. Anyone who is against that church is also against national security," declared Samvel Nikoyan, another deputy representing the former ruling party.

Lawmakers allied to Pashinyan rejected the bill. One of them, Lena Nazarian, said there is no need for such legislation because the government will protect the Catholicos whenever he feels that his security is at risk.

Another pro-Pashinyan deputy, Sasun Mikaelian, argued against "protecting the Catholicos against the people." Mikaelian said the HHK itself is responsible for Karekin's perceived unpopularity because the latter had grown too close to the previous government.

"Against whom is the prime minister protected by his security detail? Against the people?" countered the HHK's Margarit Yesayan.

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaksutyun) also backed the HHK initiative, saying that not only Karekin but also

the church as a whole needs stronger state protection. "I don't think it's right to put the Catholicos in a situation where he himself has to ask for protection," said Armen Rustamian, Dashnaksutyun's parliamentary leader.

Only 28 mainly Republican deputies voted for the bill. Their colleagues representing Gagik Tsarukian's Prosperous Armenia Party, the second largest force in the outgoing parliament, abstained.

"This is the most disgraceful vote in independent Armenia's history," charged Eduard Sharmazanov, a deputy parliament speaker affiliated with the HHK.

"There may be 28 of us today. There will be 2,800 of us tomorrow and 2.8 million the day after," Sharmazanov said before he and several other HHK parliamentarians walked out in protest.

The Armenian Church's official position on the proposed legislation is not known. Its chief spokesman could not be reached for comment on Friday.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Italian General Praises Armenian Peacekeepers In Kabul

KABUL (Mediamax) — Acting Defense Minister of Armenia Davit Tonoyan met on November 20 with NATO Resolute Support Mission Deputy Commander, Gen. Salvatore Camporeale in Kabul while on a working visit to Afghanistan.

Camporeale introduced Tonoyan in detail to the operative situation, specifics of peacekeeping, as well as the military and technical equipment of the peacekeeping forces.

He also thanked him for the service the Armenian officers and soldiers involved in the Resolute Mission, who, according to him, stand out by great discipline, initiative and training.

Armenia Blasts Azeris Attempts to Try Captive

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — The attempt of Azerbaijani authorities to present Armenian citizen Karen Ghazaryan, who is being held captive in Baku, as a criminal and orchestrating judicial proceedings against him is a flagrant violation of the international humanitarian law, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Anna Naghdalyan said at a news briefing on November 13.

“From the very beginning, it was clear that the Azerbaijani authorities would attempt to stage a performance involving the Armenian citizen who ended up in the Azerbaijani territory in unknown circumstances, presenting him as a saboteur. But their initial scenario seems to have failed since Karen Ghazaryan suffers from mental problems and wasn’t conscripted for military service,” she stressed.

“By staging a judicial process, Azerbaijan tries to press grave charges against a person with serious health problems, which is a gross violation of the international humanitarian law,” she stressed.

The spokesperson noted that this farce of Azerbaijan is just aimed at presenting a sick person as a criminal and thus putting an equals sign to some extent between him and the two saboteurs sentenced in Artsakh for committing serious crimes.

Turkey, Russia Celebrate TurkStream Gas Pipeline As Relations Warm

ISTANBUL (Jerusalem Post) — Turkey aims to be an energy center, Turkey’s Energy and Natural Resources Minister Fatih Donmez said on Monday, November 19. His comments came as Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan hosted Russian President Vladimir Putin in Istanbul to celebrate the TurkStream pipeline. The pipeline from Russia is part of Turkey’s larger ambitions to become a natural gas trading hub and position itself, along with Russia, as among the strongest countries in the region.

Putin thanked Erdogan for showing “political will and courage.” Putin claimed that, “projects of this kind and this project in particular are not aimed against the interests of anyone.” However, Turkey warned energy companies on Sunday against dealing with the Greek Cypriot government in pursuing drilling opportunities in the eastern Mediterranean, claiming it would “damage regional stability.” This illustrates that Turkish and Russia may have differing views of the natural gas sector as a strategic regional agenda.

Gazprom completed the construction of a section of the TurkStream project ahead of schedule, according to Putin’s comments. It began work on a pipeline in the spring of 2017 and laid the line across 930 kilometers the Black Sea to Turkey. It is expected to stretch toward southern Europe, to enable trading with Greece, Italy, Hungary and Serbia.

Turkey is already a major recipient of Russian natural gas and is also the fourth largest natural gas consumer in Europe. Ankara says that the pipelines from Russia will bring 32 billion cubic meters of gas flow annually, of which half will be used in Turkey and the rest in other areas of the region.

To Ease Turkish Pressure on Saudis over Killing, White House Weighs Expelling Erdogan foe

By Carol E. Lee, Julia Ainsley and Courtney Kube

WASHINGTON (NBC News) — The White House is looking for ways to remove an enemy of Turkish President Recep Erdogan from the US in order to placate Turkey over the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, according to two senior US officials and two other people briefed on the requests.

Trump administration officials last month asked federal law enforcement agencies to examine legal ways of removing exiled Turkish cleric Fethullah Gulen in an attempt to persuade Erdogan to ease pressure on the Saudi government, the four sources said.

The effort includes directives to the Justice Department and FBI that officials reopen Turkey’s case for his extradition, as well as a request to the Homeland Security Department for information about his legal status, the four people said.

They said the White House specifically wanted details about Gulen’s residency status in the US. Gulen has a Green Card, according to two people familiar with the matter. He has been living in Pennsylvania since the late 1990s.

Career officials at the agencies pushed back on the White House requests, the US officials and people briefed on the requests said.

“At first there were eye rolls, but once they realized it was a serious request, the career guys were furious,” said a senior US official involved in the process.

A spokesperson for the National Security Council initially declined to comment on this story but after it published, said in a statement: “The NSC has not been involved in nor aware of any discussions relating the extradition of Fethullah Gulen to the death of Jamal Khashoggi.”

The State Department, Justice Department and the Department of Homeland Security did not respond to requests for comment.

A lawyer representing Gulen declined to comment. The FBI also declined to comment.

A Turkish official said the government does not link its concerns about the Khashoggi murder with Gulen’s extradition case.

“We definitely see no connection between the two,” the official said. “We want to see action on the end of the United States in terms of the extradition of Gulen. And we’re going to continue our investigation on behalf of the Khashoggi case.”

The secret effort to resolve one of the leading tensions in US-Turkey relations — Gulen’s residency in the US — provides a window into how President Donald Trump is trying to navigate hostility between two key allies after Saudi officials murdered Khashoggi on Oct. 2 at the kingdom’s consulate in Istanbul.

It suggests the White House could be looking for ways to contain Erdogan’s ire over the murder while preserving Trump’s close alliance with Saudi Arabia’s controversial de facto leader, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

The kingdom, after initially denying any role in Khashoggi’s disappearance, reversed course and admitted that Saudi officials were responsible for the killing. On Thursday, Saudi Arabia’s top prosecutor recommended the death penalty for five out of the 11 suspects charged with killing Khashoggi. A total of 21 suspects have been arrested in connection with the case, according to Saud al-Mojeb.

Erdogan, meanwhile, has kept the

pressure up by leaking pieces of evidence and repeatedly speaking out to accuse Prince Mohammed of orchestrating the murder of Khashoggi, a Washington Post columnist and outspoken critic of the Saudi leadership. (Subsequently, the CIA concluded that the order for the killing was issued by the Saudi prince.)

Saudi Arabia is critical to Trump’s Middle East policy. The White House’s relationship with Prince Mohammed is key to Trump’s goals of countering Iran and helping to reach an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. Turkey is a NATO ally in possession of evidence about Khashoggi’s murder that positions Erdogan to stoke international outrage over Riyadh’s culpability in and cover-up of Khashoggi’s murder.

Erdogan has for years demanded the US send Gulen back to Turkey. The Turkish leader accuses the elderly cleric of being a terrorist who was behind a failed coup against Erdogan’s government in 2016. After the coup attempt, Ankara made a formal request to the US for Gulen’s extradition.

One option that Turkish and Trump administration officials recently discussed is forcing Gulen to relocate to South Africa rather than sending him directly to Turkey if extradition is not possible, said the US officials and people briefed on the discussions. But the US does not have any legal justification to send Gulen to South Africa, they said, so that wouldn’t be a viable option unless he went willingly.

Trump and Erdogan also recently discussed another option to relieve tensions — the release of Turkish banker Mehmet Hakan Atilla, who was sentenced in May to 32 months in prison by a US federal judge for his role in a scheme to evade US sanctions against Iran, two people familiar with the discussion said. Erdogan has criticized the case against Atilla as a political attack aimed at undermining his government.

The US and Turkey have been engaged in negotiations over a series of sensitive diplomatic issues over the past few months, including a deal for last month’s release of an American pastor, Andrew Brunson, who was imprisoned in Turkey and an agreement for joint US and Turkish military patrols in Manbij, Syria.

Gulen, who has lived in self-imposed exile in the US for almost two decades, denies any involvement in the failed coup in Turkey in 2016. A one-time ally of Erdogan, he’s become an influential cleric with a wide network of followers known as “Gulenistas.” His movement includes a host of nonprofit organizations, businesses and schools, in the US, as well as South Africa.

After Khashoggi’s murder, Erdogan appeared to see an opportunity to ratchet up pressure on the Trump administration over Gulen, the US officials and people familiar with the matter said.

Turkish officials made clear to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo during his Oct. 17 meeting with Erdogan in Ankara that they wanted the Trump administration to turn over Gulen, the US officials and people familiar with the matter said.

“That was their number one ask,” said a person briefed on the meeting.

Pompeo asked if Erdogan had new evidence of Gulen’s involvement in the failed coup, prompting the Turkish leader to try to make the case that Gulen has terrorist ties, a senior US official briefed on the meeting said.

In remarks to reporters traveling with

him, Pompeo acknowledged having discussed Gulen with the Turks. “We did talk about Fethullah Gulen and we talked about the set of issues surrounding that organization as well,” Pompeo said. “It’s something that the Turks remind us of often, and we’re mindful of places that we can work with them to make sure that we all have a shared set of facts as well. But it’s mostly not a State Department issue; it’s mostly a Justice Department issue.”

The Turkish official wouldn’t discuss details of Erdogan’s conversation with Pompeo but said, “The Gulen issue is a part of any diplomatic conversation that we’re having with our American counterparts.”

Pompeo, who also met with Saudi leaders in Riyadh on that same trip, briefed Trump on his discussions after returning to Washington.

The Trump administration later sent word to Erdogan that officials would re-examine the Gulen issue, the US officials and people familiar with the matter said.

Justice Department officials responded to the White House’s request saying the review of Turkey’s case against Gulen two years ago showed no basis for his extradition and that no new evidence to justify it has emerged, the US officials and others familiar with the requests said.

Trump administration officials then asked for other options to legally remove him, the US officials and others said.

They said the White House specifically wanted details about the terms under which Gulen resides in the US. Officials from the law enforcement agencies informed the White House there is no evidence that Gulen has broken any US laws, the US officials and others familiar with the requests said.

The requests on Gulen in mid-October mark at least the second time the Trump administration has re-examined Turkey’s extradition request since taking office. In the weeks after Trump’s inauguration, the White House asked the Justice Department to review Gulen’s case, NBC has reported.

Some officials have described the first request as a routine part of a new administration reviewing its relationship with a key ally. The request, however, took place under Trump’s former national security adviser, Michael Flynn, whose ties to Turkey came under scrutiny in special counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation into Russian election meddling. Flynn, who resigned in February 2017, entered into a plea agreement with Mueller last December and has been cooperating with the investigation.

Turkey provided boxes of materials to the US in 2016 that Erdogan says shows Gulen was behind the failed coup. But officials at the Justice Department and FBI didn’t find evidence that met the standard for extradition, which requires US prosecutors to determine that someone committed crimes abroad that would also be illegal in the US.

Relations between US and Turkey have been strained under Trump.

Khashoggi’s disappearance after entering Saudi Arabia’s consulate in Istanbul introduced new friction. Turkey publicly accused Saudi Arabia of flying in an assassination team to murder Khashoggi. The two countries have long been rivals.

Amid Saudi denials over Khashoggi’s disappearance, Turkey ramped up international pressure on Riyadh by leaking its possession of evidence, including recordings from inside the consulate that Turkey officials say show the Saudi government murdered Khashoggi.



INTERNATIONAL

Khmer Rouge's Slaughter in Cambodia Is Ruled a Genocide

By Hannah Beech

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (*New York Times*) — Many of the foot soldiers for the Khmer Rouge remain in Cambodia's remote reaches, each with a chronicle of the horror-soaked years in which Pol Pot and his Communist disciples turned the country into a deadly laboratory for agrarian totalitarianism.

Mea Chrun, a former bodyguard in the Khmer Rouge, lives in the jungle-choked hills of northern Cambodia, in Anlong Veng. He is matter-of-fact about the weight of the slaughter. "I think that one million people were killed," he said. "Don't say three million."

On Friday, November 16, four decades after a total of at least 1.7 million people, a fifth of Cambodia's population, were culled by execution, overwork, disease and famine, an international tribunal for the first time declared that the Khmer Rouge committed genocide against the Muslim Cham minority and Vietnamese.

The panel also issued guilty verdicts against the two most senior surviving members of the regime, Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan, now 92 and 87, respectively.

Nuon Chea was found guilty of genocide against both the Cham and Vietnamese, and Khieu Samphan against just the Vietnamese. The pair were found guilty of various crimes against humanity and grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions. And they were sentenced to life imprisonment, the same sentence they had received in an earlier trial.

In dry legal prose that did not camouflage the violent class struggle waged by the Khmer Rouge, the verdict repeated certain words: murder, extermination, enslavement, imprisonment, torture, persecution on political grounds and other inhumane acts against human dignity.

Detailed instances of forced labor, such as the building of dams and dikes at the threat of death, were enumerated, along with forms of torture ranging from suffocation by plastic bags to the extraction of toenails and fingernails.

Muslims were forced to eat pork. Civil servants were executed by electrocution with telephone cables.

As the lengthy verdict was read out, Nuon Chea, his eyes shielded by oversized dark glasses and his lips collapsing into a mouth missing teeth, asked to be allowed to listen to the proceedings in a holding cell rather than in the glass-enclosed courtroom.

For some, the verdict felt like a marginal footnote to a mur-

derous history that has made Cambodia a byword for genocidal mania.

"It may be finished," said Iam Yen, 52, who gave testimony to the tribunal of her years imprisoned in a child camp under the Khmer Rouge. "But I won't ever have peace."

Still, a verdict of genocide in Cambodia, no matter how delayed or limited in scope, carries implications for future prosecutions of crimes against humanity, such as in the cases of Sudan or Myanmar.

"We need to show the world that even if it takes a long time, we can deliver justice," said Ly Sok Kheang, the director of the Anlong Veng Peace Center and a researcher in peace and reconciliation efforts.

For more than a decade, the United Nations-backed tribunal, called the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, has sifted through hundreds of thousands of pages of documents, called hundreds of witnesses and heard in exhaustive detail how the Khmer Rouge ran its killing fields.

The entire effort has cost more than \$300 million.

Yet the court has convicted just three senior Khmer Rouge leaders of crimes against humanity: Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan and Kaing Guek Eav, better known as Duch, who commanded a prison camp where at least 12,000 people were tortured and ordered to their deaths.

Only five top Khmer Rouge leaders have been arrested and put on trial. But as the court's deliberations dragged on, the other two elderly defendants died.

With Friday's judgment, Prime Minister Hun Sen of Cambodia has made clear he would prefer the tribunal to cease its high-profile work. But others would like trials to extend to many lower-ranking officials who are believed to have carried out some of the Khmer Rouge's most horrific crimes.

Hun Sen, a onetime Khmer Rouge cadre who has ruled Cambodia for more than three decades, had opposed the formation of the tribunal in the first place. Rather than put Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea on trial, he said in 1998, they should be greeted with "bouquets of flowers, not with prisons and handcuffs."

"This trial has frequently been a disgrace and a farce," said Sophal Ear, a professor of diplomacy and world affairs at Occidental College in Los Angeles, whose family fled the Khmer Rouge. "The message is that you can be held to account, if you live long enough."

Khieu Samphan, head of state during most of the Khmer Rouge years, and Nuon Chea, Pol Pot's aide-de-camp and chief political strategist, were arrested in 2007, after having spent years living freely in the country's north.

When handed life sentences in 2014 at an earlier trial for other crimes against humanity, both men denied responsibility for the regime's brutality, even though they were among its highest leaders.

"Do you really think that that was what I wanted to happen to my people?" Khieu Samphan asked after the verdict four years ago. "The reality was that I did not have any power."

Khieu Udom, his son, who runs a gas station in Anlong Veng, dismissed the charges against his father. "My father was targeted so they can do whatever they like with him," he said.

Khieu Samphan's daughter-in-law, Bun Ratana, called him "a good man who would never beat a dog or a cat."

Nearby, her 6-year-old son sat hunched over a notebook writing the word "teacher" in English. Both the word and the language it was written in could have doomed him when his grandfather was head of state of Kampuchea, as Cambodia was known during the Khmer Rouge era.

Friday's genocide conviction comes more than 40 years after

the Khmer Rouge imposed its reign of terror on Cambodia. In 1975, Pol Pot and his Communist forces marched into Phnom Penh, the Cambodian capital, and declared it "Year Zero."

The aim was a classless agrarian society. People were executed for the slightest of crimes: wearing glasses, speaking French or liking ballet.

Many of the Khmer Rouge's most fervent ideologues were foreign-educated. Khieu Samphan studied political science at the Sorbonne, while Nuon Chea went to college in Thailand. The support they garnered, however, came from Cambodia's young, rural base, which had suffered from years of civil war and American bombardment as the Vietnam War spilled over the border.

Cambodia today is again a young country. Most of the population was born long after the Khmer Rouge was removed from power by the invading Vietnamese in 1979. Even if many families lost relatives during the rise and fall of the Khmer Rouge, little national introspection has occurred.

Hun Sen has muzzled the media, thrown opposition leaders in jail and warned that Western-style democracy may be a plot to foil Cambodia's autonomy. The Khmer Rouge trials are not his priority.

Yun Bin, 63, said he was taken to one of the Khmer Rouge's killing fields, hacked with an ax and dumped in a well with others. To ensure no one lived, the soldiers threw grenades in the well, he said. Yun Bin alone survived. To honor those who died in the well, he added his name as a civil party in the Khmer Rouge trials.

"I don't want people to forget what happened," he said. "Today, people care about business and money, and they want to look forward."

Even in Anlong Veng, which remained a Khmer Rouge stronghold for years as the ultra-Communists created a fiefdom near the Thai border, a flashy capitalism has arrived.

The shabby grave of Pol Pot, who died in 1998, only receives a few visitors a day. But across the street from the grave site, a massive casino with fountains and statuary draws Thai and local customers, even if gambling is illegal for Cambodians.

The most consistent visitors to Pol Pot's burial grounds are casino staff, who come to burn fake money to ensure continued good luck for the gambling hall, the grave's caretaker said.

Many ex-Khmer Rouge in Anlong Veng said they had no idea that a genocide verdict was imminent in Phnom Penh. Dividing the Cambodian population into binary good and bad halves is impossible, they said.

"We are all victims," said Panh Sam Onn, who hid his background as a teacher to avoid being persecuted by the Khmer Rouge. He was soon drafted into the Khmer Rouge and rose from foot soldier to district chief.

Panh Sam Onn acknowledged the excesses that occurred under his watch: the forced labor, the separation of children from their families, the starvation that could have been prevented by sound agricultural policies.

The Khmer Rouge trials, in a custom-built courthouse on the outskirts of Phnom Penh, were a good idea, he said, because justice was needed.

But sitting on his veranda in a village full of former Khmer Rouge in Anlong Veng, Panh Sam Onn waved away the idea that more prosecutions should follow.

"They should only try the top leaders and stop there," he said. "Otherwise, it will be too fragile for society. Where will it end?"

(Sun Narin contributed reporting from Anlong Veng, and Seth Mydans from Phnom Penh.)

Demirtas Calls on Kurds to Save Their Language from 'Extinction'

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region (Rudaw) — The jailed Kurdish leader, Selahattin Demirtas, has warned that the Kurdish language is in danger of disappearing if the Turkish government keeps prohibiting it.

"Each of the languages on the Earth is individually beautiful and precious. It is very important to adopt or promote languages which are prohibited or on the brink of extinction. Kurdish is one of those languages," the former co-chair of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) tweeted through his lawyer.

Demirtas, who previously said that he is not fluent in Kurdish because he did not have time to develop it, has started improving his Kurdish over the past year by reading books.

The 45-year-old politician was born in Elazig province, where many speak the Kurdish dialect of Zazaki. He publicly speaks in Turkish. The majority of Kurds speak the Kurmanji dialect.

A number of Kurdish political parties in Turkey, including the HDP, recently held a panel in Diyarbakir in a bid to promote the Kurdish language.

In Demirtas' tweets, he expressed support for the work of some Kurdish artists and academics who have been promoting the language in the country despite censorship.

"The ban on mother tongue is nonsense and unbelievable and offending laws have to be lifted," Demirtas tweeted.

Demirtas recommended for Kurds and non-Kurds to learn Kurdish in order to strengthen social ties.

"One does not have to be a Brit to learn English and one does not have to be a Turk to learn Turkish. In the same way, you do not have to be Kurd to learn Kurdish. It is enough to be human for each," he added.

"I do not recommend only for native speakers to learn the Kurdish language. We live and will continue living together. So, let's respect each other's languages and learn them. This does not hurt our relationships, but beautifies and strengthens it," he continued.

The Turkish government has been blamed internationally for prohibiting the Kurdish language, or shutting down institutions which promote Kurdish language.

Human Rights Watch released a report on the government's crackdown on academic, interviewing some academics.

One academic told HRW that they were warned by university administrators not to touch subjects related to Kurdish language and rights.

"One academic who wished to remain anony-

mous said that the university administration asked the academic to 'be cautious' in choosing seminar and research topics, saying the administration regarded subjects pertaining to long-standing efforts by the Kurdish population to obtain greater language and political rights, and religious minorities in Turkey as 'too sensitive at the moment.'"

HDP has launched a hashtag on Twitter, #TwitterStopCensoringKurds, claiming that the platform is being used to censor Kurdish language. "Hostility against a people's language means hostility against all languages. International corporations sentence the world to a single perception: Give it up Twitter, the world is a garden of many languages, religions and folks," tweeted the party late Monday, November 19.

"Hostility against a people's language means hostility against all languages. International corporations sentence the world to a single perception: Give it up, @Twitter, the world is a garden of many languages, religions and folks.#TwitterStopCensoringKurds"

It also tweeted: "Our language is like our skin. An attack on our language is an attack on our existence. We do not tolerate these attacks."

The hashtag has been widely used by Kurds.

One user claimed that her account has been "blocked" in Turkey for two years.

"Almost every Kurdish activist has experienced censorship on social media. Twitter is closing, banning & deleting accounts & contents of Kurdish activists on Turkey's request. For example, my account has been blocked in Turkey since 2 years," tweeted one activist.

"Almost every Kurdish activist has experienced censorship on social media. Twitter is closing, banning & deleting accounts & contents of Kurdish activists on Turkey's request. For example, my account has been blocked in Turkey since 2 years #TwitterStopCensoringKurds #TwitterKurds"

It is forbidden to speak Kurdish for official matters in the parliament. Former HDP MP Osman Baydemir won the hearts of many Kurds when he was asked "Where is Kurdistan?"

He replied (in Turkish): "It is here," clapping his hand over his heart. He is among a group of HDP MPs facing terror-related charges. Ankara has accused the party of having ties with the banned PKK — a charge the HDP denies.

Turkish officials regularly refuse to use the word "Kurdistan" — both inside and outside of the country.

Community News

CYSCA, Open World Team up to Train Armenian Activists

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.— Five young activists from Armenia will be in Greater Boston November 30-December 8, to participate in a grant program focused on activism/transition to leadership hosted by the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA). They will be accompanied by a facilitator who will assist them in orientation with customs and traditions in the US. Funding support will be provided by the Open World (OW) program of the US Library of Congress, CYSCA and its team of volunteers. The OW program is managed by its OW Leadership Center to enhance understanding and cooperation between the United States and the countries of Eurasia. The program, initiated by Open World and implemented by CYSCA, aims to give the participants first-hand exposure to America's democratic government and free-market system to Eurasian leaders as an instrument for Americans engaged in citizens' diplomacy.

A key goal of the program is to develop activism and leadership capability of young adults in government and activist organizations by engaging them with USA counterparts. CYSCA has designed a program of visits/meetings with various organizations/individuals in the Greater Boston area, including the Pioneer Institute, Common Cause, Amnesty International, Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian, ACLU, State Senate and House leaders, and numerous other organizations and individuals. Presentations at the various meetings planned by CYSCA will engage the participants in activism/transition to leadership issues, showing how young adults can become activists in a society that is changing in relevant and interesting ways since the Velvet Revolution.

The participants, ranging in ages 21-27 are from various backgrounds. They have been selected by the U. S. Embassy for their leadership potential, and they are: Yuri Avagyan, communications manager, Restart Student Initiative, Yerevan; Levon Chukaklyan, co-founder, Restart Student Initiative, Yerevan; Astghik Isakhanyan, project coordinator, Rights Information Center NGO, Goris; Garik Miskaryan, foreign affairs specialist, Restart Student Initiative, Yerevan; Alla Yeremyan, manager, Basen Hotel, Sisian; and Liana Sahakyan, facilitator for the group, currently resource coordination specialist at the US Embassy in Yerevan.

"We look forward to meeting these outstanding young adults and introducing them to their counterparts in our area to help them develop their activism and leadership skills and gain knowledge and understanding of issues facing young adults in activism in our area," stated Alisa Stepanian, CYSCA program director.

CYSCA is a sister city association partnered with the city of Yerevan since 1987. Over the past 30 plus years, CYSCA has hosted over 20 professional development programs, 10 school partnerships/student and teacher exchanges, environmental programs, school aid projects, business/entrepreneurship training, and numerous cultural projects and humanitarian assistance for Armenia. CYSCA is a non-profit organization based on the premise that citizen's exchanges on shared values transcend political and other governmental hurdles in our world-wide societies in the furtherance of civil rights and democratic principles. For more information about the OW program, contact Alisa Stepanian at <asteonian@aol.com> or about CYSCA visit www.cambridgeyerevan.org.



Garik Miskaryan



Levon Chukaklyan



The team performing a procedure in Stepanakert.

Armenia Fund USA's Latest Medical Mission

Chevy Chase Surgery Center's Generosity Boosts GI and Ophthalmology Capabilities of Stepanakert Hospital

LOS ANGELES – This year, Armenia Fund USA implemented a medical mission, from September 27 through October 5, in Stepanakert. The mission was jointly organized by Armenia Fund USA, Adventist Health (Glendale), and Chevy Chase Surgery Center (Glendale). The medical team of physicians and surgeons from Chevy Chase Surgery Center as well as a major donation of medical equipment and supplies by Drs. Avedis and Ara Tavitian helped elevate the professional levels of the Stepanakert Republican Medical Center.

The Stepanakert Republican Medical Center was built by the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund in 2013, through a generous donation by Russia-based benefactor Samvel Karapetyan. The facility is adjacent to the Stepanakert Armine Pagoumian Polyclinic, built by Armenia Fund USA in 2006; as well as the Stepanakert Oncology Center, constructed by the Fonds Armenien de France in 2007.

During the mission in Stepanakert, the volunteer medical team from Chevy Chase Surgery Center performed a range of advanced gastrointestinal (GI) and ophthalmological procedures and general surgery, working alongside their Stepanakert colleagues. For the first time in the history of Artsakh, 35 eye surgeries, 56 endoscopies, and 56 colonoscopies were performed during a single mission, which also encompassed 19 general surgeries.

The Chevy Chase Surgery Center team consisted of Raffi Sarkisian, Administrator; Dr. Edgar Mehdikhani (GI); Dr. Armine Sarkisian (GI); Dr. Mireille Hamparian (ophthalmology); Dr. Armen Gregorian (colon-rectal surgeon); Dr. Andre Yarian (anesthesiologist); Angel Matevossian (surgical technician); Angela Shagoyan (nurse-anesthetist); and Vardan Lalayan (surgical technician).

Throughout the course of the mission at the Stepanakert Republican Medical Center, the team of doctors from Chevy Chase Surgery Center equally focused on expanding the specialized knowledge and technical skills of their local colleagues. To this end, the volunteer team provided their Stepanakert counterparts with hands-on trainings in the implementation of advanced GI and ophthalmological screenings and procedures using the donated medical equipment. Valued at more than \$250,000, the equipment consisted of a state-of-the-art Alcon Infiniti System for eye surgeries, and a complete GI machinery suite, including five Japanese-made Pentax scopes, for endoscopies and colonoscopies. The Alcon Infinity equipment has given the Stepanakert Hospital the flexibility to perform three different types of cataract surgeries, while the Pentax scopes allow doctors at the hospital to perform endoscopy and colonoscopy screenings, remove polyps, and provide other treatments.

"It's all about securing the long-term technical and professional sustainability of the hospital," said Chevy Chase Surgery Center Administrator Raffi Sarkisian. "Supporting institutions such as the Stepanakert Republican Medical Center will ultimately enable them to provide better healthcare to the people of Artsakh. We have already started planning our next year's mission by adding two or three specialties to its work scope. I also want to thank Armenia Fund and Adventist Health for their continued support of the project."

"Reflecting back on my week-long mission trip to Stepanakert, many emotions come to mind. Love, laughter, joy, and hope are a few to mention," said Dr. Armen Gregorian. "I had the fortune to dive into the medical system of Artsakh as a practitioner, and was reminded of all the beautiful characteristics which make us Armenian. Our colleagues in Artsakh have always worked in suboptimal conditions, thinking outside the box to provide optimal medical care. I worked with these extraordinary people, learning from their experiences while teaching them

see MISSION, page 9

Orthodox Churches Mark World Refugees Day

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK — St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral was host to the 11th annual Joint Orthodox Prayer Service for the United Nations Community, on the evening of Tuesday, November 13.

This year's service was led by the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch, and was organized by the Joint Commission of Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches, made up of the Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops.

The evening began with a procession of the Orthodox clergy. Diocesan Primate the Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan welcomed the guests with prayers for "peace and justice in a trying world," and voiced a special tribute in honor of the 50th anniversary of St. Vartan Cathedral.

The guests of honor in attendance included Master of Ceremonies Jack Darakjy, president of the Archdiocesan Executive Council of the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch; and Kwabena Osei Danguah, chief of staff to the UN General Assembly President Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garcés. Prince Dushan of Serbia attended as the guest of Bishop Irinej of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Ambassador Mher Margaryan, the Republic of Armenia's new representative to the UN, paid special emphasis in a keynote address to the



Ambassador Mher Margaryan, the Republic of Armenia's new representative to the UN (Albin Lohr-Jones photo)

"continuing humanitarian crisis in the Middle East which has 'severely impacted the lives of many Armenian communities.'"

"Today, we remember the suffering and displacement of hundreds of thousands in the region, many of whom are Christians, as well as the destruction of numerous religious and cultural heritage sites," he said.

Pointing out that Armenia was the first Christian nation in the world, he stressed that "we have cultivated deeply-rooted traditions of 'living together' and respect towards other cultures and religions."

Referencing dispiriting statistics on the decrease in Middle East Christian populations during the 20th century, he noted that, "These declines—from 20 percent to less than 5 percent—have been detrimental to Syria's once-thriving Armenian community."

see PRAYER, page 8



COMMUNITY NEWS

Young Professionals Take on Armenian Assembly Roles in Maryland, New York

WASHINGTON — The Armenian Assembly of America announced recently the additions of more young professionals, Armineh Ghazarian and Narek Sevacheryan, as new state chairs in Maryland and New York, respectively, who will help promote Assembly initiatives in their communities.

“The Armenian Assembly has always encouraged the next generation across the nation to get more involved in their communities and learn more about Armenian American advocacy efforts, starting with our internship program for college-aged students in Washington, D.C. and reaching out to young professionals to get more involved. We look forward to working with Armineh and Narek to help with our advocacy efforts in their home states,” Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny said.

Ghazarian earned her Bachelor’s Degree from the University of Maryland, and graduated from Georgetown University School of Medicine with a Master’s Degree of Science in Biotechnology, Bio-business and McDonough School of Business with a Master’s Degree of Science in finance. She is based in Silver Spring, and works at Georgetown University as the financial Analyst and grant manager at the Lombardi Cancer Center. She is an active member of St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church, and has served as chairwoman and treasurer of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America, as well as founder and chair of the College Career Center at St. Mary.

Sevacheryan is a financial advisor with the Bieber Group at Morgan Stanley, providing forward-thinking financial strategy to high-net-worth families, family offices, and international



Newly appointed Armenian Assembly State Chairs Armineh Ghazarian in Maryland and Narek Sevacheryan in New York



clients in New York City. He previously worked at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, where he contributed to publications with leading scholars focusing on foreign policy and national security analyses in Eurasia. While in school, he served as the president of the Armenian Society of Columbia University, where he organized multiple talks and discussions related to Armenia and Artsakh, including a panel featuring Armenian Assembly Co-Chair Van Krikorian on Armenian-American and Russian-Armenian relations in the context of current developments. In 2014, as part of his Luys Scholarship Program, he participated in the “Develop Armenia Together” program where he helped

create an economic development plan for Shushi in Artsakh.

“We welcome our new state chairs, as well as thank the current State Chairs and Committees who have been active in their communities throughout the year. It was especially significant to have so many travel to our nation’s capital and join us for our National Advocacy Conference and Gala,” stated Armenian Assembly Co-Chairs Anthony Barsamian and

Bagdasarian, Pennsylvania State Chair Paul Sookiasian, Rhode Island State Chair Narine Emdjian, and Virginia State Chair Meganosh Avakian all participated in the Assembly’s 2018 National Advocacy Conference and Gala this fall. Moreover, the Assembly’s Southern California Regional Council members Al Cabraloff, Lisa Kalustian, Jim Melikian, Margaret Mgrublian, Joyce Stein, and Talin Yacoubian, Northern California Regional Council member David Ojakian, and Orange County Regional Committee member Nicole Nishanian all actively participated in the Conference, Advocacy Day, and Gala.

“In addition to our hardworking State Chairs, we would like to extend our congratulations to the Assembly State Chair in South Carolina, Richard Harpootlian, who was sworn into the State Senate last week, representing District 20 of South Carolina. We are inspired by every Armenian American who takes part in the American democratic process and runs for an elected position,” the co-chairs added.

Rachel Nadjarian Named AIWA’s Executive Director

BOSTON — The Armenian International Women’s Association (AIWA) announced this week that Rachel Onanian Nadjarian has been named executive director of the non-profit organization, founded in 1991 and devoted to serving the needs of Armenian women throughout the world.

Nadjarian, who was elected to the AIWA Board in 2017, will assume the role in a full-time capacity, succeeding Jennifer Philips who served part-time as AIWA’s first executive director from 2016 to 2018.

“All of us at AIWA recognize how significant this time period is for our Diaspora and for Armenia,” states Ani Kharajian, chair of the AIWA Board. “We see a tremendous opportunity for us to make a greater impact in our communities and we are confident Rachel has the exact leadership, entrepreneurial capability and know-how to make it happen.”

Nadjarian’s hiring comes at a crucial time for the organization, which is seeking to reach wider audiences around the world and better meet the needs of Armenian women in the 21st century.

“I am excited to have the opportunity to lead AIWA in regenerating itself. I am confident we are ready — across the globe — to work more collaboratively and cooperatively in trying to understand the challenges facing Armenian women and in working to arrive at potential solutions. AIWA is poised to build upon its vision of empowerment and connectivity, and I look forward to driving the organization to its next level of impact,” Nadjarian said.

Nadjarian has more than 25 years of experience as a marketing and fundraising consultant for non-profits, and has held leadership positions in various non-profit organizations. She received her MBA from Boston University with Certification in Public and Non-Profit Management, and a BA in economics and sociology from Wellesley College.

A native of Boston, she currently resides in Washington, DC with her husband and three children.



Rachel Nadjarian (Photo by Jiro Tcholakian)



New York State Chair Narek Sevacheryan (far right) at the Armenian Assembly 2018 National Advocacy Conference Sponsor Reception at The Kreeger Museum with Assembly Board Members Lu Ann Ohanian and Annie Simonian Totah



Maryland State Chair Armineh Ghazarian with Congressman Jim Costa (D-CA) at the Armenian Assembly-sponsored reception for Armenia’s Independence Day on Capitol Hill in 2017

Van Krikorian. “We look forward to continuing this momentum, and encourage every State Chair to reach out to their local representatives, especially those who are newly elected, and share with them the issues and concerns for the Armenian American community.”

Arizona State Co-Chair Dede Krikorian, California State Chair Valina Agbabian, Illinois State Chair Jim Keledjian, Ohio State Chair Ara

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TOP: SENATOR ED MARKEY (D-MA)
BOTTOM: ARMENIAN PRESIDENT ARMEN SARKISSIAN

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Orthodox Churches Mark World Refugees Day

PRAYER, from page 6

Armenia has “continually expressed deep concern regarding threats against minority communities in the Middle East, which continue to suffer on unimaginable levels,” he said, adding that his country has hosted a series of conferences on the prevention of hate crimes, and the advancement of religious freedom for all.

Margaryan noted that Armenia has taken in more than 22,000 Syrian refugees, making it per capita the third largest recipient of refugees in Europe. The integration of Syrian and Iraqi refugees into Armenian society has been a priority of the Armenian government which has worked closely with diaspora organizations to provide financial and social support for Middle East refugees.

Margaryan closed his remarks by pointing out that as a nation which has historically been persecuted on the basis of faith and ethnicity, “we remain committed to the agenda of genocide prevention, exemplified by a resolution initiated by Armenia and adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015.

This theme of prayers for peace and justice was also voiced by Metropolitan Joseph, the representative of the Patriarch of Antioch, who stated: “The people of Syria, the people of Gaza,



The assembled members of the clergy (Albin Lohr-Jones photo)

soul-stirring hymns, after which a reception for all was held in Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium.

For Diocesan Vicar General the Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian, “it was truly a blessing to have hierarchs, clergy, and faithful from the various Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Christian traditions gather in our cathedral and offer prayers for the work of the United Nations, and demonstrate brotherly solidarity,” he said.

“I found the hymnody offered by the Syriac Orthodox choir to be especially moving, and was deeply moved about the plight of many Christians from the same tradition, who have suffered so much



Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, Primate, Diocese of the Armenian Church (Albin Lohr-Jones photo)

the people of Yemen, and the people of Kosovo and Serbia – they are all my people.”

During the hour-long service the choir of St. Mark’s Syriac Orthodox Cathedral performed

in their homeland.”

“I pray that in the future, we will be blessed with other opportunities to express our Christian unity,” he said.



Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, Primate, Diocese of the Armenian Church praying during the program with another member of the clergy. (Albin Lohr-Jones photo)

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2018 TCA Dr. Nubar Bereberian Trust Fund Awards

WATERTOWN – The Tekeyan Cultural Association’s “Dr. Nubar Bereberian Trust Fund” has announced the names of Armenian students awarded in 2018 for their academic studies. They are:

- Gayane Ghazarian, from Yerevan, Armenia, studying at Dollar Academy, Scotland, United Kingdom, majoring in international relations
- Eric Harpootian, from West Warwick, RI, studying at Boston University, Boston, United States, majoring in Political Science
- Norayk Bahaban, from Montreal, Canada, studying at Concordia University, Montreal, majoring in political science.



Noted journalist and Armenian activist Dr. Nubar Bereberian passed away on November 23, 2016. His estate was bequeathed to the Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc. The Board of Directors of the TCA decided to establish a scholarship fund in his honor to college students of Armenian descent who major in either international relations or political science and publish a book of his Armenian-language articles and editorials. This year marked the first for the awards.

To apply for 2019 awards, email your request to tcadirector@aol.com.



COMMUNITY NEWS

ACYOA Seniors Participate in Retreat in NH

CONTOOCOOK, N.H. — The Eastern Diocese held its inaugural Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) Seniors National Fall Retreat from November 9 to 11, bringing together 44 young adults from 19 parishes. Organized by the ACYOA Central Council, the gathering took place at the St. Methodios Faith and Heritage Center in Contoocook, NH.

The title of the retreat was “Illumine,” and its theme was to illuminate the world with the light of Christ, through the Armenian Church tradition. For insight into such a project, participants explored passages from an ancient volume, “The Teachings of St. Gregory the Illuminator,” which guided earlier generations of Armenians in their faith formation and spiritual growth.

The Primate of the Eastern Diocese, the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, took part in the retreat and led several teaching and prayer sessions. Indeed, it was with his blessing that the ACYOA Central Council developed the National Fall Retreat as a successor to the ACYOA Leadership Conference, which had previously met each November.

Findikyan led the first session of the weekend: a discussion about the mission of the Armenian Church and the ACYOA. Participants had an opportunity to reflect on their Christian callings through an interactive dialogue with the Primate.

In a presentation on the meaning of baptism, Kathryn Ashbahian (Diocesan Youth and Young Adult Ministries department) explained why the Armenian Church baptizes members when they are babies, and how one can live out the promise of baptism as an “illuminated” adult.

Kathryn and her Youth and Young Adult Ministries colleague Jennifer Morris were on hand throughout the weekend, keeping the retreat activities moving forward.

Spirituality and Prayer

Deacon Narek Garabedian (St. Gregory the Illuminator Church, Chicago) gave a talk on the ways in which the Armenian Church is distinctive from its sister Christian denominations, with a beauty of spirituality all its own.

Nick Tashjian (ACYOA Central Council) presented research on issues of mental health in the United States. Participants split into groups to discuss the issue, and explore ways that the Armenian Church might address it.

Vrej Pilavjian (Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge) and Tania Melkonian (St. James



The young participants and the members of the clergy

Church, Watertown) spoke about their summer experiences on the Diocese’s “Armenia Service Project” (ASP) and “Young Adult Pilgrimage to Jerusalem,” respectively.

ACYOA Central Council chair Nora Knadjian gave a talk on prayer and how to incorporate it into daily life. Participants wrote their own personal prayers, asking God to work through them to illuminate the world.

In an activity built around an inspirational video titled “Rain,” the group reflected on difficulties people can face in life, and the ways that faith in God can calm life’s spiritual “storms.”

Throughout the retreat, attendees joined in morning and evening prayer services, led by the Primate and Fr. Avedis Kalayjian (pastor of St. Mesrob Church, Racine, WI). The Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning was celebrated by Fr. Armash Bagdasarian (assistant pastor of St. John Church, Southfield, MI).

Impressions of the Retreat

The retreat included a service project that involved collecting children’s books and unused children’s apparel to donate to “Cradles to Crayons,” a non-profit that helps disadvantaged children.

In spare time, participants took advantage of the beautiful New Hampshire countryside during an outdoor hike in the woods. Before departing for home, participants in the ACYOA Seniors National Retreat reflected on their experience.

“This was the best weekend I’ve had in a long time,” said Vatche Kaftajian (St. Sarkis Church, Dallas, TX). “Our ACYOA chapter has grown into a very active one locally, and it was nice to have this experience on a national level. I hope to take what I learned here back to Dallas, to help us grow even more.”

“The ACYOA Central Council and Diocesan Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries did a tremendous job with programming the sessions to apply to our modern-day lives,” said Aline Beylerian (St. Leon Church, Fair Lawn, NJ).

“Through the idea of ‘illumination’—illuminating others and being illuminated yourself—I learned that it’s okay to entrust others with your prayers, and to be entrusted with the prayers of others, too” said Sean Yessayan (Holy Translators Church, Framingham, MA).

“The topics we discussed this weekend, from mental health to the mission of the Armenian Church, pushed my faith to a deeper intellectual level,” said Lucine Boloyan (St. James Church, Watertown). “It also reminded me of the importance of our Armenian Church community.”

By Arsen Yeleghen

Armenia Fund USA’s Latest Medical Mission

MISSION, from page 6

from mine. At the end, the goals of our mission were accomplished: to create a bond which will last a lifetime, and to reassure the people of Artsakh that the Diaspora will continue to stand side by side with our brothers and sisters in the Homeland.”

Other doctors who had participated in the medical mission also reflected fondly on their experiences during the project.

“It was an honor to travel to Artsakh and serve my Homeland by training and working with fellow Armenian gastroenterologists,” said Dr. Edgar Mehdikhani. “They accepted us with open arms, worked with us 10-to-12-hour days, and, by the time we were done (on the fifth day), we all came out as one big family. I am proud to say that this mission, to me, was very successful, especially since local physicians were given the skills and tools they need to continue performing advanced procedures, serving the people of Artsakh. I hope we can continue to expand our collaboration with the medical community in Artsakh through future missions to the region.”

“We had the ambitious goal of training local doctors, nurses, and support staff in modern cataract-surgery techniques in the short time that we worked in Stepanakert,” said Dr. Mireille Hamparian. “I am happy to



The team of doctors in Stepanakert

report that we exceeded our expectations. We were successful because the doctors and nurses in Artsakh were open and eager to learn from us. This teamwork created great

synergy, and, I believe, a blueprint for future collaboration. I am proud of this effort and proud of the heroic people of Artsakh. The fact is, we stand united.”

“The highlight of my trip was when they showed me an x-ray of a two-and-a-half-year-old boy who had swallowed a coin six days prior to our arrival,” said Dr. Armine Sarkisian. “The coin was approximately one inch in diameter. The original plan was to operate and remove the coin. But thanks to equipment and supplies which were sent from the US, I was able to perform an endoscopy and remove the coin without surgery. There were over 30 local physicians and other staff in the room observing the procedure. I’m unable to explain in words the cheers and tears that filled that room at the successful completion of the procedure. The boy went home the same day.”

“With its excellent facilities and highly dedicated staff, the Stepanakert Republican Medical Center is poised to become a world-class hospital,” said Sarkis Kotanjian, executive director of Armenia Fund USA, and continued, “What we’ve done this year was to help elevate its capabilities to higher standards, through the introduction of advanced medical procedures, trainings, and technological assistance. I would like to convey our deep gratitude to the team of volunteer doctors from Chevy Chase Surgery Center, as well as Drs. Avedis and Ara Tavitian, for their extraordinary generosity and selfless service.”



COMMUNITY NEWS

Arpa International Film Festival Pays Tribute to Hollywood Icons Edward James Olmos and Ed Asner

HOLLYWOOD – The 21st Arpa International Film Festival (Arpa IFF), one of Hollywood’s longest running film festivals, showcased 47 films from 17 countries at Hollywood’s historic Egyptian Theatre from November 2-4. This year’s festival once more highlighted a diverse range of films that explored themes such as genocide, war, feminism, family dynamics, environmentalism, music, art, adoption, intersectional identities and LGBTQ issues.

Opening night on Friday, November 2 kicked off with a special reception and screening of “Monday Nights at Seven” (USA, 2016), a love story about a single father who is struggling unsuccessfully to let go of his past. The film stars Edward James Olmos, Marty Sader, past Arpa IFF award recipient Mary Apick and mixed martial arts legend Anderson Silva. A special ceremony honoring Edward James Olmos with a Lifetime Achievement Award followed the screening of the film. The Award was presented by Academy Award and Golden Globe nominated actress Kathleen Quinlan (“Apollo 13,” “I Never Promised You A Rose Garden”). Olmos, currently starring in the television series “Mayans M.C.,” has played iconic roles both in film and television, receiving Academy Award and Golden Globe nominations for “Stand and Deliver” (1988).

Saturday evening’s centerpiece program featured two films – Anahid Abad’s “Yeva” (Armenia, 2017), Armenia’s foreign-language



Ed Asner being presented with Icon Award from Arpa IFF Founder Sylvia Minassian

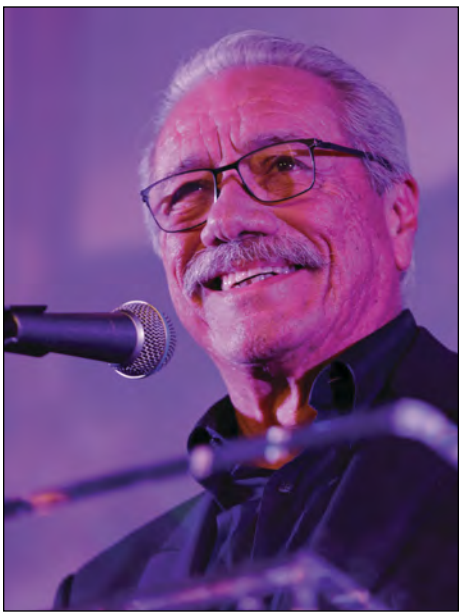
submission last year for the Academy Awards, as well as “Diverted Eden,” (USA, 2018) written and directed by Prince Baghdasarian. “Yeva”, which won Arpa’s Best Feature Film, is an intimate drama about a woman suspected of murder who flees to an Armenian village with her young daughter in tow. Yeva has chosen to

return to the place she briefly worked as a doctor during the Nagorno-Karabakh War, hoping she won’t be recognized. With mines still dotting the hillsides, the conflict remains part of the fabric of this society and people still remember “Crazy Yeva” of the front-line hospital, though they don’t immediately connect her to

the stranger in their midst. As she integrates into the rhythm of village life, Yeva’s memories of the war come flooding back, and a past tied directly to her current predicament.

“Diverted Eden,” winner of the Audience Award at this year’s Sedona International Film Festival, is the story of a war hero who takes matters into his own hands after his young daughter is kidnapped, as detectives unravel the mystery surrounding the unusual crime. Director Bagdasarian’s debut feature “Abstraction” (2013) starring Ken Davitian and Korrina Rico won the Audience Award at Arpa IFF that same year.

Sunday’s Spotlight Film, “In Vino” (USA, 2017) by director Leonardo Foti, won Arpa’s



Edward James Olmos

Best Screenplay. The film, starring Sean Young, Edward Asner, and Marina Benedict, is about a wealthy couple, who invite their closest friends and family members to dinner. Before dinner is served the husband raises the glass for a toast to his family and falls face forward on his plate dead. The wife confesses that she had poisoned him and she had poisoned everyone in the room to get the money. The guests have one choice: Kill one person among them and take the blame for both murders to get the antidote or... die in one hour. What follows is a hysterical exchange between the over-stressed members of the group who, in an attempt to establish who should die and who should be the killer, reveal all the skeletons in the closet they have been hiding from each-other for years.

A special closing night awards show wrapped up the three-day festival with three special honorees and a total of six winning films. Best Short Animation Film went to “Echo” (Serbia, 2018) by Borisa Simovic, about a 5-year-old boy who spends a day with his father, whom he only occasionally sees, in nature, with the game of calling Echo. After a great emotional charge that the play and the presence of his father create in him, he returns to his mother’s house,

continued on net page



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Garro Berberian



COMMUNITY NEWS



Avo Kambourian, Katherine and Glenn Yamada, Anahid and Ara Oshagan (We Were Americans)

from previous page

where there is no place for such outbursts of “irrational” attitude towards the world. Best Short Film went to “Taniel” (UK, 2018) by Garo Berberian. The London-based filmmaker accepted the award in person for his film on Armenian poet Taniel Varoujan, who lost his life at the age of 31 during the Armenian Genocide.

Best Documentary Film went to “River of Gold” (USA, 2016) by Reuben Aaronson. Producer Sarah DuPont accepted the award for the film which uncovers the savage destruction of Peru’s Amazon rainforest. Narrated by Academy Award winners Sissy Spacek and Herbie Hancock, “River of Gold” bears witness to the apocalyptic destruction in the pursuit of illegally mined gold with consequences on a global scale. Best Direction went to Ari Gold of “The Song of Sway Lake” (US, 2017), a romantic drama about the vanished grace of America, and the spells cast by the melodies of lost time. It’s summer on Sway Lake, former playground of the jazz-age New York aristocracy. A young music collector recruits his only friend, a rowdy Russian drifter, to help him steal a one-of-a-kind vintage record from his own family’s glamorous lake house.

He believes that possessing the secret recording of the WW2-era hit, “Sway Lake,” will magically boost his confidence with women – and redeem his father, who committed suicide on the lake.

Special honorees on Sunday night included TV legend Ed Asner who received the Arpa Icon Award. His role as Lou Grant during the 1970s and early 1980s, on both “The Mary Tyler Moore Show” and its spin-off series “Lou

Arpa IFF to a sold-out audience. Alviti flew in from Rome for the special tribute. She has the lead female role in “Lukas” starring alongside Jean Claude Van Damme, currently in theaters in Europe. Alviti was nominated for Best Female Rising Actress at the 2018 Cesar Awards.

The third honoree of the evening was producer Natalie Qasabian, whose latest feature “Searching,” starring John Cho and Debra Messing, was a huge box office success. She’s currently producing “Run” for Lionsgate alongside “Searching” producer Sev Ohanian and director Aneesh Chaganty. The first short film Qasabian produced, “Join the Club” premiered



Tigran Tsitoghdzian (American Mirror - Intimations of Immortality)

at the Sundance Film Festival in 2016. From there she went on to produce three Duplass Brothers features: “Rainbow Time,” “Take Me,” and “Duck Butter” directed by Miguel Arteta. She also produced “All About Nina” starring Mary Elizabeth Winstead and Common, which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival earlier this year and was acquired by The Orchard.

A highlight from the weekend was a special Women in Filmmaking Panel Discussion on Saturday morning moderated by Pat Saperstein, deputy editor for Variety. Five influential and distinguished women in the film industry – Angélica Vale, Kelli McNeil, Michelle Alexandria, Micky Levy and Valerie McCaffrey – discussed their journeys, successes and challenges in this ever-changing market.

Celebrity Guests throughout the weekend included Ann Cusack, James Adomian, Ken Davitian, Peter DiStefano, Sofia Milos, Vanessa Lyon, Q’orianka Kilcher, Tajh Bellow, Andre Gordon, Laure Fortier, Camille Hyde, and Tonya Crowe.



Lala Yerem accepting Best Feature Film Award for “Yeva” on behalf of Anahid Abad

Grant,” make him one of the few television actors to portray the same leading character in both a comedy and a drama. Asner is the most honored male performer in the history of the Prime time Emmy Awards, having won seven.

Arpa’s Career Achievement Award went to Italian actress Sveva Alviti whose critically acclaimed portrayal of iconic singer Dalida in last year’s eponymous biopic by Lisa Azuelos took her career to a whole new level. “Dalida” was screened on opening night at last year’s



Sveva Alviti



2018 Trinity Christmas Bazaar

Friday, November 30 12 noon-9 pm
Saturday, December 1 10 am-7 pm

Delicious Armenian Dinners

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 (combo dinners available)

served

Friday, November 30, 12 noon-7:30 pm
Saturday, December 1, 11:30 am-6:00 pm

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Activities for Children

Peter Adamian Hall, Admission is free for all events

Friday, November 30, 7 pm-9 pm
The Polar Express Pajama Party

Saturday, December 1, for all ages
11 am: Magician Matt Roberts
 Interactive show of comedy, magic and astonishing illusions

3 pm-5pm: The Star, Animated Movie
The Story of the First Christmas

Visit with Santa

Saturday, December 1
12 pm-1 pm

Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall



For further information, log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/580/

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Read News in Armenian at:





COMMUNITY NEWS

AAHPO: Helping Save Lives in Armenia and Artsakh

By Florence Avakian

ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS, N.J. — “Helping our brethren in Artsakh is my favorite program,” stated the dedicated president of the Armenian American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO) Dr. Lawrence Najarian to a sizeable group of AAHPO members, friends and supporters of this group that has been helping Armenians in Armenia, Artsakh and the New York/New Jersey/Connecticut area for the past 24 years.

This charity benefit, which took place at the elegant Najarian family home, was held on September 30. It was hosted by AAHPO Board members Drs. Garbis Baydar, Aram Cazazian, Raffy Hovanessian, Arthur Kubikian, Louiza Kubikian and Najarian.

The proceeds of the event were slated to benefit the physicians of Artsakh, with a similar project started recently for nurses.

As the attendants munched on homemade hors d'oeuvres, the exuberant Najarian gushed that this program of helping brethren in Artsakh “is my absolute favorite AAHPO project. And all the funds collected today will be allocated for this,” he declared.

AAHPO Mission

This Artsakh endeavor, which began in 2011,



Dr. Garbis Baydar

reflects the mission of the AAHPO in “Helping Save Lives.” The group’s mission statement “recognizes that good health is the foundation to the future success and the well-being of our brethren living in Artsakh.”

The statement continues, “to achieve this goal, AAHPO has committed to a program that trains motivated, bright physicians with modern medical skills that are critically needed in their home villages.”

Prior to the inception of this program, the 300 doctors of Artsakh did not have access to continuing medical education whereas their colleagues in Armenia did. In collaboration with Fund for Armenian Relief, AAHPO has now provided medical and computer literacy training to more than 70 percent of medical providers in Artsakh.

Over the years this program has expanded to reach the dedicated doctors in the rural villages that could not leave their patients. In addition, AAHPO is now working with the Artsakh Defense Ministry to train military physicians as well.

AAHPO supplements the CME training with its Visiting Professor Program, HyeBridge Telehealth which provides lectures from the Diaspora, and its Medical Mission Programs.

History of Armenia’s Medical Education

Longtime AAHPO member Dr. Raffy Hovanessian explained that after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1988, the education of physicians stopped, an education that had been fully funded by the state. With this momentous event, all physicians were on their own, having to finance their education.

It was then that Dr. Edgar Housepian, an eminent neurologist at New York’s famed Columbia Presbyterian Hospital started the Fund for Armenia (FAR) project through which AAHPO implemented the Artsakh program. Its success was noted and proven with doctors signing up again and again for training.

Currently, nurses are also receiving training for recertification in Stepanakert. Twenty-five nurses have already completed specialized training.

Dental surgeon Dr. Louiza Kubikian noted that many doctors and nurses are women. AAHPO’s connecting with women involved most of the first group that were trained, she revealed.

In a video presentation, one of Armenia’s dedicated doctors Hampartoum Simonyan, MD, was shown selecting the doctors for this unique training project.

During this Charity Benefit, AAHPO Treasurer Dr. Garbis Baydar announced that more than \$27,000 had been collected. This was a program that had originally been brought to AAHPO’s attention by Aram Cazazian and Raffy Hovanessian, two highly respected members of AAHPO, both professionals known as the “heart and soul” of the organization.



Dr. Louiza Kubikian and another guest at the program



Dr. Raffy Hovanessian and other attendees

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e-mail: headasa@aol.com

Deadline for returning completed Applications: March 15, 2019

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Go to <http://www.htaac.org/careers/> for the responsibilities and requirements of both positions. Interested candidates should submit a cover letter and resume to Nancy Kasarjian, nancy@htaac.org, by November 23.



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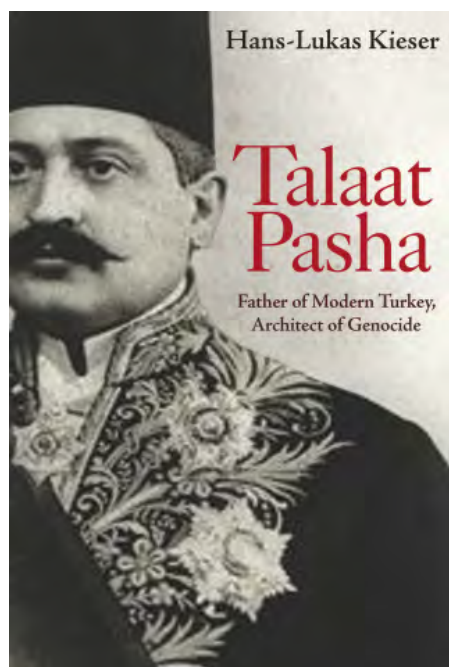
ARTS & LIVING

Arts & Living

Exploring Story of Talaat as Nation Builder, Architect Of Genocide

PRINCETON, N.J. — Talaat Pasha (1874–1921) led the triumvirate that ruled the late Ottoman Empire during World War I and is arguably the father of modern Turkey. He was also the architect of the Armenian Genocide, which would result in the systematic extermination of more than a million people, and which set the stage for a century that would witness atrocities on a scale never imagined. Here is the first biography in English of the revolutionary figure who not only prepared the way for Atatürk and the founding of the republic in 1923, but who shaped the modern world as well.

In the explosive book, *Talaat Pasha, Father of Modern Turkey, Architect of Genocide*, Hans-Lukas Kieser provides a mesmerizing portrait of a man who maintained power through a potent blend of the new Turkish ethno-nationalism, the political Islam of former Sultan Abdulhamid II, and a readiness to employ radical “solutions” and violence. From Talaat’s role in the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 to his exile from Turkey and assassination — a sensation in Weimar Germany — Kieser restores the Ottoman drama to the heart of world events. He shows how Talaat wielded far more power than previously realized, making him the de facto ruler of the empire. He brings wartime Istanbul vividly to



life as a thriving diplomatic hub, and reveals how Talaat’s cataclysmic actions would reverberate across the twentieth century.

In this major work of scholarship, Kieser tells the story of the brilliant and merciless politician who stood at the twilight of empire and the dawn of the age of genocide.

Kieser is associate professor in the School of Humanities and Social Science at the University of Newcastle in Australia and adjunct professor of history at the University of Zurich in Switzerland. His many books include *Nearest East: American Millennialism and Mission to the Middle East*, *World War I and the End of the Ottomans: From the Balkan Wars to the Armenian Genocide*, and *Turkey beyond Nationalism*.

According to Taner Akçam, author of *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*, “This is an extremely important book that not only fills a large gap in the existing scholarship but also introduces new perspectives on the Armenian Genocide. It is a must-read for anyone who wishes to understand late Ottoman history and the Committee of Union and Progress, which organized the genocide against the Christians during First World War.”



From left, Neil Grover, Daniela Tasic and Sylvie Zakarian

Understanding ‘The Other’ Through Song

BOSTON — On Friday, October 26, the Old South Church was the venue for a novel musical program oriented toward Eastern Europe with two noted local musicians. Titled “Songs of the Other,” the program explored the musical legacy of various peoples as well as their tragic histories.

“Songs of the Other,” a concert featuring Belgrade-born mezzo-soprano, Daniela Tasic and Armenian-Bulgarian percussionist Sylvie Zakarian, wove together music from the Armenian, Balkan, Jewish and Roma traditions. Tasic and Zakarian performed virtuosic arrangements of various folk songs and prayers for voice and marimba. Though differing in their place and culture of origin, each song highlighted the experience of “the other.”

At the turn of the 20th century, the Ottoman Empire committed the first genocide of the modern era by exterminating an estimated 1.5 million Armenians. The official narrative still denies it was genocide. The Holocaust targeted the Jews, Roma, Poles, homosexuals, the disabled, dissidents, and others. That too, is denied today by some. In the mid 1990s, the many ethnic groups in Yugoslavia all went to war against one another, repeating the horrific pattern of ethnically motivated murder. Today, hateful and xenophobic rhetoric against marginalized groups of people is brewing in countries all around the world, including the United States.

As the artists wrote in the program book, “With this program we hope to present many common elements of our human experience that bind us together.”

They sang of the uncertainty and despair of persecution, but also of the quiet human strength within that endures in the face of great suffering, and great calamity. It was a beautiful, cohesive night of art that reminded us of our shared humanity.

The program featured several songs by Komitas as well as marking the debut performance of Neil Grover’s new arrangement of *Avinu Malkeinu* (for voice and marimba), a Jewish prayer. Grover, a percussionist with the Boston Symphony, joined the duo on dumbeg.

see SONG, page 15



Sylvie Zakarian

NAASR Hye for Armenia! Exhibit And Symposium At the Met

By Nancy Kalajian

BELMONT, Mass. — Kind, the name on the breakfast bar, said it all, and set a welcoming tone for the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) bus trip to view the “Armenia!” exhibit and attend the Symposium: Honoring the First Scholars of Armenian Art in America, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Setting out on a luxury coach from Watertown, during a miserably drenching early morning rainstorm on Saturday, November 3, Laura Yardumian, NAASR’s Program and Administrative Associate, and Sarah Ignatius, Executive Director, brightened up the crowd by kindly serving coffee, breakfast snacks, and fruit, with happy smiles thrown in for extra measure.

After the group settled in, Ani Babaian, NAASR’s expert library curator, independent artist, and art conservator, introduced a brief history of Armenian art and noted that the second most important pilgrimages were made to the fourth century Saint Garabed Monastery, northwest of Moush, which was founded by St. Gregory the Illuminator. Speaking of Armenian gold, she reflected on the global influences of New Julfa and Amsterdam.

When the bus arrived in New York after a four-hour journey, the roofs of some high rises were visible as the weather began to clear up and participants eagerly entered The Met to attend the day-long symposium in the Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium. The symposium focused on various monuments, paintings, manuscripts, and unique items that portray the Armenian impact on international trade during the Middle Ages and its artistic global outreach. Mark Momjian, Chairman of the Board of Directors at the Armenian Center at Columbia University, which organized the symposium, gave opening remarks. Dr. Helen C. Evans, the Mary and Michael Jaharis Curator for Byzantine Art at the Met and curator of “Armenia!,” recognized and honored three special professors for their pioneering efforts in starting Armenian Studies programs: Dr. Richard G. Hovannisian and Dr. Nina G. Garsoian were welcomed onto the stage, and Dr. Thomas F. Matthews, unable to be there, was represented by his student, who read a prepared statement. Dr. Sirarpie Der Nersessian, and Dr. Vartan Gregorian, and others were also acknowledged.

see MET, page 15



Stelae at entrance to Armenia! exhibition



Three Books That Merit Reading

By Lucine Kasbarian

These recently released titles were produced outside of mainstream publishing mechanisms. They remind us that Armenians can and should avail themselves of alternatives in order to achieve publication, avoid censorship and tell their stories as they wish for them to be told.

The Migrant and the Maverick: An Allegory

By Abie Alexander;

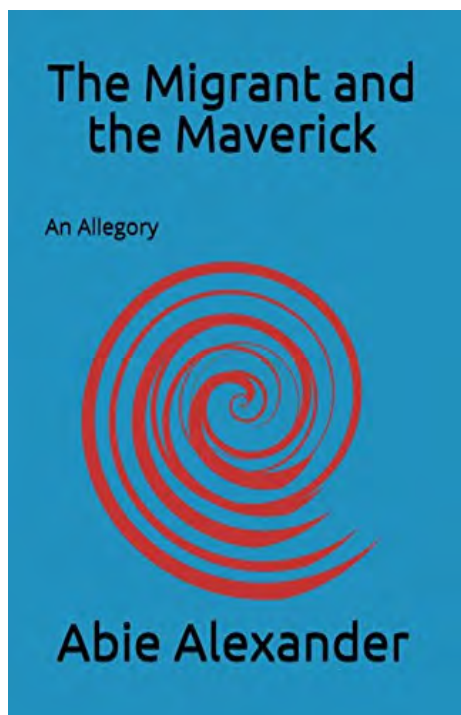
Publisher: AA Books; abiealexander.com

On the surface, this is a straightforward tale about Ken, a Rhode Island Red rooster whose life is forever altered by the arrival of migrant Canadian geese, and goose Helen with whom he develops a fond relationship.

Helen teaches Ken about migratory (and worldly) ways and not a moment too soon. Ken's keepers are readying to slaughter him, spurring him to prepare for flight.

Upon closer reading, we discover the tale's moral and political underpinnings – particularly as they relate to trials undergone by refugees and immigrants who reinvent their lives on foreign soil, and to whom this book is dedicated.

Ken and Helen deliberate about how social attitudes around the world can differ depending on circumstances, culture and environment. They also express opinions on a range of issues dominating today's headlines, such as global hegemony, climate change, nationalism, immigration, reproductive rights, gun control and political correctness, giving readers much to weigh and consider. Sometimes didactic, often touching and almost always thought-provoking, the Migrant and the Maverick is the product of a diplomatic, perceptive and sensitive soul. A financier by profession, Alexander became acquainted with Armenia through his work there with Christian relief organizations such



as World Vision and the Fuller Center for Housing. Though himself not ethnically Armenian, Alexander mentions the Armenians in every one of his six published books and is considered an honorary Armenian by Choice by his peers.

My Father: A Man of Courage and Perseverance – A Survivor of Stalin's Gulag

By Rubina Perroomian

Publisher: Rubina Perroomian Minassian; abrilbooks.com/my-father.html

During WWII and overlapping with the Stalinist Purges, the Soviet Union extended its long arm of influence to harass the citizens of Iran. Hunting down free-thinkers, the NKVD (Soviet secret police) sought to quash opposition, instill fear in the people and break the will of anyone who posed a potential threat to Stalin's leadership. These brutal repressions adversely affected millions who were either incarcerated or put to death – and by extension, blighted entire families and communities. Baghdik Minassian – a Tabriz-based scientist, teacher, writer, editor and political activist of

Armenian descent – was one such victim.

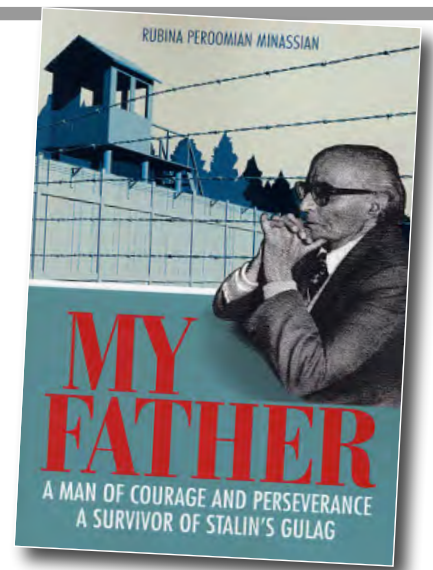
Minassian's daughter, UCLA lecturer, scholar and author Dr. Rubina Perroomian, deftly pieces together a never-completed memoir written by her father who was forced into a life of deprivation in one of the most inhospitable climates of the world: a Soviet hard labor camp in Norilsk, Siberia.

Why an unfinished memoir? Dr. Minassian, who miraculously survived his 10 years in captivity, was only able to bring himself to write

about the experience many years after his release and did not live long enough to complete his account. Upon liberation, he endeavored to make up for lost time with his family, teaching and activism, all while operating in a weakened state caused by his internment.

Minassian's experience mirrors that which was described in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich only in this case, Minassian survived the ordeal and

see BOOKS, page 16



Recipe Corner

Guest Recipe

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Fall Apple Spice Cake

Mrs. Alice Vartanian, Fresno, California



INGREDIENTS

4 cups peeled, cored and sliced apples (Granny Smith or tart red apples)
2 cups flour, sifted
2 cups sugar (use 1 cup white and 1 cup light brown sugar, if desired)
1/2 cup vegetable oil or unsweetened apple sauce
3 eggs, beaten
2 tablespoons sour cream
Juice of 1 lemon and 1/4 cup sugar (for apples)
1 tablespoon rum (or brandy, optional)
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1 teaspoon lemon or orange zest
1 teaspoon each baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg and ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts or almonds (optional)
1/2 cup chopped raisins or dates (optional)
Cinnamon and sugar

PREPARATION

Pre-heat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 9 X 13 inch baking pan or Bundt pan.
Combine dry ingredients in a bowl and set aside. In a medium bowl, toss apples with lemon juice and sugar, and set aside while you make the batter.
Beat together the sugar, oil, eggs, sour cream, rum, vanilla, and zest; stir in apples, toss, and mix to combine. Add dry ingredients and mix to combine.
If desired, add nuts, raisins or dates, and mix to combine.
Pour batter into pan and sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar. Bake for 45 minutes, or until cake is done and toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. If your oven is weak, it may take a few minutes longer for tooth pick to come out clean. Remove to rack.
Top cake with Brown Sugar Glaze (below), fresh whipped cream, caramel sauce or caramel cream cheese frosting. Or sprinkle with powdered sugar and serve with sliced fruit or berries, Greek yogurt, or vanilla or cinnamon ice cream.

BROWN SUGAR GLAZE

3/4 cup light brown sugar
3-4 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/4 cup cream or whole milk
1 teaspoon vanilla, walnut or almond extract
Combine ingredients in a sauce pan and cook over low heat until it comes to a boil. Remove from heat and spoon hot glaze over the still hot-from-the-oven cake. Let glazed cake cool before serving.
Serves 8-10.



Contributed by Mrs. Alice Vartanian, Fresno, California

"My beloved mother Alice Vartanian and late grandmother, Mrs. Pepay (Levon) Sarkisian of Lowell, Massachusetts and Los Angeles, were exceptionally generous and devoted women, mothers and grandmothers who loved to create memorable recipes and dishes for family holiday celebrations and special events. I learned by watching and listening to them laugh, talk, and cook in our Fresno kitchen for many years, says Christine Vartanian Datian. "They paid attention to detail, loved to please, and were inspired by Middle Eastern and traditional Armenian recipes, flavors, spices, ingredients, and cooking techniques," Christine adds. "They cooked with love and attention to detail, and that made all the difference..." Alice, a native of Lowell, is known for her love of entertaining, creativity, and her outstanding yalanche, dolma, rice and bulgur pilafs, cheese boureg, cookies, nut breads, gata, Italian biscotti, and desserts, including her much celebrated Armenian "shakarishie" butter cookies she has made for over 50 years. Alice loves traveling, music and plays the piano beautifully; she remains active and busy with her family and friends. She has been a dedicated member of Fresno's historic Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church and the Trinity Guild for many years."

– Christine Vartanian Datian

ARTS & LIVING

NAASR Hye for Armenia! Exhibit And Symposium At the Met

MET, from page 13

The symposium speakers, all top-notch with impressive resumes, spoke for about a half hour each and gave unique presentations connected to many items on display in The Met Armenia! exhibit. First, Dr. Benjamin Anderson spoke on "The Great Kosmos of All Armenia: On the Sarcophagus of Isaac (Sahak)." Dr. Lynn Jones spoke next on censors from Medieval Armenia. A midday lunch rounded out the morning session and provided an opportunity for socializing and camaraderie as scholars, symposium organizers, and NAASR attendees mingled.

The afternoon program included Dr. Antony Eastmond's talk on "Stepanos Orbelian and Monumental Painting in Armenia under the Mongols" and Dr. Kristina L. Richardson's "Portrait of an Armenian Merchant Family in the Diary of a 16th Century Aleppo Silk-Weaver." Intense international research by Dr. Sebouh Aslanian was evident in his topic, "Their Commercial Arms Stretched over Europe: New Julfa and the Khwaja Guerak-Mirman Family of Venice and Isfahan." The symposium concluded with Dr. Peter Balakian's

"The Ruins of Ani: From Sacred Landscape to Political Soil." The symposium was live-streamed and is available in two parts on The Met's Facebook page under "Videos" (<https://www.facebook.com/metmuseum/videos/413355889200741/> and <https://www.facebook.com/metmuseum/videos/320237418776795/>) and shared on NAASR's Facebook page in the timeline. The "Armenia!" exhibit book, already in its second printing, will be available through NAASR in the near future.

During the day, there were opportunities for NAASR's symposium attendees to explore the "Armenia!" exhibit. Sonia Dixon, a graduate student in art history at Florida State University, heard about the symposium through Dr. Lynn Jones, one of the symposium's speakers, and was very impressed with the exhibit. "Looking at an old wooden door, the lack of symmetry in the details is fascinating and shows the artisan's talents," Dixon remarked. "This is a phenomenal exhibit."

On the bus ride home, if there were a snack named High, it would have fit right in with this crowd, so thrilled with the opportunity to expe-



From left, Julia Hintlian, Dr. Lisa Gulesserian, and NAASR Board Member Judith Saryan



Standing: NAASR volunteer Adrenna Andreassian and Library Curator Ani Babaian; seated: NAASR Executive Director Sarah Ignatius, Program and Administrative Associate Laura Yardumian, and NAASR Board member Shushan Teager

rience the art, history, and culture of Armenia with like-minded individuals in one sweeping day. Driving through the Bronx, eager NAASR participants, energized to share their thoughts with one another, were facilitated by two brilliant young scholars, Dr. Lisa Gulesserian, lecturer on Armenian at the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University, and Julia Hintlian, a PhD student in religion at Harvard University's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Having just experienced "Armenia!" and the symposium, these scholars were as excited as other NAASR attendees and shared their impressions. Gulesserian remarked, "We were impressed by the sheer number of artifacts exhibited," while Hintlian, who has spent time in Echmiadzin, reflected on seeing some of the items from Echmiadzin's collection now on display thousands of miles away in a different environment and setting.

As they fielded many questions pertaining to the symposium and the "Armenia!" exhibit, their knowledge and instant responses to questions piqued even further inquiry and discussion, and the setting felt more like an upbeat classroom with dynamic interplay and discussions than a humdrum bus ride home. Time flew by quickly as such topics as maps, manuscripts, liturgical vestments and vessels, and the Armenian language were discussed. Sonia Iskenderian said, "This was very interesting. They know their subjects very well, especially the differences between Western and Eastern Armenian and krapar."

Snacks were again served by NAASR's kind hosts, and though some people shut off the overhead light to take some shut eye, for others it was a time to further connect with old and new friends or make plans to continue the day's mutually shared experiences. Anahid Mardiros

remarked on The Met exhibit, "It was the first cultural representation of Armenia. It was such a wonderful, organized trip. NAASR should do more programs like this." Sonya Merian chimed in, "I really enjoyed the symposium. I learned so much, for example, about the trade routes. It was beautifully organized; Laura Yardumian did a terrific job organizing the day. It was a very pleasant day from start to finish."

Artist Marsha Odabashian, who has a studio and gallery in Boston's South End concurred, "It's not very often when a bus trip to NY includes three actively engaged experts. Artist and conservator Ani Babaian shared her firsthand knowledge on Armenian art of New Julfa and Isfahan on the way to The Met. Dr. Lisa Gulesserian and PhD candidate Julia Hintlian, on the way home, facilitated a lively open ended discussion on participants' impressions of the exhibit and the way in which it was presented. The background knowledge, which they generously supplied, on the Armenian language and the art objects themselves added significant depth to the conversation. Without a doubt, the NAASR team arranged a well-organized, delightful, and worthwhile trip to Armenia! – a very important symposium and exhibition in NYC."

Danny Donabedian, a student at Harvard's Near Eastern Languages and Civilization program, remarked, "This trip was a great idea. As someone who is unfamiliar with NAASR other than its research in Armenian Studies, I discovered that NAASR has a fun, adventurous side. I thought this trip was extremely rewarding both as a scholar and as an Armenian-American, and have NAASR's efforts to thank for that."

Preserve, Enrich, and Inspire, three words connected to NAASR's logo, were in full Hye gear for this noteworthy experience.



UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ARMENIAN STUDIES PROGRAM
TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION
AGBU ALEX & MARIE MANOOGIAN SCHOOL

present
Arman Grigoryan
Guest Speaker

**From Nationhood to Statehood:
 Reflections on Ter-Petrosian's Writings**

Armenia has experienced a set of transformational political events since the late 1980s – the Karabagh movement; independence; war; political and economic transition. These events have attracted considerable scholarly and journalistic attention. The country has also undergone important ideological shifts in this period, which have attracted less attention. What is worse, that attention has produced more heat than light. More specifically, shortly after the birth of the Karabagh Movement, some of the cherished assumptions of Armenian nationalism and politics came under assault. The ideology of the Armenian Cause in particular, which, despite slogans about class politics and socialist internationalism, had been embraced even by Armenian Communists since at least the end of WWII, was subjected to a hitherto unprecedented intellectual scrutiny. In a parallel conversation, Armenia's political class debated the competing visions of a liberal vs. a "national" state in the early years of independence. With some modification and with varying intensity these debates have continued to this day. The recent publication of Levon Ter-Petrosian's speeches, articles, and interviews on these matters for the English-speaking audience is a good opportunity to revisit these debates and look at them through the eyes of one of its most important contributors.

Open to the public - join us on..
Thursday, November 29 at 7 pm
AGBU Alex & Marie Manoogian School
22001 Northwestern Hwy., Southfield
Reception will follow lecture

Arman Grigoryan is an Assistant Professor of Int'l Relations at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, PA. His research focuses on ethnonationalist conflicts, interventions, and the politics of the post-Soviet space. His publications have appeared in *International Security*, *International Studies Quarterly*, the *International Political Science Review*, *Ethnopolitics*, and the *Nationalities Papers*.

Professor Grigoryan holds a Ph.D. in political science from Columbia University, a Master's in international relations from the University of Chicago, and a BA in Middle Eastern Studies from Yerevan State University. He has been a recipient of research fellowships at Harvard University, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, and the University of Michigan.

Professor Grigoryan served in the Armenian government in 1991-1993.

Understanding 'the Other' through Song

SONG, from page 13

Zakarian is a member of the percussion faculty at the Longy School of Music of Bard College. She went to the Dobri Hristov National School of Arts in Varna, Bulgaria, before studying percussion at the Royal College of Music in London and later the Boston Conservatory. She has performed locally and internationally.

Tosic has performed regularly in the area and has been praised for her "burnished and warm sound" (*The Boston Musical Intelligencer*). She is a soloist and chamber musician who specializes in early, contemporary, and world music repertoires. Her concert appearances include the Utrecht Early Music and the Maastricht Musica Sacra Festivals, Regensburg's Tage Alter Musik, the Flanders Festivals of Ghent and Brussels, a Banco Republico tour of Colombia, and the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary music; the Frick Collection and Rockefeller University in New York City; Denver's Newman Performing Arts Center; the Da Camera Society of Los Angeles and festivals in Ottawa and Montreal. Tosic is a founding member of the vocal ensemble Tapestry, winner of the Echo Klassik and Chamber Music

America Recording of the Year awards. Most recently she has joined Rumbarroco, a Boston-based Latin-Baroque fusion ensemble.

To see a portion of the concert, visit the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3my70nsMFKc&feature=share>

– Stephany Svorinic



The performers received thunderous applause.



ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

FLORIDA

JANUARY 20-27, 2019 — Armenian Heritage Cruise XXII 2019. Western Caribbean Cruise aboard the Royal Caribbean’s Allure of the Sea. Traveling to Nassau, Cozumel, Roatan, Costa Maya. Cabin Rates, starting from \$949/person based on double occupancy, including port charges and ACAA registration fee. Government rates of \$137.45 are additional. Armenian entrainment, Armenian cultural presentations, Armenian Festival Day, Tavlou and Belote Tournaments and much more. Call Travel Group International at 1-561-447-08750 or 1-866-447-0750 ext. 108, contact person Janie.

MASSACHUSETTS

NOVEMBER 30 and DECEMBER 1 — Friday and Saturday, Trinity Christmas Bazaar, Friday, 12-9 pm, Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Featuring delicious Armenian dinners, a la carte menu and take-out meals; booths and vendors – perfect for Christmas shopping; Armenian gourmet foods, delicacies and pastries; raffles, and more. Activities for Children, Peter Adamian Hall: Friday, 7-9 p.m., All Aboard “The Polar Express” Pajama Party, for children ages 5 and older; Saturday, 11 a.m., Children’s Entertainment, and 3-5 p.m., “The Star” movie, for all ages. Saturday, Visit with Santa, 1-2 pm, Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall. For further information, contact the Church office at 617.354.0632, or log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/580/.

DECEMBER 2 — Acapella Christmas Concert by Boston Jazz Voices to Benefit the Armenia Tree Project. 5 p.m. at the Jenks Center, 109 Skillings Road, Winchester. Free parking. Event will feature an acapella performance, refreshments, raffle, and silent auction. Tickets are \$30 each and a family four-pack of tickets is available for \$100. Tickets available via Eventbrite at www.armenia-tree.org/acappella

DECEMBER 3 — Monday, St James Armenian Church Men’s Club Dinner Meeting. Speaker: Gregory Vartanian, Esq., a Boston-based immigration attorney. He will provide an overview of US immigration laws and regulations. He will also discuss cases of Armenians and non-Armenians in various parts of the world seeking asylum and those just wanting to immigrate to the US. He will also present his opinions on issues with the US immigration system, the Presidential proclamation affecting Muslim countries, and how to interpret what you hear and read in the news. Social hour and mezza at 6:15 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m. Mezza and Losh Kebab & Kheyma Dinner \$16/person. Ladies invited. St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown.

DECEMBER 9 — Christmas Holiday Concert – Erevan

Choral Society and Orchestra, Sunday, 7 p.m., Church Sanctuary, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Remembering the Very Rev. Oshagan Minassian on the 10th Anniversary of his passing, and Commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the earthquake in Armenia and the 2,800th Anniversary of Yerevan. Under the direction of Composer Konstantin Petrossian, Music Director and Conductor, with Guest Soloists Anahit Zakaryan, soprano, and Michael Calmés, tenor, the program will consist of a variety of traditional Armenian and Western sacred and holiday music. The public is warmly invited to attend this complimentary concert. Reception to follow featuring an Exhibit, “To Armenia” by Winslow Martin, an Arlington-based documentary photographer. For further information, call the Church office, 617.354.0632 or log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/582/.

DECEMBER 16 – Candlelit Labyrinth Peace Walk, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, Sunday, 4:30-5:30 p.m., Walk the Candlelit Labyrinth. Tie a Ribbon on the Wishing Tree. Hot Chocolate & Desserts, hosted by The Bostonian Hotel. RSVP appreciated hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

DECEMBER 16 — St. James Annual Name Day Banquet - Celebrating the 87th Anniversary of the Parish and Honoring Rev. Arakel Aljalian on the 25th Anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood. V. Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan, Primate, Presiding. 10 a.m. Divine Liturgy. Name Day Banquet to follow. \$45 per person. \$15 for children 12 and under. Advance Reservations Required – purchase tickets online at www.stjameswatertown.org. 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown 617.923.8860 info@stthagop.com.

APRIL 25, 2019 — Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston Presents The Dr. Michael and Joyce Kolligian Distinguished Speaker Series: Anthony Ray Hinton, Author of The Sun Does Shine: How I Found Life and Freedom on Death Row, “Surviving Criminal Justice in America.” Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge MA 02138. Reception and book signing to follow talk. Open and free to the public. For further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church office, 617.354.0632, email office@htaac.org, or log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/622/.

SEPTEMBER 18, 2019 – SAVE THE DATE! InterContinental Hotel, Boston. Extraordinary Benefit for Armenian Heritage Park’s Endowed Fund for Care.

MICHIGAN

NOVEMBER 29 — “From Nationhood to Statehood: Reflections on Ter-Petrosian’s Writings,” lecture by Prof. Arman Grigoryan at 7 p.m. at the AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School, co-sponsored by the University of Michigan Armenian Studies Program, the Tekeyan

Cultural Association and the AGBU Alex and Maria Manoogian School. Grigoryan is an assistant professor of international relations at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania and focuses on ethno-nationalist conflicts. He holds a PhD in political science from Columbia University and a master’s in international relations from the University of Chicago. Open to the public and free. A reception will follow the lecture.

NEW JERSEY

DECEMBER 8 — Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group will present a Christmas gala with Sarina Cross. Save the date. Details to come.

NEW YORK

SEPTEMBER 22 - January 13, 2019 – ARMENIA! at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Armenia! is the “first major exhibition to explore the importance of Armenians and their remarkable achievements in a global context...” <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2018/armenia>

RHODE ISLAND

DECEMBER 1 — St. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church ACYOA ANNUAL HOLIDAY KEF. Evagian Hall, 70 Jefferson St., Providence, RI Featuring Mal Barsamian, Jason Naroian, Brian Ansbikian, David Ansbikian. 8:30 p.m. – 1 a.m. Mezze Available, coffee/dessert. For reservations, contact church office 401-272-7712. Adults \$25 and Students \$20. All are welcome.

DECEMBER 8 — The Cultural Committee of the Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church presents “O Holy Night” Christmas Concert Featuring the Chorale of St. Michael Ukrainian Orthodox Church , Woonsocket, RI, Armenian Chorale of Rhode Island, Soloists, 7 p.m. In Church Sanctuary, 70 Jefferson St., Providence, RI. Donation free. Refreshments.

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

Three Books That Merit Reading

BOOKS, from page 14 resumed his productive and exemplary life, even if deeply scarred.

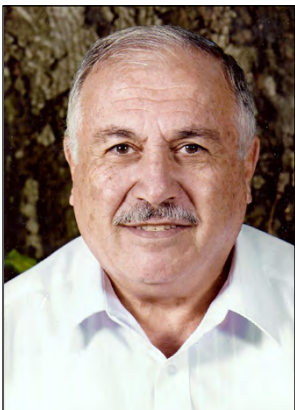
Dr. Peroomian, who has written many books about the Armenian genocidal experience, has finally focused her literary lens on her own family’s journeys around injustice, loss, trauma and achievement in spite of tremendous odds. This long overdue tribute to the fortitude of Minassian and his family is worthy of our attention, recognition and praise. It also adds another dimension to existing first-hand, non-fiction accounts of the horrors suffered in Siberian gulags.

Ravished Paradise: Forced March to Nothingness
By Mardig Madenjian;
Publisher: Mardiros Madenjian;
mardigmadenjian.com

Following years of research, travel, interviews and investigations into family history, Mardig Madenjian produced this unique work that is really two books in one. Filled with

meticulous detail, conviction and righteous indignation, *Ravished Paradise* recalls the Madenjian clan’s activities in their native region of Chepni, located between Sepastia and Kayseri in Western Armenia. We learn about their history through anecdotes, folklore, genealogical connections, and family dynamics of conflict, coincidences and redemption. At the same time, Madenjian presents a parallel and condensed narration of the Armenian Genocide brimming with facts and figures in historical context.

Though the book has a few spelling, grammatical and factual errors, it is a formidable achievement in that it makes learning about the Armenian Genocide – especially for students – an engrossing (but not always comfortable) experience. Readers can, for one thing, apply faces, names, personalities and vignettes to an

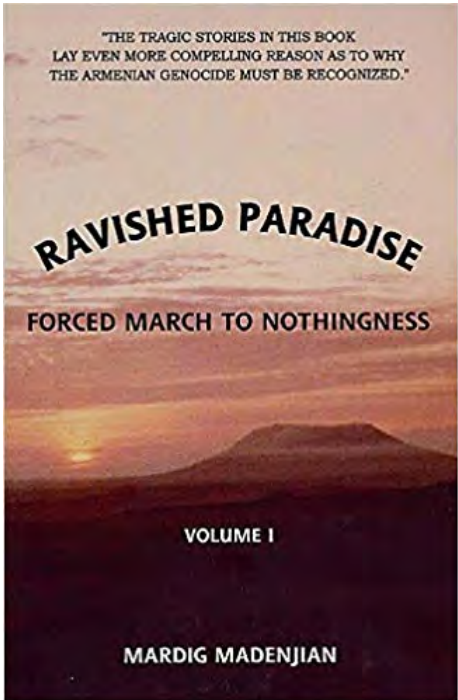


Mardig Madenjian

otherwise daunting topic.

Among many precious details, we are reminded that all Armenians were targeted during the Turkish extermination, not just the so-called radicals; that statesman-author Krikor Zohrab had his head smashed to pieces so that his Turkish tormentors “could see what the brains of a genius looked like”; that the victorious French during WWI who ultimately betrayed Cilician Armenia put slippers over their horseshoes to conceal that they were abandoning the Armenians to the predatory Turks; and that medicinal folk remedies – many now lost – were often life-saving in their properties.

In speaking of the savagery of the genocidists, Madenjian does not sugarcoat his words, nor does he abide by tenets of political correctness. Some information in Madenjian’s book has never before been presented in English. The



author of 16 books, Madenjian won the Hollywood Book Award twice – for this book and again for its sequel, *Reclaiming Ravished Paradise*.

COMMENTARY

Stalemate in Syria

By Edmond Y. Azadian

One of the hotspots of the resurgent Cold War is being fought on Syrian territory. During the Soviet era, all the Middle Eastern conflicts had an ideological bent, but with the fall of the Soviet empire, religion became politicized and weaponized in order to fuel sectarian violence in the region.

The Middle East has a global significance for the major powers because of oil as well as the security of Israel. In this age of fake pop up news sites on major technological platforms, any a conflict can be portrayed in any light other than its accurate one.

The Arab Spring was launched in the Middle East supposedly to introduce democracy in the region. After that spring devastated Iraq, Libya and Syria, as well as Yemen just further south, people realized that any stable country in the region was a threat to the hegemonic plans of some powers. One irony of that charade was that the authoritarian kingdom of Saudi Arabia, armed with an extremist religious ideology of Wahhabism, was relegated by the US to introduce “democracy” in Syria, one of the few lay regimes left in the region.

The Syrian conflict, with its outflowing refugee problem, not only destroyed the country itself, but it had ramifications far beyond its borders, straining the economies of neighboring Jordan and Lebanon and creating a political backlash all the way to Eastern Europe and Germany.

At this time, many major and minor forces are at work on the Syrian battlefield to manage and mismanage the ongoing war. The major players are, of course, the United States and Russia, followed by Iran, Turkey, Israel and to a certain extent, the Gulf states. Each participant in the conflict has been paying lip service to “helping the Syrian people,” while actually pursuing their narrow, selfish interests.

When Moscow was recovering from the collapse of the Soviet empire, the West successfully instigated the bloody Balkan wars and the wars in the Middle East, without much hindsight, but when Syria was invaded by mercenaries, the Russian military and economic assets were directly threatened and Moscow decided to draw a line in the sand. Then a confluence of interests from Turkey and Iran became a factor, rendering the Syrian conflict to become a laboratory of the Cold War to sort out the self-interests of each combatant.

Ironically, Washington’s goal was regime change in Syria. With the help of a pliant and undereducated news media, any targeted leader can be demonized within a short period of time to justify subsequent military attack against his territory, as it happened in Iraq and Libya. Then the US moving target was shifted to ISIS (Islamic State or ISIL), when Washington realized that Moscow had decided to defend the Assad regime to the bitter end.

Today, Russia has an expanded military base in Tartus, Syria, Iran has its military and political presence, with its ancillary Shiite militia of Hezbollah, its hedge against Israel. The US is there with shifting goals. Israel makes its presence felt through its bombing raids into Syrian territory with Prime Minister Netanyahu boasting confidently that Israel will be on the Golan Heights forever. Also, Turkey is fanning the flames of its Ottoman dreams to carve out a piece of its territory in Eastern Syria.

Much of the Syrian territory has been recovered from the ISIS forces and has been under government rule in quasi-normal conditions good enough for some of the refugees to repatriate. But as far as the major powers and Syria’s future are concerned, the conflict is declared to be a stalemate.

During the conflict, Moscow and Ankara have become odd bed-fellows much to the chagrin of the West. Turkey has expanded its exports to Russia, defying US sanctions, and has bought military hardware (S-400) from Russia. Moscow, in its turn, has brought to fruition the consolidation of the TurkStream gas pipeline to supply Europe with natural gas. Mehmet Ogutcu, head of the Bosphorus Energy Club, has said that TurkStream is a great success, despite the US efforts to block the project. “This project will

cement military and trade relations between Turkey and Russia, because it is creating mutual interdependence,” he added.

The Syrian war has resulted in the deaths of 360,000 civilians since it started in 2011 and left many internal refugees, in addition to the ones who have flooded Turkey (3 million), Lebanon (2 million), Jordan (1 million) as well as Europe.

Although much of the territory has been recovered by the Assad forces, with Russian military assistance, still the war has not fully come to an end. In November 28-29, Russia, Turkey and Iran will hold their 11th conference in Astana, capital of Kazakhstan, to finalize an agreement. The three have been meeting regularly to arrive at a solution, and their efforts have reduced the violence.

ISIS is still in Der Zor, an oil rich region as well as a historic site of great interest for Armenians. Turkey is in Afrin, fighting local Kurdish forces. The US is in Manbij supporting the Kurdish Forces (YPG), which have proved to be the most effective fighting group against ISIS.

The American Special Representative for Syria, James Jeffrey, has stated that the US’s “local partner since 2014 has been PYD/YPG, which is the Syrian offshoot of PKK but we have not designated it as a terrorist organization, which we did with the PKK.”

But it looks like the American local policy has reached a turning point, since it has been Ankara’s contention that Syrian Kurds also have to be labelled as terrorists. Mr. Jeffrey’s statement veers toward that direction as he adds, “The US operations in Syria could not be done without the active participation, coordination and cooperation of Turkey.” This is an indication that the US is contemplating abandoning the Kurds and that is why some of the Kurds are cozying up to the Assad regime.

The White House, the State Department and the Pentagon have made conflicting statements about Syria. Mr. Trump announced that the US forces will soon leave Syria. His National Security Advisor John Bolton contradicted that statement by declaring that the US forces will not leave Syria until Iranian forces do, along with their paramilitaries. While the Pentagon was not sure if removing Iran and Iranian proxies were actually the official stance, a US Assistant Secretary of Defense of International Security Affairs said that the US was “desegregating efforts against ISIS from the Iran policy.”

While the Syrian conflict is winding down, the Armenians dislodged from that country are hesitant to return. Up to 22,000 are in Armenia, some ready to return, while others are deciding to settle there permanently and still others consider Armenia as a waystation. They are looking for Armenian passports in order to be able to relocate to the West.

Before the war, there were some 80,000 Armenians in Syria, enjoying a privileged status as they did not meddle in politics and contributed to the Syrian economy as professionals, traders and hardworking business owners. They also constituted the last bastion of Armenianness, providing other communities with educated priests leaders, writers and scholars.

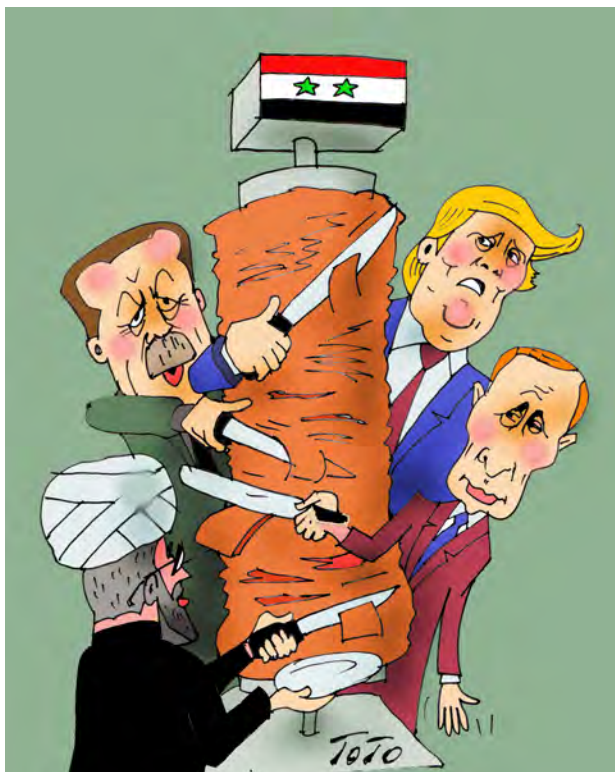
A researcher named Serdar Kurucu has made a striking statement to Al Monitor: While other ethnic groups from Syria are seeking refuge in Turkey, this writer has questioned a Syrian Armenian: “When Turkey is so close, why are Syrian-Armenians not coming there?” The answer was “Yes, Turkey’s border is very close, but in real life, it is too remote from us.”

That response not only signified the memory of the Armenian Genocide, but also the more recent memory of devastation of Der Zor monument and the pogrom in the Kessab region of Syria, by the Turks and their associates.

Former President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan had warned Armenians to remain neutral in the Syrian conflict. But it seems that Nikol Pashinyan has developed a different policy. Indeed, Armenia, along with Serbia, is preparing to send a contingent to Syria on a humanitarian mission. Armenia had shipped humanitarian assistance in earlier years, but his current mission involves military personnel as well.

Although Mr. Bolton, during this recent visit to Yerevan, has warned Armenia against any involvement, acting Defense Minister Davit Tonoyan has stated that preparations are underway and the mission will take leave soon.

Armenia owes that humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people and the Armenian community in Syria.



Mirror Spectator



Established 1932
An ADL Publication

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The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is published weekly, except two weeks in July and the first week of the year, by:

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

U.S.A.	\$80 a year
Canada	\$125 a year
Other Countries	\$190 a year

© 2014 The Armenian Mirror-Spectator
Periodical Class Postage Paid at Boston, MA
and additional mailing offices.

ISSN 0004-234X

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Armenian Mirror-Spectator, 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472

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COMMENTARY

Blundering American Ambassadors Unmask the War on Terror

By David Boyajian

We know that US ambassadors tend to be bureaucratic and boring.

If you challenge them forcefully, however, the resulting outbursts can provide stunning insights into their ineptitude and State Department policies.

Consider the mind-boggling statements made by then-Ambassador to Armenia Richard M. Mills during the question-and-answer at Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Cambridge, Mass.

I had bluntly questioned Mills about the Turkish government’s support for ISIS and similar jihadist/terrorist organizations.

Though this occurred two years ago (March 3, 2016), his answers remain relevant to America’s so-called “War on Terror” and the ongoing wars in Syria and Iraq.

When posing my question, I said that I would be handing everyone in the audience a study titled “Research Paper: ISIS-Turkey Links” by Columbia University’s Institute for the Study of Human Rights.

Dr. David L. Phillips, director of its Program on Peace-building and Human Rights, oversaw the study. The widely published Phillips is a foreign affairs adviser for the State Department and the United Nations.

Using dozens of sources, the study definitively established that Turkey was providing weapons, ammunition, financing, transportation, training, and recruits to ISIS in Syria and Iraq and to other terrorist groups such as al-Nusra, an al-Qaeda offshoot.

Incredibly, Mills angrily replied that Turkey had not helped jihadists/terrorists in any way.

The ambassador even claimed that if some jihadists had entered Syria from Turkey they did so only by sneaking past Syrian refugees who were crossing in the opposite direction. To its credit, the polite Armenian-American audience refrained from laughing.

Mills’ hyperbolic defense of Turkey was particularly incongruous as American-Turkish relations were even then headed downhill toward today’s quagmire.

Moreover, the ambassador’s vindication of Turkey went even further than had the Obama administration.

Indeed, in a rare moment of frankness Vice President Joe Biden himself told a Harvard University audience (October

2, 2014) that “our allies” Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and UAE were “our largest problem in Syria ... giving hundreds of millions of dollars and thousands of tons of weapons” to jihadist organizations.

These included, said Biden, al-Nusra, al-Qaeda, “extremist” jihadis, and ISIL [ISIS].

Though Biden never withdrew his statements, President Obama soon forced him to apologize to Turkey and UAE to spare them and America further embarrassment.

Mills also vehemently denied that Turkey was buying oil from ISIS.

Yet the New York Times had reported (“Struggling to Starve ISIS of Oil Revenue, US Seeks Assistance From Turkey,” September 13, 2014) that “the Obama administration is struggling to cut off the millions of dollars in oil revenue that has made [ISIS] one of the wealthiest terror groups in history, but so far has been unable to persuade Turkey ... where much of the oil is traded on the black market, to crack down on an extensive sales network. Western intelligence officials ... track the ISIS oil shipments [from] Iraq [into] Turkey.”

Additionally, a second Columbia University study, “Research Paper: Turkey-ISIS Oil Trade,” confirmed that Turkey was buying voluminous amounts of crude oil from ISIS. President Erdogan’s son, Bilal Erdogan, son-in-law Berat Albayrak, and brother-in-law Ziya Ilgen, were reportedly major players in that illicit trade.

As a State Department official, Mills blundered by exonerating Turkey. In so doing, he demonstrated that the “War on Terror” was less about stopping terrorism than about shielding an ally from terrorism charges.

Another Blundering Ambassador

Six months after the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks, Ross L. Wilson, the American ambassador to oil and gas-rich Azerbaijan, spoke at a sparsely-attended seminar at Harvard University’s oil and gas industry-funded Caspian Studies Program.

I pointedly asked him about terrorism expert Yossef Bodansky who in 1999 had documented numerous instances of jihadists, including Chechens and Afghans,

IN A RARE MOMENT OF FRANKNESS VICE PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN HIMSELF TOLD A HARVARD UNIVERSITY AUDIENCE (OCTOBER 2, 2014) THAT “OUR ALLIES” TURKEY, QATAR, SAUDI ARABIA, AND UAE WERE “OUR LARGEST PROBLEM IN SYRIA ... GIVING HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS AND THOUSANDS OF TONS OF WEAPONS” TO JIHADIST ORGANIZATIONS.

using Azerbaijan as a base.

Wilson vociferously denied everything in Bodansky’s article.

Yet the FBI had found that al-Qaeda used Baku, Azerbaijan as a communication and logistical base for 1998’s fatal bombings of American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

Moreover, in the early 1990s Azerbaijan imported thousands of Afghan Mujahideen, as well as Chechen and Turkish, mercenaries to fight against Armenians in the

Karabakh/Artsakh war.

Ambassador Wilson thus gratuitously covered for Azerbaijan’s involvement with jihadists/terrorists just as Ambassador Mills would later do for Turkey.

More recently, hundreds of Azeris have joined ISIS and similar jihadist groups in Syria.

Furthermore, Azerbaijan’s Silk Way Airlines has reportedly been delivering billions in weapons (including from the US) to jihadists in Syria. Silk Way is apparently owned partly by Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev’s family.

The inept Wilson also called Iham Aliyev – who hadn’t yet inherited the throne from his father Heydar Aliyev – an idiot or a similar insult.

This apparently panicked host Dr. Brenda Shaffer, the Caspian program’s research director, a prominent pro-Azeri propagandist, former adviser to the Israeli Foreign Ministry, and now a lecturer at the Azerbaijani Diplomatic Academy.

She abruptly announced that Wilson’s presentation was now “off the record.”

Armenia’s Unrecognized Record

Since 9/11, I’ve asked two US ambassadors to Armenia this question: Given America’s so-called global “War on Terror,” why do you never mention that Armenia has an exceptionally strong anti-jihadist/terrorist record compared to other countries within a thousand mile radius or more?

Indeed, Armenia has had no jihadist citizens, hasn’t supported jihadists, and hasn’t served as a jihadist base or transit route.

Neither ambassador provided a cogent answer though one said that Armenia is mainly Christian so that it wouldn’t be expected to be associated with jihadists.

Yet neighboring Georgia, which jihadists have used as a base and pass-through is also mainly Christian. And witness the many jihadist cells and terror attacks in Christian Europe.

What ‘War on Terror’?

The four ambassadors’ reactions we described reinforce what many experts believe:

America’s “War on Terror” has largely morphed into a cover for the State Department’s and some American lobbies’ geopolitical agendas – such as deposing Syrian President al-Assad. After all, given the chance to criticize Turkey, Azerbaijan, and others for supporting jihadists, Ambassadors Mills and Wilson refused to do so.

American officials downplay or outright deny the support that US “allies” such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia provide jihadists/terrorists lest our own nation’s support of terrorism also be exposed.

Similarly, American officials never praise Armenia’s fine record on jihadism/terrorism because as we pointed out the “War on Terror” is primarily not about terror/jihadism.

Lynne M. Tracy has been nominated to replace Richard Mills as ambassador to Armenia.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee should grill her on the same terrorism subjects, and more, that I raised with other ambassadors.

If citizens do not successfully push Congress to fully expose America’s and its “allies” roles in supporting jihadists/terrorists, we have only ourselves to blame.

(David Boyajian is a freelance journalist. Many of his articles are archived at

LETTERS

Remembering the Many Kindnesses of Anna Hovnanian

To the Editor:

It was with a heavy heart that I read about the passing of Mrs. Anna Hovnanian in your October 20 issue.

The article made reference to the summer internship program of the Armenian Assembly and the intern classes which Mr. and Mrs. Hovnanian hosted each summer in their home.

In the summer of 1978, having just graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, and

again in the summer of 1979, before entering law school at the University of Southern California, I was one of those interns fortunate enough to have spent a lovely weekend at the Hovnanians’ beautiful home in Deal, NJ. In fact, if memory serves, Tanya Hovnanian was, in 1978, one of my fellow intern classmates.

I do have very fond memories of those times and of the warm and gracious hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Hovnanian: how they made each one

of us feel so welcome in their home. It was as if we were part of their family; and of course, in a way, we were.

It wasn’t simply their spirit of generosity (which was overwhelming). It was also how they valued all things Armenian – the Armenian spirit – and how important it was to them that we celebrate and honor our Armenian heritage while, at the same time, providing opportunities for us to participate in very meaningful ways as

proud Armenian-Americans in the American system, whether in government, business, law, education or the arts.

These were, and are, memories and lessons which have stayed with me throughout the years.

My deepest sympathies, along with my thoughts and prayers, go out to the entire Hovnanian family.

Ralph E. Arpajian
Pennsylvania



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Kurdish Member of Turkish Parliament Delivers a Harsh Speech and Ends up in Jail

Ferhat Encu, a Kurdish member of the Turkish Parliament from the Sirnak province of Turkey, delivered a while back extremely critical remarks about Turks and Turkey on the floor of the Parliament in Ankara. I just discovered the video of his bold speech on YouTube.

Encu, a member of the Kurdish HDP Party, is well known for his steadfast opposition to the Turkish government for its perpetual violence against Kurds and violation of Kurdish human rights. In 2011, the Turkish Air Force bombed a group of Kurdish civilians killing 34 of them, including several members of Encu's family.

During his speech, Encu, 33, received many threats from Turkish parliament members. Subsequently, he was stripped of his parliamentary immunity and jailed. He remains in jail!

Here are Encu's six-minute-long powerful remarks in the Turkish Parliament which was constantly interrupted by threats: "I will make my statement short and to the point. Some of you call us killers. But, who kills civilians and who is a killer? You are!"

Threats shouted at Encu from the Parliament floor: "Shut him up! Take that terrorist and shoot him!"

Parliament Speaker: "Let him speak. Say what you have to say and finish it."

Encu continued his remarks: "Together here, you are

tough! But, the truth is you are just a mouth and nothing more. I, as a Kurd – history is my witness – that I, as a Kurd, live in my land, Kurdistan, at a time when you were gathering grassroots and feeding, playing around with your horses in Mongolia..."

Shouts from the floor: "Shoot him!"

Encu: "This so called your land is not your land, nor that of the AKP [President Erdogan's ruling party]. This land is older than all of you. It belongs to the real people..."

Parliament Speaker: "You will be punished for this. You can talk this over Kebab during lunch time. You support terrorists in front of us."

Encu: "The honorable Greeks and Armenians were here..."

Shouts from the floor: "Shoot that terrorist."

Encu: "We Kurds are still here. No tanks and none of your military can remove us..."

Shouts from the floor: "We destroyed your city."

Encu: "You can destroy it, but we will build a dozen more. You Turks are nothing. We have defeated worse monsters than you in Silopi. Drop your bombs. Kill our children. Kill civilians, but you cannot kill us being a Kurd in Roboski, all over Kurdistan or what you call 'Turkey.' Humanity has seen worse than you. We defeated them..."

Parliament Speaker: "You will go to jail for this. Five years will be your minimum sentence."

Encu: "I don't give a damn. Truth is more important than life..."

Shouts from the floor: "He needs a bullet. Arrest him!"

Parliament Speaker: "We have sent for security. He will be arrested."

Encu: "We Kurds will always be Kurds, before you Turks came here and after you Turks leave here. Your 'Turkey' is the stolen land of Greeks, Armenians and us Kurds. History is my witness."

Shouts from the floor: "Your head will roll."

Encu: "What can you do? Here I am against hundreds of you. What you got in you?"

Parliament Speaker: "You will be punished for this."

Encu: "Kill me. I will still tell the truth."

Parliament Speaker: "Say that when the security gets here.

By this law book, I will send you to 10 years in prison. Ten years is the minimum."

Shouts from the floor: "He needs to be shot right here."

Encu: "I will finish."

Shouts from the floor: "You will pay with your life for this; you scum Kurd!"

Encu: "Bark all of you as you wish. I stand strong here, come and face..."

Shouts from the floor: "That is enough. Where is the security?"

Encu: "You all act tough in a group, but alone, you are cowards. Our Kurdish youth showed that to your military. No Turkish soldier or police can patrol a Kurdish street. Your soldiers ran from our youth. Like now, you just have mouths and act tough together. But, face to face you are nothing..."

Shouts from the floor: "Shut that Kurd up!"

Encu: "Alone, I, as a Kurd, can take on all of you..."

Shouts from the floor: "Firing squad!"

Encu: "You think by killing us you can defeat us; it only makes us stronger. You call me a 'terrorist,' I, who fight for my freedom from your occupation. I, who lived in this land for thousands of years, you come and occupy it. I fight for the freedom of my people, for freedom like all other nations..."

Shouts from the floor: "You will be shot!"

Encu: "I face death and bullets bravely for my freedom like millions of other Kurds. No occupation lasts forever. Freedom always triumphs at the end..."

Shouts from the floor: "You signed your own death warrant by a Turkish bullet. You are a dead man walking. Don't let him leave alive from here."

Parliament Speaker: "Go back to your seats. He is alone. There is nothing to worry about. He is alone. We are many. We will get him. Take your seats."

The fearless and self-sacrificing Ferhat Encu has joined thousands of other innocent Kurds and Turks who have been arrested by the Turkish government in recent years for expressing their opinions and some for no reason at all! It is shameful that world leaders have remained silent in the face of such massive and persistent Turkish violations of human rights.

New Iranian Sanctions and the South Caucasus

By Emil Avdaliani

ON NOVEMBER 5, The Trump administration re-imposed sanctions on Iran following Washington's decision to withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) signed in 2015. Following the decision on withdrawal, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qasemi told state TV that his country had "the knowledge and the capability to manage the country's economic affairs."

The worst disagreements coming as a result of the US decision were seen between the European and Russian counterparts. Both were against the break-up and still remain strong believers in the JCPOA. In order to diminish the economic effect on Europe, a special clearing house was designed to allow European companies that trade with Iran to bypass the new US sanctions. It was reported that the clearing house will be established within several months either in France or Germany.

The Europeans came up with the idea of the clearing house, also known as a "Special Purpose Vehicle" (SPV), to show Iran that Europe is still a strong supporter of the 2015 nuclear deal and that the SPV will even allow the European Union to expand business with Tehran.

While analysts discuss how the new sanctions will impact Iran and the world oil prices, it is interesting how it will influence the South Caucasus. It is clear that the region is important for the US in exerting pressure on Iran. One of the major reasons the US National Security Adviser John Bolton recently visited the South Caucasus countries was to enhance Iran's isolation. The US remembers well how Iranians acted previously, before the 2015 agreement, using Armenian and other regional banks to circumvent the sanctions. Even though Washington exempted eight countries from new sanctions, none of them is from the South Caucasus.

Since one of the major goals of new US sanctions is to reduce Iran's oil exports to zero, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan will not be directly impacted. However, although none of the three states in fact uses or transports Iranian crude, all three sometimes use Iranian natural gas either for transit or commercial usage.

For example, Armenia, where a major portion of gas is imported from Russia (via Georgia), also imported about 400 million cubic meters of gas from Iran in 2017, in exchange for which it sends electricity to Iran. In late 2017, there was even an agreement through which Yerevan would increase gas imports from Iran by some 25%, again in exchange for electricity. Now with the new sanctions in force, those plans are likely to be shelved. Moreover, Armenia's position will be further worsened since the US sanctions will also touch other parts of the Iranian economy. Yerevan will now have fewer chances to

build new pipelines or railways from Iran to Georgia in order to be a transit point. Talks around the construction of a \$3.7 billion railway are stalled as there are difficulties finding finances for the project. Another reason is that neighboring Azerbaijan already has the necessary pipeline infrastructure and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway.

Perhaps Azerbaijan is the country which might benefit most from the new US sanctions, as global oil prices are likely to rise. Since natural gas prices are mostly indexed to oil prices, Baku might see a sudden growth in revenues.

Sanctions-stricken Iran's influence will be curtailed in the South Caucasus region. The

SINCE ONE OF THE MAJOR GOALS OF NEW US SANCTIONS IS TO REDUCE IRAN'S OIL EXPORTS TO ZERO, GEORGIA, ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN WILL NOT BE DIRECTLY IMPACTED. HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH NONE OF THE THREE STATES IN FACT USES OR TRANSPORTS IRANIAN CRUDE, ALL THREE SOMETIMES USE IRANIAN NATURAL GAS EITHER FOR TRANSIT OR COMMERCIAL USAGE.

diminution of Iranian economic activities in the region will be followed by a decline in the country's geopolitical force. In that regard, Russia is to reap the most fruit.

Russia and Iran have long been geopolitical rivals. Russia, for instance, wants to obstruct any Iranian moves to establish Russian-influence-free pipelines or railways to Armenia and Georgia. Now it will be easier for Moscow to block any Iranian initiatives. Yet both countries will nevertheless work together to block Western-led infrastructure projects. Another common interest will be to avoid any foreign military presence in the region, particularly in Georgia.

Iran already lags far behind its regional competitors in terms of economic and military influence in the region, and now the country is set lose more in the South Caucasus. Those geopolitical impetuses which existed before, primarily Europe's willingness (however unsuccessful) to diversify its gas market from Russian gas, are now unlikely to bring results.

The next several months will show how negative the new sanctions will be for the region. However, one argument is clear: Iran, which hoped, following the successful negotiations and the lifting of restrictions in 2015, to increase its involvement in the South Caucasus, is likely lose the momentum it enjoyed. The European and Russian decision to stay in JCPOA might help, but as many believe, the US withdrawal is crucial.

(This analysis originally appeared in Georgia Today on November 12.)



AMAA Holds 99th Annual Meeting Elects New Board Members for Class of 2021

LOS ANGELES – The 99th Annual Meeting of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) was held at the United Armenian Congregational Church on Saturday, October 20. AMAA President Nazareth Darakjian, MD presided over the meeting. Rev. Haroutune Selimian, president of the Armenian Protestant Community of Syria offered a prayer and a short devotion. Reflecting on people's pressures, problems and pain, he said hope liberates people from hopelessness and gives them direction and purpose for life.

During the meeting AMAA Officers, Directors and Committee Chairs, as well as delegates of the Armenian Evangelical Unions, the Armenian Evangelical World Council and affiliated organizations shared their joys and concerns and praised God for another successful year.

The general membership of the AMAA elected the following nine members to the Board of Directors Class of 2021 for a term of three years: Bryan Agbabian, Bryan Bedrosian, Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian, John Cherkezian, Mark Kassabian, Esq., Louis Kurkjian, Heather Ohaneson, Ph.D., Michele Simourian and Ken Kevorkian.

In conjunction with the AMAA Annual Meeting, the Armenian Evangelical World Council held its meeting on October 18 and 19.

On Sunday, October 21, members and guests joined the United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles for a special Worship Service. Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, president of Haigazian



Installation Service of the newly elected members of the AMAA Board

University, preached in English and Rev. Hovhannes Hovsepyan, pastor of the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Yerevan,

preached in Armenian. A special prayer was offered in memory of AMAA members and friends who had passed away during the past

year. Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian officiated at the installation of the newly elected members of the Board of Directors

Alexis Ohanian Launches Shakmat Brandy

SHAKMAT, from page 1

The official tasting notes tout Shakmat's "flavors of dried fruits, nuts and spices, think plums, raisins, walnuts and cloves, as well as rich molasses, tobacco and vanilla notes which are typical of a traditional Armenian Konyak."

Keeping it local, a portion of the proceeds will help fund the non-profit Armenia Tree Project.

In a final Armenian touch, Shakmat is an homage to the country's national game, chess.

"Shakmat (chess) is a big deal in Armenia—it's a compulsory part of the school curriculum," Ohanian explained. "To be a great chess player, you need smart moves in the right moment, patience, knowledge, and resourcefulness. These are values that resonated with me, especially as an entrepreneur who looks for these qualities when I'm meeting with founders and deter-

mining if we at Initialized Capital should invest in their new venture."

Ohanian's partner Flaviar is a spirits club that fuses mail-order sales, curation, and education. The company also began branching out into private bottling recently. (If you are confused, the combined club and mail model exempt Flaviar from "three tier" regulations.)

"Everyone is talking about direct to consumer now, but the Flaviar team has been doing it for years, building a real community of consumers who are passionate about discovering new spirits," said Ohanian in a statement. "After seeing the launch of Flaviar's first private label Son of a Peat, I chatted to Jugo and Grisa, the founders of Flaviar, about creating my own spirit."

The initial run is only 2,400 bottles. For Flaviar members, the price tag is \$95; everyone else can buy a bottle on the web for \$110.



TCA Mourns Loss of Former President Dr. Kevork Keshishian

KESHISHIAN, from page 1

he was elected to serve on its Central Board of Directors during the presidency of the late benefactor Alex Manoogian.

As one of the leaders of the Tekeyan Cultural Association and the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party, his actions have left their indelible imprint on the history of the twin organizations.

The years 1988 to 1992 marked the expansion and intense development of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) under Dr. Keshishian's visionary leadership. The TCA membership is particularly indebted to its late president for his initiation, planning and execution of the TCA Mirror Fund drive, in cooperation with his wife, Cecil.

Dr. Keshishian's leadership also helped to further expand programs and chapter membership throughout the United States and Canada. His congenial demeanor and enthusiasm were contagious and instrumental in recruiting new membership for the organization.

Dr. Keshishian was a devoted family man. He and his wife raised two talented children, recognized internationally in the realm of the entertainment arts.

Dr. Keshishian will be sorely missed as a friend, as a generous human being and as a leader, who leaves behind a legacy of love, achievement and fond memories.

On behalf of the members of the Central Board and the entire membership of the Tekeyan Cultural Association, we extend our sincere and profound sympathies to his widow and to his children, Alek and Aleen.

May his soul rest in peace.

Tekeyan Cultural Association Central Board
Edmond Y. Azadian, President
Hagop Vartivarian, Secretary

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