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City of Smile Boston Friends Organize an Evening To Benefit Children with Cancer in Armenia

By **Aram Arkun**
Mirror-Spectator Staff

YEREVAN/BOSTON – There is nothing more heartrending than the sight of children suffering. One of the plagues children face everywhere is cancer. In Armenia, their affliction is made worse due to the lack of resources that are more readily available in the West. American Armenians who came face to face with this difficult situation could not but take action. Now they in turn reach out to the broader community in an effort to create a future in which Armenian children get the same level of treatment as in the United States. On April 5, an evening at the Westin Waltham Hotel featuring Anna Hakobyan, Honorary Chair of the City of Smile Charitable Foundation and spouse of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, will give the public the opportunity to support this vital humanitarian cause.

Today, children in Armenia with cancer primarily come to the Muratsan



Anna Hakobyan, Honorary Chair of the City of Smile Charitable Foundation and spouse of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, with a patient

Chemotherapy Clinic in Yerevan for treatment. Amazingly, treatment is completely free. Children from Artsakh and Javakhs

also come here, and even occasionally non-Armenian children from other places. see SMILES, page 10

Michel Legrand, Oscar-Winning Composer Who Lived ‘Surrounded By Music’, Dies At 86

PARIS (Combined Sources) – Three-time Oscar-winning composer, songwriter and pianist Michel Legrand died Saturday, January 26, at his home in France. He was 86.

The conservatory-trained musician worked across genres but was best known as a prolific composer of film scores, and resulted in two hits, *The Windmills of Your Mind* and *I Will Wait For You*.

The music of the composer, singer, arranger, conductor, jazz musician and went on glowing long after many of the 250-odd films he had written soundtracks for had fallen by the wayside.

Legrand made deadpan reference to that phenomenon when he played at Ronnie Scott’s club in London in 2011 – announcing that it was his ambition to meet “one of the 19 people who ever saw ‘The Happy Ending,’” the 1969 Hollywood film for which he wrote his classic love song *What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life?*

But if some of the film vehicles for Legrand’s artistry were outlasted by his music, several became famous, including “The Umbrellas of Cherbourg” (1964) and see LEGRAND, page 8



Michel Legrand and Miles Davis, a frequent collaborator



Aspiring scientist Daniel Shakaryan with Dr. Oganessian

Celebrating Work of Singular Heavy Metal Expert Dr. Oganessian

GLENDALE – Internationally renowned nuclear physicist Dr. Yuri Oganessian, the only living person on the periodic table of elements, was honored for his lifetime achievements by the Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America (AESA) during its 35th anniversary gala at the Armenian Society of Los Angeles on Saturday, January 19.

The academician, who is scientific director of the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research (JINR) in Dubna, Russia, is considered the world’s leading researcher in super heavy chemical elements. It was with his significant achievements in mind that the AESA bestowed upon him the Victor Harmbartsumyan Award, named after the legendary astrophysicist, and given to engineer and scientists of Armenian descent to recognize their technical excellence and contributions to their fields and to the greater community.

In an exclusive interview (aided by translator Dr. Gagik Melikyan, Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry at California State University, Northridge), Oganessian said he was “honored” to receive the Victor Hambarzumyan Award that is named after a “prominent astrophysicist” whose work he respects.

Throughout his accomplished career, Oganessian focused his research on nuclear reactions, synthesis of new elements of the periodic table, and investigation of their properties that led to the discovery of six elements in the periodic see OGANESYAN, page 12

By **Taleen Babayan**
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

NEWS IN BRIEF

Russian, Armenian Premiers Discuss Economic Cooperation

MOSCOW (Tass) – Trade and economic cooperation between Russia and Armenia were in focus of talks between the two prime ministers, Dmitry Medvedev of Russia and Nikol Pashinyan of Armenia, in Moscow, the press service of the Russian government said on Friday, January 25.

“Talks between the Russian and Armenian prime ministers was held in Moscow on January 25,” the press service said. “The meeting was requested by the Armenian side.”

“The two heads of government discussed current issues of the Russian-Armenian trade-and-economic cooperation and other aspects of bilateral relations,” the press service said.

President Visits Indian Embassy for Republic Day

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – President Armen Sarkissian, accompanied by his wife Nune Sarkissian, visited the Embassy of India on January 29, on the occasion of the National Day of India – Republic Day, the president’s office said.

The Sarkissians congratulated Ambassador Yogeshwar Sangwan, embassy staffers and extended congratulations to the people of India, wishing successes, as well as further deepening and strengthening of the friendly ties between Armenia and India.

Armenia Ranks 105th on Corruption Perceptions Index 2018

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – Armenia ranked 105th out of 180 nations with a score of 35 on the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2018 released by Transparency International non-governmental organization on January 29.

The index, which ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and business-people, uses a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean. More than two-thirds of countries score below 50 on this year’s CPI, with an average score of just 43.

Armenia rose by two points from the previous year’s 107th place with the same score. Armenia sat at 113rd with 33 points on the 2016 index.

Azerbaijan was at 152nd place with a score of 25, while Turkey placed 78th with 41 points. Russia’s score fell to 28, leaving it in 138th place. Georgia led the way for the region with a score of 58, making it 41st on the index.

Denmark and New Zealand top the index with 88 and 87 points, respectively. Somalia, South Sudan, and Syria are at the bottom of the list, with 10, 13 and 13 points, respectively.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Premier, Wife Attend Komitas Anniversary Concert

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Last week Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his wife Anna Hakobyan attended the concert giving start to the events dedicated to the 150th anniversary of Komitas at Aram Khachaturian concert hall.

The Armenian National Academic Choir led by conductor Hovhannes Chekijian performed during the concert.

Pashinyan Supports Building Marriott Hotel on Iran, Armenia Border

DAVOS (Armenpress) – Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan finds his Davos visit for the World Economic Forum to be quite full with meetings and discussions.

Speaking to the Russian RBK TV, Pashinyan said that concrete ideas are under discussion.

“Davos is a good arena where leaders of different countries of the world and business representatives meet hold discussions. I met with businessmen from Russia and other countries. I had meetings with representatives of a number of European and Asian countries. I’ve brought concrete ideas from there, that require further discussions. Particularly, there is an idea concerning the opening of a Marriott hotel at the Iran-Armenia border. Since Marriott’s policy is that they don’t build and don’t buy real estate, but rather rent territory, therefore in order to fulfill this idea it is necessary to find an investor who will agree to build a building, will agree the project with Marriott, and to whom it will then rent the area,” he said.

He also mentioned concrete ideas that were discussed with Russian businessmen.

Particularly, with VTB bank the sides discussed the exploitation of the Teghut mine, in order to involve a new professional operator. VTB is managing the Teghut mine since 2018.

Pashinyan also noted discussions with the Russian Fund of Direct Investments. He said that interesting ideas exist here also.

“A rather great interest exists currently for Armenia, and we hope that this will lead to new investments,” he said.

Armenian Party Leader Dies in Prison

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – A leader of a small Armenian party prosecuted on corruption charges died in prison at the weekend following a 44-day hunger strike.

Armenia’s National Security Service (NSS) arrested Vahe Yeghiazaryan, the deputy chairman of the Armenian Eagles party, and charged with him fraud and bribery on December 3.

“He did not deny taking money,” Yeghiazaryan’s lawyer, Vahe Armenakian, said on Monday, January 25. “He just thought that the matter should be investigated on the civil-administrative plane and that the criminal case should not have been opened because in Armenia tens of thousands of people borrow money from each other and return it later on.”

Yeghiazaryan, who also ran a news website, began the hunger strike two days after his arrest, demanding his immediate release from custody. He ended it on January 17, nine days before he died at Yerevan’s Nubarashen prison. The 51-year-old died from a heart attack, according to the prison administration.

Armenakian said his client may have stayed alive if he had been taken to a civilian hospital right after the hunger strike. Yeghiazaryan did not receive adequate medical care at Nubarashen’s medical unit, said the lawyer.

According to the office of Armenia’s state human rights ombudsman, Arman Tatoyan, the suspect suffered from a chronic heart disease. The office said it urged law-enforcement authorities to free him on bail because of that.

A Yerevan court refused to grant bail to Yeghiazaryan on January 16.

Bolton Voices US Support For Pashinyan

DAVOS, Switzerland (RFE/RL) – The United States regards the recent parliamentary elections in Armenia as democratic and supports Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s reform agenda, US National Security Adviser John Bolton said on Thursday, January 24.

“I called Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia yesterday to congratulate him on his re-appointment and applaud the Armenian people on free and fair elections in December,” tweeted Bolton. “The US supports his efforts to secure a prosperous future for Armenia.”

Pashinyan was quick to report the phone conversation with Bolton on his Facebook page. Writing from Davos, he said they “stressed the importance of US-Armenian relations for our governments.”

Visiting Armenia in October, Bolton praised the new Armenian government’s stated efforts to democratize the coun-

try, combat corruption and strengthen broader rule of law. He also said Washington expects Pashinyan to take “decisive steps” towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict’s resolution “right after” his widely anticipated victory in the December 9 parliamentary elections.

Bolton spoke with Pashinyan by phone one day after the latter met with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum held in the Swiss resort town. The Armenian leader said Wednesday that he did not discuss the Karabakh issue with US President Donald Trump’s key adviser.

Trump sent a congratulatory letter to Pashinyan late last week. “The United States supports a prosperous, democratic Armenia at peace with its neighbors,” he wrote. “Together, we can make progress on deepening trade between our countries, strengthening global secu-

city, and combating corruption. A peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will help these efforts.”

During his visit to Yerevan, Bolton also stated that normalizing relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey would enable Armenia to break “historical patterns” that have shaped its traditional foreign policy. He further indicated that Washington is ready to sell Yerevan US weapons and thus reduce Russia’s “excessive influence” on Armenia.

Russia condemned those remarks, accusing the US of meddling in its South Caucasus ally’s internal affairs. “We expect that the current leadership of Armenia ... will have the courage to resist the unhidden external blackmail and pressure,” Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin said last month.

Armenian leaders earlier played down the significance of Bolton’s statements.

Armenia to Host International Aurora Forum in Fall

YEREVAN – The first Aurora Forum will take place in Yerevan, Armenia on October 14-21. The forum will bring together leading authorities on social, scientific-technological, educational and humanitarian innovation, marking the first program of its kind in the region.

The weeklong series of activities will provide an opportunity for thought leaders to compare best practices, lessons learned and, in some cases, disruptive thinking around issues ranging from infrastructure challenges to healthcare breakthroughs to women’s empowerment.

The events will include the fourth Aurora Prize Ceremony, the second Global Innovation Forum, an educational forum and series of open lectures to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the United World College (UWC) Dilijan, and a set of roundtables and cultural activities. The week will culminate in a grand closing concert event in Yerevan.

“The Aurora Forum has the potential to serve as a bridge between international progress and local developments with measurable impact. But that potential can only be advanced with the participation of change-makers who share Aurora’s vision through their own global deeds,” said Vartan Gregorian, co-founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative.

The Aurora Forum will be powered by partner institutions with a shared vision:

- * FAST, established in 2017, harnesses scientific, technological, and financial resources within national and international communities to advance Armenia as a nation with a thriving ecosystem in STEM-related sector;

- * Scholae Mundi Global Educational Platform promotes education through the United World College system, including and especially at the United World College Dilijan;

- * IDeA Foundation committed to transitioning Armenians from survival to prosperity through long-term infrastructure and development projects that aim to strengthen Armenia and enable it to make a lasting contribution to the world;

- * Aurora Humanitarian Initiative and its internationally recognized The Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity, which empowers modern day heroes and recognizes the exceptional impact their actions have made on preserving human life.

The combined capacities and efforts of these groundbreaking organizations will be supported by the commitment of the Aurora Forum’s Goodwill Ambassadors—100 plus luminaries from business, civil society, and academia,

who volunteer their services to advance the goals of establishing Armenia as a regional humanitarian, educational, technological, social, and cultural hub.

Working together, all the organizations and the individuals involved with the Aurora Forum will strengthen the prospects of achieving a meaningful and sustainable national and global change.

“The Aurora Forum is based on our belief that global Armenians and all global citizens who aspire to tackle the world’s most-pressing challenges, can do so by embracing the best in humanitarian, educational and technological practices to make lasting advances in social, cultural, and scientific spheres,” said Noubar Afeyan, Co-Founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative. “We hope that the Aurora Forum will engage international networks and also allow new linkages to be made for maximum impact.”

“The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative is a respected presence among humanitarians who see the impact of the Initiative’s work to protect children, above all. But the Armenian presence on the global stage stretches into every sector, and every arena. The Aurora Forum will further promote and expand the Gratitude in Action concept by bringing together leaders and innovators from various fields to inspire and be inspired by others. What started as a story of thankfulness of 100 people whose ancestors were saved during the Armenian Genocide, has become a global movement showing the world that humanity can be better,” explained Ruben Vardanyan, Co-Founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative.

The October 2019 Aurora Forum events will be held across Armenia with major events in cities from north to south.

Armenian FM Deplores ‘Defeatist’ Claims on Karabakh Peace

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan on Monday, January 28, dismissed serious concerns voiced by critics of the Armenian government over a series of high-level Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations held in recent months.

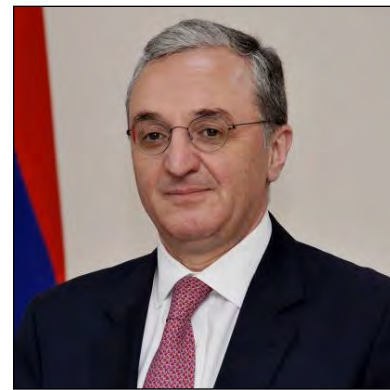
Mnatsakanyan and his Azerbaijani counterpart, Elmar Mammadyarov, met on January 16 for the fourth time in six months. They both described the meeting in Paris as “useful” and pledged to hold more “results-oriented” negotiations on resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

In a joint statement, the US, Russian and French mediators co-heading the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group said Mnatsakanyan and Mammadyarov acknowledged the need for “concrete measures to prepare the populations for peace.”

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev fueled more talk of major progress towards the conflict’s resolution when they met in Davos, Switzerland, on January 22.

Some Armenian opposition politicians and commentators critical of the government speculated that Pashinyan may have agreed to make significant territorial concessions to Azerbaijan. Pashinyan brushed aside these “conspiracy theories” on January 23.

Mnatsakanyan also deplored the crit-



Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan

ics’ “defeatist” claims. “I was somewhat surprised and wondered with if we have some defeatist sentiment within the society or have lost our self-confidence,” he told reporters. “I am sure that there is no such sentiment in our society.”

Mnatsakanyan insisted that the government will not deviate from Armenia’s traditional position on a Karabakh settlement. “We have made clear that the questions of [Karabakh’s] status and security remain Armenia’s overriding priorities,” he said.

The minister did not shed more light on his talks with Mammadyarov or comment on chances of a breakthrough in the peace process.

Pashinyan insisted that he did not discuss with Aliyev any “concrete detail” of a possible peace accord.



Mass Audubon Offers Birding Tour to Armenia, September 15-29

By Roxanne Etmekjian

YEREVAN – For a birder (or bird-watcher, as many people know us), nothing beats the thrill of seeing a species in the wild that you have never seen before. It's even better if you have the opportunity to do it in Armenia.

This year, the Massachusetts Audubon Society, which has been offering birding tours worldwide for over 50 years, is offering a birding tour to Armenia for the first time, and has openings available. The trip is scheduled for September 15-29, 2019, a 2-week period that allows for seeing many of the 350+ species documented in Armenia, including migrating birds from Europe and Asia. The itinerary includes stops along the Ararat Plain, Lake Sevan, Dilijan, the Selim Pass, Noravank Canyon, Gndasar, Meghri and Shvanidzor (along the Iranian border), Goris, Tatev, Jermuk, Garni and



Pied Avocet (photo by Karen Aghababyan, (c) TSE - Towards Sustainable Ecosystems NGO)



Bearded Vulture (photo by Karen Aghababyan, (c) TSE - Towards Sustainable Ecosystems NGO)

Geghard, and Mount Aragats.

While this trip is primarily for seeing birds and nature in Armenia, cultural and historic sites will be included. The group will be accompanied by a local Armenian guide knowledgeable about the birds of the area as well as a Mass Audubon guide. Each day will start early in order to see the most birds, and will include walking 1-2 miles on most days.

I personally had the chance in October 2017 to spend 8 days birding in Armenia with local Armenian guides and a driver, arranged by Dr. Karen Aghababyan, executive director of TSE - Towards Sustainable Ecosystems NGO, who also worked with Mass Audubon on the arrangements for the upcoming trip. The excitement of birding in full view of Mount Ararat or Noravank Monastery (designated an Important Bird Area, or IBA by BirdLife

International) is indescribable. But just as meaningful can be a visit to ignored and depopulated villages such as Vanand near Sardarapat, where we picked up a second guide, Veelen Minasyan, a village resident whose whole family had moved to Russia for work. As a local expert for his area, he was able to take us to a favorite spot of the uncommon Black-bellied Sandgrouse, where our presence attracted the interest of local elderly men who were surprised to see visitors, armed with binoculars and spotting scopes, who had come merely to see a gamebird.

As ecotourism develops in Armenia, it can contribute to improving the economy, particularly in less developed rural areas, and thereby also strengthen support for policies that protect Armenia's natural treasures.

For more information and to book a reservation on Mass Audubon's September 2019 birding tour of Armenia, contact the Mass Audubon travel office by phone at 800-289-9504 or email travel@massaudubon.org. The travel itinerary is available on their website at <https://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/travel-tours/upcoming-tours>. A minimum number of participants will be needed by the end of March to proceed with the trip.

Armenian Authorities Reopen Panama Papers Probe

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – An Armenian law-enforcement agency has launched a new criminal investigation into a former senior official who resigned in 2016 after being accused of having secret offshore accounts exposed by the Panama Papers.

Citing the leaked documents, the Hetq.am investigative publication reported in April 2016 that Mihran Poghosyan, the then head of an Armenian state body enforcing court rulings, controls three shadowy companies registered in Panama. It said Poghosyan has the exclusive right to manage Swiss bank accounts of two of those firms.

After initially denying the report, Poghosyan announced his resignation later in April 2016. But he stopped short of admitting any wrongdoing.

The Special Investigation Service (SIS) launched a criminal investigation in connection with the Hetq.am report shortly after the resignation. It closed the criminal case in January 2017, saying that it found no evidence of Poghosyan's involvement in "illegal entrepreneurial activity."

Poghosyan had close ties to then-President Serzh Sargsyan and his Republican Party of Armenia (HHK). He was elected to the former Armenian parliament on the HHK ticket in April 2017.

A spokeswoman for the SIS, Marina Ohanjanian, said on January 24 that the SIS has reopened the probe. She said investigators will again try to determine whether the once powerful official used his position to earn and hide business revenues.



Mihran Poghosyan

Government Committee to Address State and Church Ties

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – By a decision of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, on January 29 it was announced that a working group dealing with issues concerning relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian Apostolic Church has been created, the government announced on its website.

The working group's composition includes representatives from ministries at the level of deputy ministers, the prime minister's chief of staff, as well as high ranking members of the clergy of the church.

Armenian media outlets had for years accused Poghosyan of having extensive business interests. In particular, the 43-year-old was widely regarded as the main owner of Katrin Group, a company that enjoyed a de facto monopoly on banana imports to Armenia until last year's Velvet Revolution that toppled Sargsyan. He always denied owning any lucrative businesses.

Shortly after the revolution the State

Revenue Committee (SRC) launched a tax evasion inquiry into Katrin Group and three other firms linked to it. They promptly admitted failing to pay a total of 600 million drams (\$1.2 million) in taxes, leading the SRC to stop the criminal proceedings.

The SRC reopened the probe a few weeks later, however, saying that it has discovered evidence of greater tax evasion on the part of the four business entities.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

MFA: We Commemorate 6 Million Who Perished during Holocaust

YEREVAN (News.am) — Armenia's Foreign Ministry honored the memory of those who lost their lives during the Holocaust on Sunday, January 27, International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

"Today we commemorate 6 million worlds that perished because of hate and violence. Men, women, boys and girls, each of whom had dreams, who loved and were loved, to whom we have a sacred obligation: never to let the horror occur again. #Neverforget #Holocaust #HolocaustMemorialDay," the MFA tweeted with a photo of a memorial to the victims of Holocaust.

Kalashnikov Director Visits Armenia to Discuss Production Plant

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Defense Minister of Armenia Davit Tonoyan received on January 29 a delegation led by General Director of Kalashnikov Andrei Baryshnikov.

Tonoyan highlighted the cooperation of Armenian military industrial companies with Kalashnikov and expressed his readiness to support all the initiatives aimed at the joint military production.

Congratulating Armenia on Army Day and thanking for the invitation to participate in the official reception dedicated to the 27th anniversary of the establishment of the Armenian army, Baryshnikov presented to the Armenian Defense Minister the implementation process of the initiatives with Armenian partners in the sidelines of CSTO cooperation. Particularly, Baryshnikov informed that final details of the production of new assault rifles have already been clarified.

Jerusalem Mayor Visits Armenian Patriarchate

JERUSALEM (news.am) — Moshe Lion, the newly elected Mayor of Jerusalem, visited the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem on January 16, where he met with Archbishop Nourhan Manougian, the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem.

First, the Patriarch congratulated Lion on being elected mayor, and he wished him success. The new mayor, in turn, congratulated the Patriarch on the New Year and Christmas holidays.

Also, the interlocutors discussed matters of concern for the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Armenian community.

Foreign Minister Receives EU Commissioner

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Foreign Minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan received the European Union (EU) Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Johannes Hahn on January 29.

The two discussed Armenia-EU multilayered agenda in detail, emphasizing the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) as a key legal base regulating bilateral relations.

In this context Mnatsakanyan noted that the CEPA is an important tool for fostering the development agenda of the Armenian Government, emphasizing the strengthening of democratic institutions of the country.

Mnatsakanyan and Hahn assessed the 10th anniversary of the Eastern Partnership Initiative a good opportunity for summing up the achievements of the initiative and outline future activities.

During the meeting the sides exchanged views on a number of pressing international and regional issues, a special attention was paid to the situation in Syria and the recent developments over Iran.

Mnatsakanyan detailed to Hahn the recent developments over the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement process, the approaches and position of Armenia on NK conflict settlement.

Council of Europe Human Rights Report Asks Armenia to Improve Record on Women, Children and Disabled

YEREVAN — The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Dunja Mijatovic has published a report based on her visit to Armenia carried out in September 2018, the Council of Europe reported.

"The report focuses on women's rights, gender equality and domestic violence; the human rights of disadvantaged or vulnerable groups; and accountability for past human rights violations.

Finding that women in Armenia remain significantly underrepresented in public decision-making, the Commissioner urges the authorities to ensure women's full and effective participation, as well as equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of public life, equal pay and equal access to the labor market. In order to counter the persisting discriminatory gender stereotypes, Commissioner Mijatovic recommends raising public awareness and promoting gender equality, especially through education.

To build on the considerable improvements to Armenia's legislation against domestic violence, the Commissioner recommends ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, while ensuring that the new national legislation is effectively applied in practice. Specifically, she urges the authorities to increase the availability of places in shelters for victims of domestic violence, and to ensure access to education for children staying in such shelters.

Another focus area of the report is the human rights of persons with disabilities, children, older persons and LGBTI people.

While welcoming the authorities' clear commitment towards de-institutionalization of persons with disabilities, the commissioner recommends that revised legislation governing state support to persons with disabilities ensure their inclusion in all decision-making processes that concern them. In particular, she calls on the authorities to put an end to plenary guardianship for persons with psycho-social disabilities and to move from a substituted to a supported decision-making model for all persons who may require such support.

The Commissioner encourages the government to achieve its aim to make

all education fully inclusive by 2025, and recommends that special attention be paid to ensuring inclusive education at the pre-school level and to pursuing de-institutionalization equally for children with and without disabilities. She



Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Dunja Mijatovic

also recommends that Armenia solidify its commitment to international standards in this area, by accepting additional provisions of the Revised European Social Charter, and by ratifying instruments allowing for individual and collective complaints. The Commissioner welcomes the recent appointment of a well-known disability rights activist as Minister for Labor and Social Affairs, and encourages the government to take further action to raise public awareness on the rights of persons with disabilities.

Mijatovic recommends that Armenia strengthen its efforts to combat child poverty and to guarantee the right of all children to an adequate standard of living. She is particularly concerned by the placement in state care of children whose parents face socio-economic difficulties. She encourages the authorities to expand their efforts to allocate resources for parents resuming care over their children, while promoting foster care — including for children with disabilities — when this is in the child's best interest. The Commissioner also recommends that Armenia improve its legislation protecting all children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, in particular by ratifying the Council of Europe

Lanzarote Convention.

To address the inadequate level of social protection of older persons in Armenia, the Commissioner recommends raising the overall level of old age pensions, increasing the availability of primary and specialized health care at the home or in the community, and tackling the shortage of medical professionals specialized in geriatric services.

The Commissioner further recommends that the authorities promptly adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination law which should specifically include a clear reference to sexual orientation and gender identity. She calls on the authorities to take prompt and resolute action against

all instances of violence, hate speech and hate crime targeting LGBTI persons in Armenia. Such incidents must be firmly condemned and investigated, and those responsible prosecuted. She also urges parliamentarians to unequivocally reject any legislative proposals that may infringe on the rights of LGBTI persons or stoke anti-LGBTI sentiments.

Lastly, Mijatovic welcomes the steps taken to finally establish the truth and prosecute those responsible for the deaths that occurred during the violent events of March 2008. At the same time, she stresses the importance of ensuring that this process is conducted in a careful manner and in strict adherence to the principles of rule of law, judicial independence, transparency and guarantees of fair trial, in order to dispel any accusations of alleged revenge politics or selective justice. She also calls on the Armenian authorities to protect the presumption of innocence of any person charged with criminal misconduct and to avoid using polarizing, stigmatizing or inflammatory language in their public discourse, which the Commissioner believes to be an obstacle to building a cohesive society and healing past divisions," the CoE said in a press release.

Russia, Turkey Agree to Take Steps to 'Stabilize' Syria's Idlib

MOSCOW (Al Jazeera) — Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan say they have discussed steps needed to stabilize the situation in Syria's Idlib province where the joint battle against "terrorist" organizations will continue.

Erdogan arrived in Moscow on Wednesday, January 23, with several of his cabinet members for a day-long visit.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Russian Foreign Ministry said the situation in the region, where Moscow and Ankara have tried to create a de-escalation zone, was rapidly deteriorating and that it was almost under the full control of Hay'et Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) - a rebel group that was previously linked to al-Qaeda.

"Unfortunately there are many problems there and we see them," said Putin, standing alongside Erdogan at a joint press conference following the meeting.

He said Turkey was doing a lot to try to remedy the situation, but that more action by both Ankara and Moscow was

required to "liquidate the actions of terrorist groups".

In September last year, Turkey pledged to disarm and remove HTS fighters in Idlib when a deal was signed between Turkey and Russia.

The deal succeeded in preventing a Russia-backed Syrian government offensive from launching in Idlib which is home to nearly three million people.

Putin also said he had agreed to host a summit soon where Russia, Turkey and Iran could discuss the situation in Syria under the Astana peace track.

He noted that a Syrian Constitutional Committee is "very important" and dialogue should be initiated among all parties, and complained about the difficulty of forming a UN-sponsored committee.

The two leaders met to discuss the situation in Syria as the nearly eight-year conflict winds down. Various players - including numerous armed groups backed by different allies - seek to gain control of territory.

Ankara is seeking to establish a 30km-long safe zone along the Syrian border to contain a US-allied Kurdish militia that it considers a "terrorist" group.

During Wednesday's joint press conference, Erdogan said the leaders did not have any disagreements about establishing this planned safe zone, without revealing any details.

Al Jazeera's Rory Challands, reporting from Moscow, said the two leaders have not reached a concrete deal over two main issues — establishing the so-called safe zone, and the situation in Idlib.

"The Russians are saying yes, 'we will help our Turkish friends to ensure their security, but the preferred Russian way of doing that is by getting Damascus and the Kurds to talk'," he said.

Erdogan also said it was of crucial importance that the planned US withdrawal from Syria does not leave room for "terrorist" groups to roam freely.

He added Turkey and Russia would continue to battle "terrorist" organizations in Syria's Idlib province.



INTERNATIONAL

Foreign Minister Meets with Francophonie Secretary General in Paris

PARIS — On January 17, Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, Foreign Minister of Armenia, met with Louise Mushikiwabo, the newly appointed Secretary General of International Organisation of La Francophonie (IOF).

Mnatsakanyan once again congratulated Louise Mushikiwabo on assuming the post of the OIF Secretary General and reiterated Armenia's full support in fulfilling her mandate and clearly outlined priorities aimed at further development of the OIF - an important platform based on common values.

The interlocutors highly commended the Yerevan Summit of La Francophonie in terms of organization, substance and representation. He and the OIF Secretary General shared the view that the decisions adopted and the agreements reached within the framework of the Summit create good prerequisites for deepening cooperation within the Francophone region.

During the meeting, Mnatsakanyan briefed Mushikiwabo on the priorities of the Armenian Presidency in the La Francophonie Summit and upcoming plans by underscoring expectations of close cooperation with the OIF Secretariat for their implementation. Promotion of the trade-economic component between the OIF member states, advancement of smart development and digital agendas were outlined as priority directions. Acting Minister noted that as a country presiding at the Summit, Armenia will continue to take steps aimed at resolving the issues faced by the organization, to strengthen its position and reputation on the international fora, including through a close cooperation with international and regional organizations, such as the UN, UNESCO, the Council of Europe. In this context, the parties highlighted the promotion of dialogue with the African Union.



Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, Foreign Minister of Armenia, and Louise Mushikiwabo, the Secretary General of International Organisation of La Francophonie (IOF).

Better Assad Than the Turks, Say Syrian Kurds Squeezed by Trump

By Glen Carey

WASHINGTON (Bloomberg) — Syrian Kurds are pursuing talks with the government in Damascus to protect their territory from attack by Turkey, one possible consequence of President Donald Trump's decision to pull US troops from the country.

"It isn't comfortable for us but what is the other option?" said Ilham Ahmed, a senior official with the Kurdish group that fought Islamic State alongside the US "If we were cornered into choosing between a Turkish militia attacking our areas," and reaching an accord with President Bashar al-Assad, she said in an interview in Washington, "we would go with the regime."

Kurds were the most important ground forces in the American-led coalition against Islamic State in Syria, taking heavy casualties and eventually gaining control of about one-third of the country. But their prospects of holding onto it took a blow when Trump announced that the US would withdraw.

Turkey has strongly opposed the US alliance with Ahmed's Kurdish group, which it sees as the Syrian branch of a terrorist organization that's been fighting for autonomy from Ankara. Turkey is keen to move into parts of northeast Syria when the US departs, and the two NATO allies have discussed setting up a "safe zone" to protect Turkey's borders.

'We'd Fight Back'

Ahmed said that such a zone wouldn't be safe at all for the Kurds, but a "swamp of terrorism." And she said they'd fight back if Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's sends in his troops. "We can protect the safe zone ourselves," she said. "We would defend ourselves."

The Kurds, she said, have provided Assad, and his key backer, Russia, with an 11-point road map for reintegrating the region under the Damascus government. The new Syria should be "decentralized," said Ahmed. But "we want the unity of Syria. We don't want to secede."

Trump shocked even those in his inner circle by yielding to a suggestion from Erdogan, during a December 14 telephone conversation between the two leaders, to reverse the Pentagon's Syrian strategy by pulling out US forces.

Trump's critics have warned that his abrupt decision would enable the Assad-Russia-Iran alliance to complete its victory in the eight-year civil war, which has killed half a million people and turned millions more into refugees.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis resigned over the withdrawal plan, and other officials have pushed back, creating confusion over the timetable for withdrawal.

'Wave of Violence'

In Ankara last weekend, Republican Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, a prominent Trump ally and influential voice on foreign policy, said the US should slow down its planned exit to make sure Iran doesn't emerge as the biggest winner.

Ahmed said she's in Washington "to hear assurances and explain our point of view." She said what she's heard from the Americans suggests that they "aren't going to put a deadline for the withdrawal yet." And she warned that if the Kurds are left out of any Syrian settlement, there could be "another wave of violence." The Americans, she said, should be trying to help achieve a political solution to the conflict between Turkey and the Kurds as well as to the daunting question of Syria's future.

While he backs the idea of a safe zone in which Turkey would be involved, Trump has acknowledged the risks for his Kurdish allies. In a January 13 tweet, the president threatened to "devastate Turkey economically" if Erdogan's armed forces attack the Kurdish fighters who helped drive Islamic State out of 99 percent of the territory it once held.

Georgia Might Be Led By a Woman But That Hasn't Stopped the Sex Smears

By Alan Crosby

TBILISI (RFE/RL) — A female member of Georgia's parliament is vowing to fight back as another sex-tape scandal rocks the former Soviet republic just as it hoped to shed its chauvinist image following the election of the country's first female president.

Eka Beselia, a member of the ruling Georgian Dream party, became the target of what she called a "moral terror" campaign after video of her personal life, apparently taken without her knowledge, was released over the weekend.

Beselia, well-known in Georgia for her recent stance against the appointment of Supreme Court justices for life, says the videos were recorded several years ago when Mikheil Saakashvili and his United National Movement (ENM) party ruled Georgia. She was the head of the Georgian parliament's Legal Affairs Committee until the end of December.

"You will not be able to stop me, you will not be able to silence me or make me disappear!!!" she said in a Facebook post late on January 28.

"You have awakened a new Eka in me. One who is more and more self-reliant on my beliefs, commitment, and responsibility. Who can protect a woman better than herself?" she added.

The leaked videos that spread on social media have sparked an outcry in Georgia, where illicit footage featuring influential politicians and journalists regularly surfaces despite official pledges to stop it.

The use of sex espionage is a well-honed tactic dating back to the Soviet era, with covert footage having been used against a number of public figures. In recent years, such tactics have been used in Russia and Azerbaijan.

In Georgia, Saakashvili's former government — which ruled between 2004 and 2012 — was accused several times of building up a massive

collection of compromising videos featuring members of the opposition, 181 hours of which were publicly destroyed, though many worry hundreds of hours more still exist.

'A Message To All Women'

The timing also hits just weeks after Salome Zurbishvili, backed by billionaire and Saakashvili rival Bidzina Ivanishvili, broke the gender barrier to become the first female ever elected president of the country.

After the leak, parliament Chairman Irakli Kobakhidze called for an immediate investigation of a crime he characterized as "immoral."

"I have personally communicated with law enforcement agencies and I call on them once again to investigate this case and to investigate it fully," he told journalists on January 29.

Still, sex scandals are usually more damaging for women than for men in Georgia, where male public figures face little public backlash, if any, for their sexual relations.

"Such actions are aimed at intimidating not only the targeted recipients, but also those members of society who are critical of officials. These methods of battle are most often used against

active women and are a message to all such women," the civil campaign This Affects You — They Are Still Listening said in a statement.

"It is astonishing that the exposure of her private life suspiciously coincides with the recent criticisms Eka Beselia has made regarding the judicial process. It is distressing that...specific people are trying to stop court reforms and try to protect the clans of judges."

Like many other rights advocates, Baia Patariaia, a lawyer who runs the Georgian women's rights organization Union Sapari, views the footage release and threats as a brazen attack on women who have defied Georgia's macho culture and successfully pursued a career in a male-dominated profession.

Patariaia believes the tapes are a message for women to "think again" before entering politics.

"Private recordings are used as a political weapon against women, based on the fact that sexual freedom and a woman's private life are considered taboo," she was quoted as saying by the online news website On.ge.

Bad Old Days Live On

In the past, the ENM party that ruled Georgia under Saakashvili has pinned the blame squarely on government supporters, in particular Ivanishvili, the influential founder of Georgian Dream.

Georgian Dream officials have rejected the oft-made accusations, claiming the videos were recorded during the ENM's time in power.

"There is nothing to explain in the content that is being disseminated. The form is disgusting. The deprivation of a family's coexistence and the invasion into private space with hidden cameras!!!" Beselia said in her Facebook post.

"I demand answers...from law enforcement agencies in the shortest possible time.... What is happening now? Who chose to exact revenge on me with this method? Who had this footage? Who made the illegal recordings and attempted to exert moral pressure on me?" she added.



Georgian President Salome Zurbishvili

Community News

FAR Fund Honors Legacy of Dr. Nerses 'Krik' Krikorian, Celebrated Scientist

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – Nerses “Krik” Krikorian was 4-years-old when he first stepped on US soil. Born on the side of a Turkish road in 1921 as his parents were fleeing the Armenian Genocide, his family spent the next four years moving from country to country with only the clothes on their backs. On the way, his brother was born in Aleppo, Syria.

Canada became their final refuge. The family finally found its American home in Niagara Falls, NY, when Krik was 4, his father becoming a factory worker, and his mother a homemaker after having their youngest child.

He remembered many years later, that all that moving from place to place was a “tortured way of living, because you don’t belong anywhere.”

With such bleak beginnings, Krikorian’s future seemed anything but promising. From age 4 to 96, when he died in Los Alamos, NM,



At an International Symposium, right, with Charlton Heston, left

his story is anything if not amazing. He was one of the most famed scientists and intelligence analysts in America, having been a major player on the Los Alamos Manhattan Project which eventually created the first nuclear weapon.

His first job was at Union Carbide in 1943, following a bachelor’s degree in chemistry. The lab made highly enriched uranium. He was, however, unaware that he was ensconced in the Manhattan Project which dropped the first atom bomb on Hiroshima.

He said at the time, “Well, the war is going to end. And I hope we never have to use it again for any purpose.”

After the war, Union Carbide cut down its uranium work, and he went to New Mexico to continue working on the Manhattan project.

Many years later, when his father visited him, he mentioned to Krik that the rugged mountains and dry climate of New Mexico reminded him of the old country. Krik felt that “deep down, maybe I had some connection to it that I didn’t even remember.”

It was also at Los Alamos that he met his wife, Katherine Patterson, who had also come in 1943 to work on the Manhattan Project as a member of the Women’s Army Corps.

There, they raised their only child, Debra, now a retired Army lieutenant colonel.

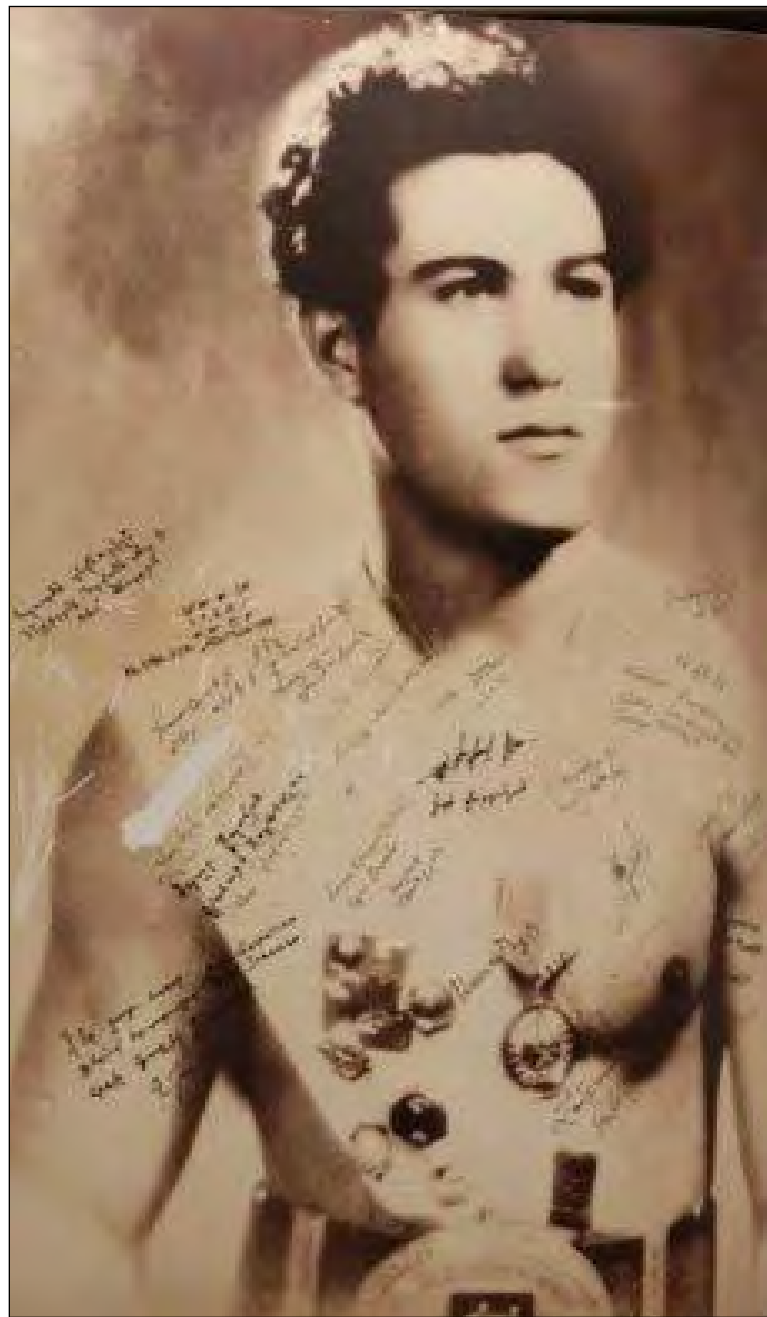
Armenian Ties

And so began an illustrious career for Krik that spanned four and a half decades. It was in 1972, when he was asked to join an intelligence unit, though he didn’t know why. He suspected that the reason also included the fact that he spoke fluent Armenian and some Russian.

As a child, his parents had forced him to speak and write Armenian, as well as to learn the history, culture and literature of Armenia.

“As a kid, I thought it was useless,” he remembered. Why do I need to learn a language that hardly anyone speaks. I guess God knew what was coming.”

see KRIK, page 9



Portrait of Vladimir Yengibaryan

TCA Metro LA Chapter Pays Tribute to Gold-Medal Winning Armenian Boxer Vladimir Yengibaryan

Remembered by the Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles Chapter

GLENDALÉ – The Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles Chapter hosted a program titled “Vladimir Yengibaryan: Gold Medal Winning Armenian Boxing Legend” on January 25, at the Glendale Central Library. Avetis Bairamian, sports editor of *Nor Or* weekly and author of Armenian language publications, *Famous Armenians in the World of Sports* and *Armenian Sports Encyclopedia*, served as the keynote speaker and presented the fascinating life of Vladimir Yengibaryan.

Mihran Toumajan served as the program’s master of ceremonies and explained that one of the goals of the program was to continue a campaign for Yengibaryan to become an eligible candidate for induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York. Yengibaryan’s eligibility would become possible upon the establishment of an “Amateur Section” at the Hall of Fame. Toumajan also made specific references to Armenian Americans throughout the 20th century who made notable contributions to boxing in the United States, including Lud Shabazian of the New Jersey Boxing Hall of Fame, who was a boxing writer and cartoonist. Shabazian was also one of many who participated in the organizational work which led to the building of St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral in New York.

Toumajan also highlighted the work of Ed Derian, a prominent boxing ring announcer and member of the Pennsylvania Boxing Hall of Fame. Also referenced were two Armenian Americans from Massachusetts, including Dr. Nishan Kechejian of Brockton, the personal physician for Hall of Fame middleweight boxing champion Marvin Hagler, and Haroutune “Harry” Bilazarian of Boylston, a successful boxer in the late 1940s, who happened to be defeated by legendary boxing champion Rocky Marciano in Providence, RI in 1948.

Following Toumajan’s opening remarks, Varazdat Pahlavuni, counselor of the

see TRIBUTE, Page 7

IDEA Foundation Shares New Ways of Mobilizing Investments For Sustainable Development Goals

NEW YORK – The Initiatives for Development of Armenia (IDEA) Foundation is seeking to expand its horizons to mobilize investments for implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Armenia. To further this goal, on January 25, at the United Nations (UN) headquarters, the IDEA Foundation, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations held a joint event, titled “Ideas for Impact: Mobilizing Investment for Sustainable Development Goals.”

The event, attended by representatives of the UN Member States, leading philanthropists and impact investors, civil society and diaspora organizations representatives, explored the ways and opportunities to accelerate solutions and innovations contributing to the achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs). The 17 SDGs summarize the ambitious agenda set by the United Nations Member States to transform the world by 2030.

The panel discussion opened with welcome remarks by Mher Margaryan, the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations, followed by Inga Rhonda King, president of the UN Economics and Social Council (ECOSOC).

In his opening remarks, Margaryan highlighted the added value of partnerships for sustainable development – the very idea behind the 2030 agenda and Goal 17, which calls for enhanced synergies for inclusive and collaborative action by the government, the civil society, the private sector in supporting sustainable development efforts. “We are determined to continue to work hand in hand with all partners who are committed to ideas for impact, and, in this context, I would like to thank the IDEA Foundation for commitment and dedication to the UN global goals and the projects implemented in support of the SDGs.”

With government experience exceeding two decades, Margaryan served as First Secretary to Armenia’s Embassy to the United Kingdom from 2006 to 2009, as head of the United Nations Division at the Department of International Organizations at his country’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2005 to 2006, and Second Secretary to the Armenia’s Mission to the United Nations from 2001 to 2004. From 2000 to 2001, he served as Third Secretary at the Department of International Organizations at the United Nations Desk in Armenia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he also worked as an attaché from 1998 to 1999.

Role of IDEA

The discussion focused on the role IDEA Foundation can play as a development partner joining efforts with other stakeholders to accelerate and scale up business solutions/innovations contributing to the achievement of SDGs in Armenia, and the role of diaspora in creating effective development cooperation.

In this regard, now on the board of Armenia’s UNDP-supported National SDG Innovation Lab, IDEA is working with Armenians from all walks of life – from local communities to the Armenian diaspora – to strengthen the country’s economy and living standards while preserving its culture and ancestral traditions.

“Learning by doing, bringing in platforms of different partners, such as IDEA Foundation, scaling up solutions and bringing in blended financing are key factors to increase success in development in the 21st century,” said Paolo Galli, Senior Regional Adviser at UNDP’s Regional Bureau for Europe and Central Asia.

In his keynote speech board member of IDEA Foundation, co-founder of Aurora Humanitarian Initiative Nouraf Afeyan touched

see IDEA, page 9



COMMUNITY NEWS

TCA Metro LA Chapter Pays Tribute to Gold-Medal Winning Boxer Vladimir Yengibaryan

TRIBUTE, from page 6

Consulate General of the Republic of Armenia in Los Angeles, addressed the audience on behalf of the Consulate. In his remarks, Pahlavuni emphasized that Vladimir Yengibaryan was synonymous with “greatness,” in light of his gold medal winning performance at the Summer Olympics in Melbourne, Australia in 1956, which elated Armenians around the world. Pahlavuni concluded his remarks by praising Yengibaryan’s service to the Armenian nation, not only as an athlete, but also as a coach.

Upon the completion of Pahlavuni’s remarks, Toumajan read the biography of keynote speaker Bairamian, and invited him to the podium. Bairamian mentioned that Yengibaryan was born in Yerevan in 1932 and made special note of the significance of his birthday being on April



Artur Aleksanyan

24. Bairamian spoke of Yengibaryan’s prolific career, having retired with a record of 255 wins and 12 losses. Yengibaryan was a three-time European champion (1953, 1957 and 1959) and three-time Soviet champion (1955, 1956 and 1958). Bairamian listed many of Yengibaryan’s noteworthy accomplishments, including his earning of a gold medal for the U.S.S.R. in the light welterweight (63.5 kg) category at the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne. Yengibaryan, con-



From left, Talene Hachikian, Taleen Babayan, Armand Yerjanian, Carl Bardakian, Knarik Yengibaryan, Artur Aleksanyan, Counselor Varazdat Pahlavuni, Mihran Toumajan and Parsegh Kartalian

Shahinyan won two gold medals four years earlier in gymnastics at the Summer Olympics in Helsinki in 1952. Bairamian praised Yengibaryan for being a great patriot and national hero of the Armenian people. Bairamian also emphasized the importance of Yengibaryan as a prominent boxing coach, who developed and trained several generations of Armenian youth in the sport of boxing until his death on February 1, 2013 in Los Angeles.

Upon the completion of Bairamian’s speech, Toumajan expressed the Tekeyan Cultural Association’s gratitude to Artur “the White Bear” Aleksanyan of Gyumri, seated in the front row, for his attendance at the presentation in posthumous honor of Vladimir Yengibaryan. Aleksanyan won a gold medal in the sport of Greco-Roman Wrestling for the Republic of Armenia at the Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2016. Toumajan recounted the significance for Armenians throughout the globe, when, during the medal ceremony, the humble and patriotic Aleksanyan wore a t-shirt with the image of hero Robert Abajyan, a junior sergeant who, along with over 100 fellow Armenian soldiers, sacrificed his life for the defense of Artsakh during the April 2016 Four-Day War initiated by Azerbaijan.

The program continued with Carl Bardakian, chairman of the Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles Chapter, offering remarks and indicating that Yengibaryan is, indisputably, one of the most important figures in Armenian sports history. Bardakian highlighted that, albeit representing the best of Armenians in different sport categories, the torch for Armenian athletic excellence has been passed from 20th-century Olympic gold medalist Yengibaryan to 21st-century Olympic gold medalist Aleksanyan. Bardakian emphasized that the passing of this torch should serve as inspiration to all athletically serious Armenian youth – be they in Armenia, Artsakh, or in the diaspora – to become the next Yengibaryan or Aleksanyan in their chosen sport. Bardakian concluded his remarks by referencing a historic photo of Yengibaryan with Catholicos and Supreme Patriarch of All Armenians, Vasken I, and mentioned how Yengibaryan would often travel to Holy Echmiadzin before his boxing matches, in order to receive a blessing from Catholicos Vasken I.

Bardakian warmly welcomed Knarik Yengibaryan, the widow of the honoree. Mrs. Yengibaryan thanked the Tekeyan Cultural Association for organizing the program in



Keynote speaker Avetis Bairamian

posthumous honor of her husband. She recounted Vladimir Yengibaryan’s deep patriotism to his nation, as well as his devotion to the sport of boxing. The Yengibaryans were blessed with four children and several grandchildren, with many of the latter in attendance to hear about their remarkable grandfather.

Next, Toumajan introduced Nazo Ayranyan,



Custom made souvenir boxing gloves dedicated to Vladimir Yengibaryan’s gold medal performance donated by Nazo Ayranyan.



Mrs. Knarik Yengibaryan, widow of champion boxer Vladimir Yengibaryan

a prominent boxing coach and referee originally from Vanadzor. Currently the owner of Nazo Boxing in North Hollywood, California, a boxing supplies manufacturer, Ayranyan presented Knarik Yengibaryan and keynote speaker Bairamian with custom-made souvenir boxing gloves dedicated to Vladimir Yengibaryan’s gold medal performance at the Summer Olympics in 1956 in Melbourne, Australia.

Toumajan concluded the program by thanking attendees and particularly the Yengibaryan family, who joined the Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles Chapter to remember and posthumously honor the legendary Yengibaryan.



Mrs. Knarik Yengibaryan holding boxing gloves worn by her late husband, Vladimir Yengibaryan, flanked by Carl Bardakian and Mihran Toumajan

sidered the most prominent Soviet boxer of the 1950s, was the first Soviet boxer to become a European champion. After his retirement, Yengibaryan served as an international boxing referee and judge. Bairamian stressed in his presentation that Yengibaryan was the second gold medalist from Soviet Armenia after Hrants



OBITUARY

Michel Legrand, Oscar-Winning Composer, Dies At 86

LEGRAND, from page 1
Norman Jewison's "The Thomas Crown Affair" (1968), with Noel Harrison singing *The Windmills of Your Mind*, which won Legrand's first Oscar, for best film theme song, in 1969. Another Oscar followed for "The Summer of '42" two years later – this time for best film music. Its theme, *The Summer Knows*, was recorded later that year by Barbra Streisand, whose 1983 film, "Yentl," won him his third Oscar, again for best music.

Legrand's songwriting skills flowered in the early 1950s through intimate acquaintance with the modern chanson movement in Paris, at first as a gifted piano accompanist. After World War II, the US was nostalgic for French culture, and when Columbia Records commissioned an English-language album of chanson classics, the young Legrand was hired to steer it – and found himself with an 8-million-selling hit.

By his mid-20s, Legrand was able to call the shots as a composer and arranger on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1958, he even had more than sufficient clout to hire Miles Davis, John Coltrane and Bill Evans – three of the hippest and most acclaimed young jazz musicians of the decade – to play sidemen's roles on his "Legrand Jazz Session."

Legrand was born in the Paris suburb of Bécon-les-Bruyères into a family with strong musical connections. His father, Raymond Legrand, was a composer, conductor and former pupil of Gabriel Fauré, and in his later years would go on to collaborate with Edith Piaf and Maurice Chevalier. His maternal uncle on his mother Marcelle's side was the dance-band saxophonist and bandleader Jacques Hélian.

But Raymond left home when Michel was 3, and his mother Marcelle (nee Ter-Mikaëlian), struggled to provide for the boy and his older sister, Christiane. He found a consoling friend in the flat's battered piano and it quickly emerged that he had a gift. Christiane also played the instrument, and she was similarly destined for a successful career in music, as a jazz singer.

Michel became obsessed with the music and life of Franz Schubert, and – with Nadia Boulanger among his teachers – won a raft of prizes on a variety of instruments at the Paris Conservatoire, which he began attending as a 10-year-old in 1942. But a 1947 Paris concert by the bebop trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie and his big band thrilled him with the sound of jazz.

By the time he left the conservatoire in 1949 he was a budding jazz pianist with a profound knowledge of musical theory and a working knowledge of many instruments. His resourcefulness quickly found him work with chanson stars including Juliette Gréco and Zizi Jeanmaire, and in 1954 the international popularity of chanson brought his international breakthrough.

Columbia-EMI wanted an English-language version of those evocative Parisian songs, and none of the big-name American arrangers was interested. Through a contact at the record company, the unknown Legrand was commissioned to produce it – for \$200 and no royalties. The result was the best-selling album "I Love ParisChevalier then hired Legrand as his musical director and the resulting US tours enhanced the newcomer's stature.

Legrand began a solo career, with the easy-listening but sophisticated jazz albums "Holiday in Rome" (1955), "Michel Legrand Plays Cole Porter" (1957) and "Legrand in Rio" (1958). He also worked with the French Caribbean singer Henri Salvador, who, under the alias of Henri Cording, made some of the first French forays into rock and roll, with Legrand furnishing the music and the surrealist novelist, poet and jazz critic Boris Vian the lyrics. In 1958, he returned to New York to make his celebrated Legrand Jazz album – with Ben Webster joining Coltrane, Evans and Davis in the lineup.

Legrand later admitted to being anxious about Davis's involvement. The trumpeter rarely played sessions other than his own and made a diva's point of arriving 15 minutes late, checking out the music from the studio doorway and promptly leaving if he did not like the sound of it. But, according to Legrand, the usually taciturn Davis not only participated, but even asked the young bandleader if he had liked his contribution.

By this point, Legrand was developing a paral-

lel career as a film composer. He scored Henri Verneuil's 1955 crime passionel movie "Les Amants du Tage" (The Lovers of Lisbon), and became a significant collaborator with the new wave directors Jean-Luc Godard, Agnès Varda and François Reichenbach. He also composed for Jacques Demy, most notably on the innovative "Les Parapluies de Cherbourg" (The Umbrellas of Cherbourg) – a reappraisal of the film musical, combining a realist perspective with a narrative in which songs replaced dialogue.

The movie's theme song *Je Ne Pourrai Jamais Vivre Sans Toi* was covered – in English as *I Will Wait for You* – by stars including Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett and Liza Minnelli. Legrand, Demy and the film's lead, Catherine Deneuve, collaborated on the Hollywood homage "Les Demoiselles de Rochefort" (The Young Girls of Rochefort, 1967), with Gene Kelly. Legrand also wrote for Gilles Grangier and Yves Allégret, and for Joseph Losey – most notably in 1971 on the Palme d'Or winner *The Go-Between*.

Through close relationships with the jazz-enthusiastic chanson singer Claude Nougaro and the Belgian singer-songwriter Jacques Brel, Legrand not only began to develop a personal repertoire of original songs, but to consider performing them himself. He collaborated on the lyrics with other writers including Eddy Marnay and Jean Dréjac, and worked on the occasional forays into songwriting by the novelist Françoise Sagan.

In 1968, Legrand moved to Los Angeles, during which time he composed the award-winning scores to "The Thomas Crown Affair" and then, two years later, "Summer of '42." Legrand later said that Jewison cut the highly charged seven-and-a-half-minute chess game scene between Steve McQueen and Faye Dunaway in "The Thomas Crown Affair" to fit the music, which begins with a solo harp and ends with a big band playing a jazz waltz.

As well as the Oscars, between 1971 and 1975 Legrand won five Grammy awards, and in this period was on his way to becoming one of the US's most popular Frenchmen. A sharp and witty raconteur, he appeared on television chat shows, and for relaxation worked at Shelly's Manne Hole club in Los Angeles with the great double bassist Ray Brown. In the next decade, he composed for Clint Eastwood and Orson Welles, and the James Bond film "Never Say Never Again" (1983).

During this time Legrand also played a lot of jazz, making three albums with a regular trio featuring the bassist Marc-Michel Le Bévillon and the drummer André Ceccarelli, and bringing together the celebrated American saxophonists Phil Woods and Zoot Sims to join him in a septet to make the 1982 album "After the Rain." He released a solo vocal album, and staged his own oratorio, inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as part of the celebrations for the bicentenary of the French Revolution, in 1989.

Legrand's search for new challenges found one that even he could not pull off when he directed the unsuccessful semi-autobiographical film "Cinq Jours en Juin" (1989), but leading a big band in the next decade found him on more secure ground – he toured widely, and accompanied Ray Charles, Diana Ross and Björk with it. Legrand composed for Jean Guidoni's 1995 album "Vertigo" and participated in an award-winning show at the Casino de Paris with Guidoni the following year.

In 1997, with the playwright Didier Van Cauwelaert, he worked on "Le Passe Muraille," a quirky musical adapted from a 1943 Marcel Aymé short story about an unassuming clerk who can walk through walls. The show went to Broadway as "Amour" five years later, and its lead singer Melissa Errico became an important muse for Legrand. They worked together for six years on the album "Legrand Affair" (2011).

In his later years, Legrand remained ready for surprises, even if the world was beginning to treat him as a grand old man. Stars queued up to perform his hits in a celebration at the Louvre in 2000; and the French government made him an officier de la Légion d'honneur in 2003.

When his friend Nougaro died in 2004, he recorded "Legrand Nougaro," where the composer and a bespoke jazz band accompanied tapes of his friend's voice in new performances

of the Toulouse singer's songs – including the previously unheard *Mon Dernier Concert*.

In 2009 Legrand came to Britain with a repertoire combining his biggest hits and a selection of jazz favorites, and a lineup including his long-term partner, the harpist Catherine Michel and the singer Alison Moyet. The following year, he conducted the Moscow Virtuosi chamber group in Russia, for the two-CD set "The Music of Michel Legrand." And for his 80th birthday Christmas album the following year – "Noël! Noël!! Noël!!!" – Legrand was joined by Rufus Wainwright, Jamie Cullum and Iggy Pop.

"When I hit 80," he said, "I knew that the last chapter of my work would be classical. So I wrote a piano concerto that I recorded myself, a cello concerto, a harp concerto, some sonatas. I wrote a huge ballet. I'm very proud of that. It's a good final chapter."

Last September, Legrand conducted orchestral arrangements of music from his soundtracks with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, against projections of the scenes they originally accompanied, at the Royal Festival Hall, in London.

He lived his last years as he had lived his earliest ones as a precocious music student in Paris – guided, as he said, by the "ambition ... to live completely surrounded by music. My dream is not to miss out anything. That's why I've never settled on one musical discipline. I love playing, conducting, singing and writing, and in all styles. So I turn my hand to everything – not just a bit of everything. Quite the opposite, I do all these activities at once, seriously, sincerely

and with deep commitment."

Legrand was married three times: to Christine Bouchard, a model; to the actor and producer Isabelle Rondon, ended in divorce and Macha Mèril, whom he married in 2014.

He is survived by Macha and his four children, Dominique, Hervé, Benjamin and Eugénie.

Legrand last visited Armenia in 2012, in conjunction with the 6th International Music Festival in Yerevan. The Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra and City Lights Entertainment (London) gave a joint concert in his on his 80th birthday.

During interactions with Armenian media, Legrand spoke much about his Armenian roots and feelings toward his second motherland.

Legrand's maternal grandfather, Sarkis Der Mikaelian, was Armenian. In 1917, he fled the Armenian Genocide and settled in France.

"Armenia holds a special place in my heart. My Armenian grandpa died in 1942. As I lived for I 10 years with him, I learnt much about Armenia. He used to show the chords on piano to accompany Armenian national music instruments. His love toward Armenia was filled with sorrow. When I visited Armenia for the first time in 2009, I met with my extended family members," Legrand said.

During the visit Legrand was hosted by then president Serzh Sargsyan. "Every time I have a chance to visit Armenia, I feel, I return back to my roots. It's cordial for me and Armenian music flows in my blood," Legrand said at the meeting.

(The *Guardian* and Panorama.am contributed to this report.)

Harold M. Mgrublian World War II Veteran

PASADENA, Calif. — Harold M. Mgrublian died on January 14. He was 94.

He was born in Evanston, Ill., and raised in Euclid, Ohio, he passed away in Pasadena.

A loving husband, father, and grandfather.

During World War II, he served in the Pacific Theater as an intercept operator of the Japanese Katakana Code.

He was a member of South Pasadena Masonic Lodge #290 for over 70 years, the Valley York Rite Bodies, and the Pasadena Lodge of the



Knights of Vartan.

He is survived by his wife, Alice, son David (Margaret) of Pasadena, daughter Diane (Ron) of South Pasadena, and three granddaughters, Kathryn, Madlyn and Taleen.

Services were held on Friday, January 25, at Ararat Home of Los Angeles in Mission Hills.

Giragosian

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COMMUNITY NEWS

IDEA Foundation Shares New Ways of Mobilizing Investments for Sustainable Development Goals

IDEA, from page 6

upon the importance of engaging the Armenian diaspora in the implementation SDGs and spoke about the role of IDEA Foundation in that process.

"IDEA's thoughtful and holistic approach combines economic, social and cultural advantages to address ambitious goals for advancing the prosperity and strengthening the identity of the global Armenian nation. We are fortunate to have at its helm a committed group of leaders from the Armenian diaspora, who bring a diverse collection of talents and expertise," Afeyan noted.

He explained that at the core of IDEA's development model is an anchor project that represents a substantial investment and that makes a significant leap in sustainable long-term impact for the Armenian world.

Afeyan is the founder and CEO of Flagship Pioneering, an enterprise that systematically makes breakthrough, life-science innovations which improve human health and sustainability. During his 30-year career as inventor, entrepreneur and CEO, Dr. Afeyan co-founded and helped build more than 40 successful start-ups. He is currently a lecturer at Harvard Business School and was a senior lecturer at MIT. He received a Technology Pioneer 2012 award from the World Economic Forum (WEF). He is a member of the Corporation (Board of Trustees) of MIT and a member of the Board of the IDEA Foundation and the UWC Dilijan International School. In 2015, he co-founded the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative.

"IDEA makes its long-term impact on people; lives are changed, enriched, and empowered by

the projects that it launches. Ultimately, the most accurate measurements of prosperity and identity are ones that assess our contribution to the human condition," Ruben Vardanyan, philanthropist, social entrepreneur, co-founder of IDEA Foundation and Aurora Humanitarian Initiative added.

He noted that IDEA stands ready to complement the work and existing responsibilities of the government and civil society organizations, the UN and other development partners.

IDEA foundation has already directed over \$585 million of blended finance to development, implementing sustainable projects which have large scale socio-economic impact on Armenia's advancement. As an example of IDEA's successful project, the Tatev Revival program key achievements were presented during the event. Back in 2008, IDEA launched the Tatev Revival Program to demonstrate a powerful combination of traditional philanthropy, impact investment, as well as social investment to develop local communities.

Vardanyan serves on the advisory boards of the IFC (World Bank Group) and Fundação Dom Cabral business school in Brazil, board member at Ameriabank, among many others. A prominent financier, he is known both for his commercial projects as well as his philanthropic programs, such as the first UWC college in Eastern Europe (Dilijan, Armenia) and the Tatev Revival Project. In 2015, Vardanyan co-founded the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative.

Also participating in the program were Paolo Galli and Pierre Gurdjian.

Galli is the senior regional Adviser at the



Inga Rhonda King, president of the UN Economics and Social Council (ECOSOC) speaks while the panel listens.

Regional Bureau of Europe and the CIS of the UN Development Programme. Galli brings 30 year experience with the UN system holding various senior positions including as the Director of the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development Her Majesty Queen Maxima of the Netherlands, Director of UN and multilateral affairs in UNDP's Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy, Deputy Director of UNDP's Washington Liaison Office. Prior to joining the United Nations Paolo worked in the finan-

cial sector in London.

Gurdjian is Philanthropy Partner with the RVVZ Foundation. In addition, he is an expert in executive leadership and change management. He is also the President of the Board of Directors of the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), one of Belgium's largest universities, Vice President of the Board of Directors at UCB (a listed Belgian biopharmaceutical company), member of the Board of Directors at Lhoist (a Belgian industrial company, world leader in limestone production) and member of the Board of Directors at Ameria Bank.

FAR Fund Honors Legacy of Dr. Nerses 'Krik' Krikorian, Celebrated Scientist

KRIK, from page 6

In the 1960s he had to translate Russian chemistry books into English. This information became very useful to the US government at the time.

"I'm an American," he said. Feeling a deep commitment to America's national security, he felt that the intelligence analysts were all motivated to keep the peace. "I feel obligated to this country. Look at what I have been able to accomplish here."

Krik was always amazed that as a boy he had arrived in this country with papers that labeled him as "stateless," and could rise to a position of security head for a US intelligence unit.

As the holder of six patents, Krik retired in 1991 after receiving countless honors, including the Los Alamos Medallion (its highest award), two honorary doctorates, the CIA's Intelligence Community Medal, and in 2005, election as an honorary Doctor to Armenia's National Academy of Sciences.

Recently, Krik's daughter, Debra, in a telephone conversation, reminisced about her father's strong link to his heritage. "My father felt strongly about his Armenian background. He was fluent in both modern and liturgical Armenian, and could read and write."

Grandson of Genocide Survivors

She revealed that her grandparents suffered during the Genocide, with her grandmother's immediate family all killed. Her grandfather's brothers split, with the eldest moving to Canada,

and the other brother going to Yerevan.

"My grandparents apparently masqueraded as Kurds during a portion of this odyssey as both were fluent in Kurdish. They never spoke to me about the Genocide," Debra remembers.

She relates that when her father moved to New Mexico, there were very few Armenians, but in the 1950s and 1960s, a group of about 60 came together. "When I was a child we would get together with these families frequently even though it was 100 miles each way to see each other. During the 1980's there were enough to establish a cultural organization as well as an Armenian church which my parents supported."

She recalls that her father often read Armenian poetry, history and philosophy, and translated many writings "which he left to me. During the last days before his passing, he reverted to speaking Armenian and spoke to several of his Armenian friends. In short, he went back to his Armenian roots."

Krikorian had opportunities to go to Armenia in the 1990s, first at the request of the US State Department to assist and engage with the scientists there. Later he visited and assisted through the audits of scientific projects funded through the International Science and Technology Center.

During these visits, he also happily met his relatives there. It was his wife "who had the heart and soul of an Armenian" who first went to Armenia in 1979, and found his relatives who still

keep in contact with Debra to this day.

A scientist "in soul and heart," Krikorian had been regularly contributing to one of the most effective Diasporan projects supporting cutting-edge research and development in Armenia – the Armenian National Science and Education Fund (ANSEF), run by the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) in New York City.

Following his personal wishes, a special endow-

ment fund was established at FAR by his daughter after his death. Its goal is to perpetually support young researchers in universities in Armenia.

In a 2017 interview, Krikorian reflected, "things have worked out far beyond what I ever imagined. I think of my parents, and wonder, 'How did they ever do it'. My parents instilled in me the importance of doing the right thing and giving back to your fellow man. I hope I have done that."



In Armenia

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COMMUNITY NEWS

City of Smile Boston Friends Organize an Evening To Benefit Children with Cancer in Armenia

SMILES, from page 1

Despite the successes that have been achieved until now by dedicated staff fighting heavy odds, there are many difficulties that this clinic and the medical system in Armenia must overcome in order to provide treatment on a level and scale parallel to that offered in Western countries.

Dr. Gevorg Tamamyan, a pediatric oncologist and hematologist at the Muratsan Clinic and Muratsan Hospital in Yerevan, who is also an associate professor of oncology at Yerevan State Medical University, explained that pediatric cancer was a fatal disease in the Soviet era in Armenia. In 1993, Dr. Samvel Danielyan, who had studied and worked in Moscow, returned to Armenia to change this situation, and became the founder of modern pediatric oncology there.

Danielyan started using German protocols for treatment, and because the necessary drugs were not available, initiated the creation of the Help for Armenia foundation in Germany with the aid of German colleagues and philanthropists to obtain drugs for pediatric leukemia.

However, treatment of pediatric cancers is still done in a fragmented way in Armenia. The Hematology Center treats the majority of pediatric leukemias. Stem cell transplantation is done there, along with treatment of benign blood disorders. The National Oncology Center has the only radiation therapy unit in the country, so if radiation is required children must go there. There are also several other hospitals like Surb Astvatsamayr Hospital in Yerevan with surgical facilities that handle specific types of procedures.

One of the goals for pediatric chemotherapy, Dr. Tamamyan said, is to centralize the care.

The Muratsan Clinic receives some funding from the state and the university, and the remainder from philanthropic institutions. There are a number of major challenges that it faces. It lacks equipment, ranging from infusion pumps to monitors.

There is no family housing for family members who want to be with their children during treatment but live far away. There are no palliative care services or rooms, so that children die at home in pain and suffering, Tamamyan said.



Volunteers for City of Smile at the Jimmy Fund Walk

He began to find ways for the professional development of Armenian doctors, who were sent to Europe, Russia and the United States.

The survival rate of children with pediatric leukemia rose from the initial 0-5 percent to 65 percent, and now it is more than 70 percent. Danielyan eventually left his post at the Prof. R. H. Yolyan Hematology Center of the Armenian Ministry of Health in Yerevan and created the Muratsan Chemotherapy Clinic, connected to the Muratsan Hospital of Yerevan State Medical University, in 2008. The Muratsan Clinic treats almost all pediatric solid tumors in Armenia at the present, along with the majority of lymphomas and some leukemias. The clinic treats both children and adult patients with different types of oncological and hematological disorders. Many new types of treatment were started at this clinic which were not originally available in Armenia, with some of the results published formally.

There is no other clinic for children in Armenia in the private or public sectors. Yerevan State Medical University supports the clinic, which belongs to the Muratsan Hospital complex of the university. This means that there is an educational component of its activities, with students, fellows and research.

All of the doctors working at the clinic receive some training abroad and there is ongoing collaboration with different institutions around the world. The clinic also organizes conferences and meetings in Armenia. Last November, together with the Armenian Association of Hematology and Oncology, it hosted the joint master class of European School of Oncology and the American Society of Clinical Oncology. This was the first time not only in Armenia but in the world that these two major cancer organizations joined together for such a program.



Patients at the Muratsan Chemotherapy Clinic

line state of cancer in Armenia, including the types of cancers and the age they appear in the Armenian population. Hospital-based registries collect information to give an overview of toxic deaths, including what the causes are, the outcomes of treatments and specific regimens, and give clues as to what measures need to be changed. At present, a collaboration is being initiated with St. Jude Children's Hospital to create a registry.

Obtaining medications can be difficult. They have primarily been supplied as donations by charitable foundations, and up until getting them has been one of the clinic's primary goals. Last month the Armenian Ministry of Health announced that it will procure essential ones on the World Health Organization list starting this year. However, Tamamyan said, there are many other drugs not on this list which are expensive

continued on next page



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COMMUNITY NEWS

from previous page

and used by patients in clinical trials which do not exist in Armenia. It will take many steps to bring clinical trials to Armenia.

Brain drain of the clinic's staff is a challenge. There are ten doctors and at present five fellows with three-year terms. Tamamyan said that low salaries (on average \$300-400 monthly at present depending on the number of night shifts) and other challenges lead many doctors and nurses to leave Armenia. However, after the Velvet Revolution, some people returned, and there is hope this will continue. The goal is to be able to give a normal salary for everyone.

Aside from the aforementioned challenges, the major goal of the clinic is to be able to turn it into such a comprehensive pediatric center that not only will Armenian patients choose not to go abroad for treatment but also patients from neighboring countries will come to get care there. There are a few sporadic instances of this even now. For example, there is a patient from Iran receiving treatment at present. As with Armenian patients, his treatment is free. Tamamyan said, "Cancer does not recognize religion, race, or nationality, so we will treat any child who comes to our clinic as much as we can."

gists, hire new specialists like nutritionists and set up a palliative care unit.

In order to help raise funds for this work, the City of Smile Foundation (www.cityofsmile.org) was established in 2014 by Drs. Gevorg Tamamyan and Lilit Sargsyan.

Boston Armenians Become Aware, Take Action

Meanwhile, the Boston-Armenian community's connection with Muratsan happened in various ways. When Tamamyan was visiting Boston for a Dana-Farber/Boston Children's Cancer and Blood Disorders Center training program at the end of 2015, he stayed at Holy Trinity Armenian Church's parish house in Cambridge. When the church organized a trip to Armenia in 2016, a group of parishioners, including Cynthia Kazanjian, her husband Richard and her 10-year-old grandson Vaughn Krikorian, visited Muratsan along with Fr. Vasken Kouzouian and his wife. (See <https://mirrorspectator.com/2017/11/24/muratsan-oncology-clinic-doctors-visit-boston-area/> and <https://mirrorspectator.com/2017/09/14/local-group-raises-funds-childrens-cancer-clinic-armenia/>)

The effect of seeing the children stricken with

and 2017. Even Kazanjian's grandsons helped in this.

Zareh Zurabyan was inspired by Kazanjian's work to organize with friends a brandy-tasting fundraiser in December 2016 with the support of the Knights of Vartan at the Armenian American Social Club (Papken Suni Agoump) in Watertown.

Kazanjian tirelessly spread awareness of the situation of Armenian children with cancer. When Fr. Mampre Kouzouian visited Armenia in 2017, Kazanjian asked him to visit the clinic. He was so moved by what he saw that he decided to donate half of whatever gifts people would give him at the May 2018 60th anniversary celebration of his ordination to the City of Smile Foundation via Catholicos Karekin II in Echmiadzin.

Further efforts of Kazanjian and others in the Boston area led to another substantial sum being raised and sent to City of Smile for Muratsan by means of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, which did not charge anything for this transmittal service. The AMAA first investigated the project and accepted it as legitimate and worthwhile.

The total raised by all these efforts in the Boston area and sent to Muratsan over three years is approximately \$175,000.

Another important component fell into place with New Paths-Bridging Armenian Women, an online networking group, co-founded by Armine Hovhannissian and Rosalyn Minassian. In the summer of 2017 Kazanjian asked Hovhannissian, going to Armenia on summer vacation, to take some scarfs for some young women in the clinic who had lost their hair. Hovhannissian said, "I came back with my heart broken." Then when Tamamyan and oncologist Liana Safaryan from Muratsan came to Boston for a Dana Farber program that fall, Kazanjian asked Hovhannissian to host Tamamyan, and this cemented the connection.

When planning their activities for the year, New Paths wanted to do outreach for charity work and they thought immediately of Muratsan. The group contacted Kazanjian, and their discussions were the first step toward the broader community effort which began at the end of 2018.

The final piece of the story came together during the summer of 2018, when Kazanjian was invited to attend an event honoring Anna

Hakobyan, who had become honorary chair of the City of Smile Foundation. Hakobyan is spouse of Nikol Pashinyan, leader of the Velvet Revolution and now prime minister of Armenia.



Volunteers for City of Smile at the Jimmy Fund Walk



Armine Hovhannissian, left, and Cynthia Kazanjian

The size of the clinic at present is not large. It can treat 26 children at any one time, and there are also a lot of adult patients. Half of the children are from the provinces outside of Yerevan. There are also some ten to twenty other children who come and go for maintenance therapy.

Additional outside resources are necessary to sustain the current number of doctors and nurses. However, at present, there are efforts underway to merge the pediatric cancer clinic with the hematology center. This along with additional outside help would allow increasing the number of doctors, nurses and psycholo-

cancer was profound and led young Vaughn to ask what could be done to improve their situation.

Upon returning, Cynthia, who had already seen the toll taken by cancer among her own family members, together with others was able to make an arrangement with Dana Farber Global Health Initiatives to ensure that 90 percent of funds raised through the annual Jimmy Fund Walk would be sent to Muratsan Chemotherapy Clinic in Armenia. She went back several more times to Armenia to try to help. Meanwhile, the Jimmy Fund walkers and some auxiliary events raised money in 2016

Unbeknownst to Kazanjian, she herself was also honored for her support, and the encounter with Hakobyan led to another private meeting to have coffee. Kazanjian invited Hakobyan to Boston for a fundraiser, and Hakobyan accepted. Hovhannissian then met with the executive director of the foundation, Ester Demirtshyan, while in Armenia in summer of 2018, to kick off the planning.

Energized and excited, Kazanjian and Hovhannissian realized that it was necessary to go beyond New Paths, so they reached out to as many Armenian organizations and active members of the community as they could in Boston for their involvement. community noted for pulling together for pan-Armenian causes. They created the City of Smile Charitable Foundation Boston Friends group at the end of 2018 to carry out fundraising and support the mission of Muratsan. This was to become the beginning of a nonprofit chapter of the City of Smile here in the United States. The two women are now also co-chairs of the forthcoming evening program, and their efforts continue to bring people of all backgrounds together in support of a good humanitarian cause. Even people as far away as in Los Angeles have been donating their services.

Kazanjian, encouraging the public to participate as much as possible, said, "I see this as a vehicle to help children with cancer in Armenia. They deserve to have a life. They are young, innocent children who have no choice. They have been diagnosed with cancer and this is devastating not only to their lives but the whole family. It hits you so hard, and more so when you do not have the resources. It is overwhelming to think about how much it costs to help a child in this situation, and they do not have it."

Hovhannissian added her appeal to the public, declaring: "When I visited the clinic, I knew what to expect as someone born and raised in Armenia, but living in the US for over 20 years and having my own children in and out of hospitals gave me a whole new perspective. It made me realize that the kids in Armenia are no less than the ones here and they absolutely deserve the same highest quality of care. Though this is a major undertaking, we are moved to do this from the depths of our hearts, as we know this is an important cause and we want to do all we can to help these innocent children's lives. We are beyond grateful to all those organizations and individuals who are in support of this wonderful effort and looking forward to spend a beautiful evening together with the Boston Armenian community!"

For advance ticket purchases for the April 5 evening, contact Postaljian@hotmail.com/ 617 921-8962 or Manuk0102@gmail.com / 781 883-4470 by March 22.



City of Smile Charitable Foundation Boston Friends

Join Us For An Unprecedented Evening To Benefit Children With Cancer in Armenia

Friday, April 5, 2019 • Cocktails 6:30 PM • Dinner & Program 7:30 PM
The Westin Waltham Hotel

Distinguished Guest

Anna Hakobyan

Honorary Chair, City of Smile Foundation
Spouse of Prime Minister of Armenia

RSVP

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manuk0102@gmail.com 781-883-4470

Advance ticket purchase required.





COMMUNITY NEWS

Celebrating Work of Singular Heavy Metal Expert Dr. Oganessian

OGANESSYAN, from page 1

table, one of which, element 118 (Oganesson, Og 118) was named after him in 2016 by the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC).

His humility shone through when he explained the logistics and unwritten rules of how elements receive their names. He noted that they can be locations of where the element was discovered, such as Berkeley or Dubna, or after the scientists who discovered them “as a way to immortalize them.”

notable awards.

“We give great importance to the development of science and technology in Armenia,” said Harutyunyan. “The network between Armenia and the Diaspora in science and engineering is very important to us and we want this network to be part of a new scientific agenda in Armenia.”

Oganessian has been a longtime advocate of advancing the sciences in Armenia and stressed his Armenian heritage and strong ties to the country.

“I am Armenian and I always say I am Armenian,” said Oganessian, who is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the Russian Academy of Sciences. “A decade ago I gathered the 10 most prominent scientists from around world and I told them to look at the potential and what can be done in Armenia.”

Oganessian explained that during their research, they uncovered that the oncology death rate was high in Armenia and they set out to discover why.

“We asked ourselves if it was a curse or if it was something else,” said Oganessian. “We realized that diagnostic tests were missing and we identified a priority area to create scientific centers.”

In the years that followed, Oganessian devel-

oped the National Center of Excellence of Oncology in Yerevan as well as the establishment of the A. I. Alikhanian National Science Laboratory Center for Isotope Production and Diagnostics.

He maintains a close relationship to Armenia and supports the flourishing of the sciences there, along with the assistance of the AESA.

“It is really meaningful to have Dr. Oganessian with us as we celebrate our 35th anniversary,” said John-Emmanuel Shirajian, president of AESA, in an exclusive interview.



Dr. Oganessian, left, receives the Victor Harmbartsumyan Award and plaque.

A graduate of the Moscow Engineering Physics Institute, Oganessian was raised by an engineer father who worked for Yerevan’s City Council and by a mother who always encouraged his abilities in the math and sciences. He initially aspired to become an architect, the course of his studies changed when he was awarded a gold medal (valedictorian) in high school for his academic excellence. Because of this accolade, Oganessian was automatically admitted to any school of his choice without entrance exams and decided to pursue physics, a field he has dominated for more than 60 years.

He explained what excites him about his work in the sciences is that “it’s difficult to anticipate what is next because anything can change unexpectedly.”

He observes that the sciences are an important field “for any nation” but emphasized Armenia’s dominance during Soviet times as the “most scientifically developed country in the Soviet Union.”

“It was popular among the youth and the academic institutions were very developed and recognized, not only in the Soviet Union, but around the world as well,” said Oganessian, who noted the “huge scientific potential” of Armenia. “Even on the genetic level, there is a scientific tradition passed down from parents to their children and it is very important that it carries on from one generation to the other.”

FLNR, where Oganessian is the scientific director, has served as the center for nuclear research in the Soviet Union for almost a century.

He expressed his appreciation to the AESA for inviting him to the United States.

“I’m very glad I’m here,” said Oganessian, who has authored 800 scientific papers. “This is my first visit to Los Angeles and it is quite an interesting and fascinating atmosphere where I am surrounded by so many Armenians.”

During the afternoon’s press conference, Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia Arayik Harutyunyan congratulated Oganessian, who has received the highest honors in the former Soviet Union and the Russian Federation, including the USSR State Prize and the Russian Federation National Award, as well as the Lise Meitner Prize of the European Physical Society, and the Order of Honor of the Republic of Armenia, among many other



(l-r) AESA President John-Emmanuel Shirajian, Minister of Education & Science H.E. Arayik Harutyunyan, Dr. Oganessian and translator Dr. Gagik Melikyan. Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry at California State University, Northridge.

“We are extremely honored and proud that he came and accepted our invitation.”

The non-profit organization seeks to advance, promote, and disseminate science and technology in Armenia and the Diaspora by encouraging technical and entrepreneurial interactions among Armenian scientists and engineers around the globe.

“Our mission is to be useful to our local community, the youth, as well as scientists in Armenia and Artsakh,” said Shirajian.

Annually, the AESA organizes a Science Olympiad for Armenian schools in Los Angeles, along with curating lectures on science, engineering, and technology. The non-sectarian organization also offers scholarships, funds and undertakes projects in science and engineering in Armenia. Its most recent focus has been directed towards nation building by championing the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Specific projects the AESA has undertaken to benefit Armenia include establishing mobile science labs in the Noyemberyan region so students can receive hands-on experience in physics, chemistry and mathemat-

ics.

“It is so important that we give the knowledge of science and math to a new generation,” said Shirajian. “We should cooperate with students and scientists in Armenia because while they are talented, sometimes they lack the resources we have.”

Celebrating AESA Goals

The evening’s gala was a sold-out affair with more than 350 guests, as scientists, engineers, professionals and friends and supporters of AESA gathered to celebrate this milestone. The festive occasion was filled with culture and showcased the Armenian brain power and dedication to its heritage, including live performances by Nune Avetisyan, Grand Stage Dance, PRIMA and Nectar at the Armenian Society of Los Angeles.

Dignitaries included Consul-General Armen Baibourtian, PhD, as well as Minister of Education Harutyunyan, who were representing Armenia; California State Sen. Anthony Portantino and Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian, who presented Certificates of Recognition to Oganessian.

Proceeds from the gala were earmarked towards three symbolic projects in Armenia: setting up mobile science labs for students, providing potable water dispensaries and delivering vital medicine to families in Armenia.

The AESA has indeed thrived throughout its history and has brought the significance of science to the forefront as it continues to benefit Armenia and the Diasporan communities. The organization has certainly fulfilled the vision of Dr. Hagop Panossian and Dr. Stepan Simonian when they sought to create a worldwide Armenian scientific institution in the 1970s. The AESA has come a long way since its first official meeting in June 1983 in Burbank and currently boasts a wide network of talented professionals who are looking towards the future as they develop programs relevant and beneficial to Armenia.

“Organizations like AESA that have a STEM based value system, professionalism, and global reach can and must play a central role in catapulting Armenia and the diaspora towards a brighter future,” said Richard Ohanian, the current vice president and president-elect. “We strive to empower scientists, technologists, engineers and professionals in Armenia and the Diaspora to realize their full potential and impact the Armenian nation, state and the world.”

The significance of upholding science and engineering, particularly in Armenia, is of significance to Shirajian and the AESA, as it serves as the basis of society.

“If you don’t have science, you don’t have industry, if you don’t have industry, you don’t have economy and if you don’t have economy, you don’t have a country,” said Shirajian. “Science and math are the foundation of any country.”

For more information about AESA and its upcoming projects, visit <https://aes.org/>



Senator Anthony Portantino presenting a certificate of recognition to Dr. Oganessian

Arts & Living

First-Ever English Translation of Tzarukian Poem Published by Hairenik Press

WATERTOWN — The Hairenik Press announced on January 11 the first-ever publication of the English translation of Andranik Tzarukian's long-form poem *Letter to Yerevan* (Tught ar Yerevan).

The translation was a collaborative effort between the former director of the ARF and First Republic of Armenia Archives and former editor of the *Armenian Review* Tatul Sonentz-Papazian and former editor of the *Armenian Weekly* Rupen Janbazian. It features an in-depth introduction by another former editor of the *Armenian Weekly* and the volume's English editor, Vahe Habeshian, as well as six original illustrations by Yerevan-based artist Meruzhan Khachatryan. The Armenian language republication was edited by Yeghrem Tokjian of Toronto, Canada.

Written in 1944, *Letter to Yerevan* was a response to writer Gevor Abov, who wrote a poem titled "We Have not Forgotten," calling the ARF and the leaders of the First Republic of Armenia traitors. The response made Tzarukian a prominent voice in the Armenian Diaspora almost overnight — from the Middle East to Europe and the Americas.

The poem was republished more than a dozen times in various Armenian communities — including in Syria, the United States, Lebanon, and Cyprus — up until the early 1990s, and as a result became a source of inspiration for tens of thousands.

The English translation of Tzarukian's poem was announced on May 28, 2017 — the 99th anniversary of the establishment of the First Republic of Armenia (1918-1920) — and published in book form on December 24, 2018 — 74 years to the day that Tzarukian sent his lengthy rebuttal to Abov's publisher in Soviet Yerevan.

"Translators Sonentz-Papazian and Janbazian, two generations apart, are themselves testament to the enduring power of this work that reaches English-language readers on the 100th anniversary of the First Armenian Republic," said ARF Bureau member, former *Armenian Weekly* editor and current professor at Columbia University, Khatchig Mouradian.

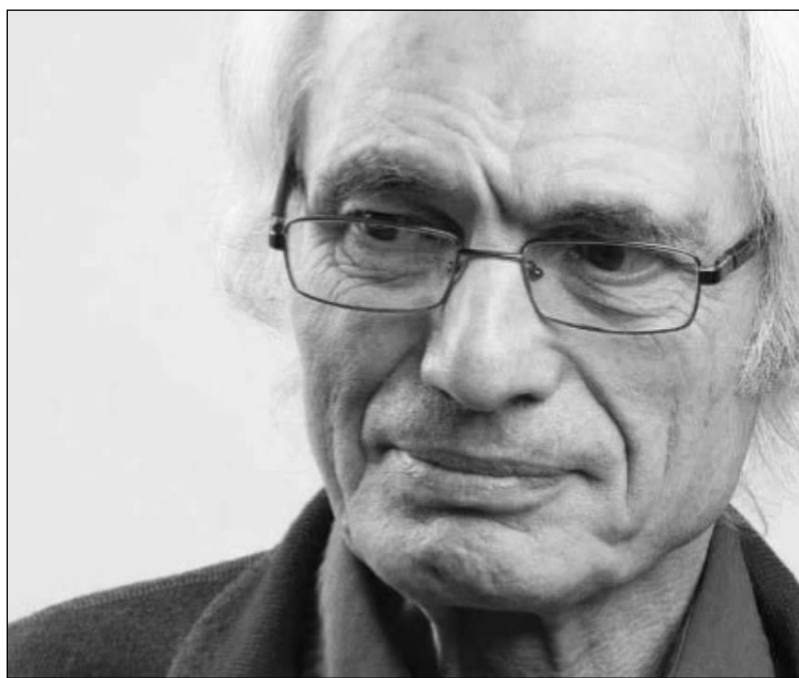
Parts of Sonentz-Papazian and Janbazian's translation were periodically published in the *Armenian Weekly* between 2017 and 2018.

"Making foundational texts like Tught ar Yerevan available in English can only create opportunities for such text to be read not only by Armenians but also by others. In translation, those texts can again inspire, becoming for English-speaking readers what they were for previous generations of Armenians," Sonentz-Papazian and Janbazian said about the book, which also includes their translation of Abov's "We Have Not Forgotten."

The original Armenian version of the poem will also accompany the English translation in the 119-page book, which is available for purchase on Amazon and soon at the Hairenik Bookstore in Watertown. "We also hope that our humble attempt might prompt Armenian youth to engage with and learn Armenian, the language of the original text. That is why we found it integral to include the original Armenian—which has not been republished in decades—along with the translation," the two added.

One hundred percent of book sale proceeds will be donated to the Hairenik Association's Newspaper Digitization Project, through which, the archives of the *Hairenik Daily* (Armenian), *Hairenik Weekly* (English), the *Armenian Weekly* (English), and the *Hairenik Weekly* (Armenian) will be digitized and made available to the public.

"The translators, editors, illustrator, and designers have all graciously donated their time and efforts to making the publication of this book a reality and for that, we are extremely grateful," the Hairenik Association said in a statement.



Composer Tigran Mansurian

Tigran Mansurian

A Life Lived for, with and by Music

YEREVAN — The milestone represented by the marking of one's 80th birthday is doubtless a profound one, a token of the human activity — present and long past — which has unspooled before them over the decades, with its memories imprinting themselves upon the soul like static images burned onto a projector screen. But for an artist like Tigran Mansurian, who regards the act of composing as a spiritual confession, the occasion becomes a communal one; an anniversary in which artist, performer, and listener are threaded together by the composer's compelling testimony, distilled into score after score which are simultaneously beautiful, timeless, yet bearing the wounds of an erstwhile century which remains burningly alive for many.

Born in Lebanon, Mansurian's early childhood was darkened by the long shadow cast by the Armenian Genocide, which had taken the lives of several of his family members. His family later moved to Soviet Armenia while he was still a boy, eventually settling in Yerevan. A gifted musical student, Mansurian became a pioneering composer, becoming the first Armenian composer to write a 12-tone work. By the 1970s he emerged as one of the leading younger composers in the former Soviet Union, attracting attention from musicians within the Eastern Bloc, as well as in the West. However, he soon turned away from Western-style modernism, instead developing a personal idiom grounded in the music and lore of Armenia's ancient history and refracted through the prism of the Western avant-garde. As with many Soviet composers of his generation, Mansurian was witness and victim of the censorious wrath of conservative musical bureaucrats of his era. Nevertheless, he managed to persevere, not only remaining true to his artistic beliefs, but forming close friendships and working relationships with other composers, writers, and film-makers.

Today Mansurian is recognized across the world for the integrity of his art: Delicately beautiful, touchingly humane and compassionate without a hint of pathos, with its architectural unity and pithy eloquence subtly intimating its creator's inner strength.

Just a few days away from his 80th birthday, the composer agreed to an interview, reflecting on his music, friends, and the momentous times that he experienced.

Néstor Castiglione: Einojuhani Rautavaara once commented that with music no longer being dominated by a single or handful of stylistic trends, the composer of today was free to employ a "toy box" of diverse musical techniques and styles. Your art is renowned for its searching into the ancient melos of the Armenian soul, but venturing further back into your catalogue — your early works and film music come to mind — one finds a more sprawling, even eclectic approach to style. Were you ever conscious of having this "toy box" at your fingertips? If so, did it ever provoke a sense of unease or crisis? What inspired you to reject this eclecticism and, instead, embrace the musical roots of Armenia's deep historical past?

Tigran Mansurian: The great Finnish composer, of course, [is correct], even though many may not agree with this criterion. As for myself, I must say that the greater part of my past [artistic] journey has been the road to independent study, acquiring on my own the rudimentary musical skills of notation, solfège, etc. From that moment and [later] through my time [as a student], when I was appropriating the great processes and advances of music, [my mind has] always been an open window. Needless to say that I am grateful to my teachers at the Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan. My composition teacher was Ghazaros Saryan, who had studied with Dmitri Shostakovich. For that reason I also like to consider myself a "grandson" of Shostakovich.

A few times [in my career], however, I have had occasion to terminate various periods of [stylistic] interests, my trial periods. For instance, during the 1970s I had written a work entitled *Interior* for string quartet, which in some unexpected way ended up in the hands of Pierre Boulez. Let me say that this score was markedly "Boulezian." The French master had liked my work, and had the Ensemble Intercontemporain perform it. After learning about the appreciation Boulez had

see MANSURIAN, page 14

Dr. Christopher Sheklian To Speak on 'Armenian Minority in Turkey Today'

FRESNO — Dr. Christopher Sheklian, director of the Zohrab Information Center (Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church, New York) will present a talk on "Liturgy and Property in Istanbul: The Armenian Minority in Turkey Today" at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, February 22, in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, at Fresno State.

The presentation is part of the Armenian Studies Program Spring 2019 Lecture Series and is supported by the Leon S. Peters Foundation.

During the Divine Liturgy (Badarak) of the Armenian Church at the small church of St. Gregory the Illuminator in Kuzguncuk, a beautiful neighborhood on the Asian side of Istanbul, one often hears the Islamic call to prayer being recited from the mosque next door. Like all the churches in Istanbul, St. Gregory is organized as a *vakıf*, a type of endowed charitable foundation developed within Islamic law. In the middle of the twentieth century, the board of the St. Gregory Kuzguncuk *vakıf* happily supported the building of the mosque. In fact, the two courtyards share a wall. Today, the proximity of the properties of the two religious properties results in the auditory mingling of liturgy. The ezan, the call to prayer, wavers with the singing of Armenian hymns.

Of course, things are not always so harmonious. Armenian properties — *vakıf* and otherwise — have been systematically expropriated by the Turkish state since its founding in 1923. The *vakıf* board of the Armenian Hospital of Surp Pırgıç (Holy Savior's) sued the government in the European Court of Human Rights over some of its properties. Similarly, religious education and liturgical practice has at times been stymied by the Turkish government. This presentation uses these two categories of liturgy and property to trace the status of Armenians in Turkey today. Harmonious or contentious, at hospitals or during church services, Istanbul Armenians lead rich and varied lives in the fabric of the city, proclaiming "Buradayız Ahparig" — "We are here, brother."

Sheklian was appointed director of the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center in September 2018. He is a native of Visalia, California, and earned an MA in Anthropology and then his PhD in Anthropology from the University of Chicago in 2017 after defending his thesis titled "Theology and the Community: The Armenian Minority, Tradition, and Secularism in Turkey."

He conducted two years of ethnographic fieldwork in Istanbul, living and working with the Armenian community there. He traveled extensively in historic Armenia during his fieldwork. This work was the basis of his doctoral dissertation and much of his current research.

Sheklian specializes in the anthropology of religion and secularism, studying the role of liturgy and law on the lives of religious minorities. His published work includes the article "Promises of Property: Religious Foundations and the Justice and Development Party's Ambiguous Attitudes towards Religious Minorities" in the journal *Turkish Studies* and "Venerating the Saints, Remembering the City: Armenian Memorial Practices and Community Formation in Contemporary Istanbul" in the volume *Armenian Christianity Today*. As an active scholar, he continues to pursue research on secularism, religious minority rights, and the embodied and emotional aspects of religious life.

The lecture is free and open to the public.



Dr. Christopher Sheklian



ARTS & LIVING

Tigran Mansurian: A Life Lived for, with and by Music

MANSURIAN, from page 13

shown for my work, I considered that the “Boulezzian” chapter [of my career] was closed, allowing me to move forward.

It is obvious that each composer aspires to see the traces he has left behind in a single totality. These traces can emerge from a variety of [vantage points and] different points of origins. Therefore, the Armenian composer who is trying to assimilate the entirety of his footprints knows that he has under his possession one and a half millennia of spiritual academic music and theory, and this has no affinity, nor can it hope to have any association with the perception of the composer’s art in the West. Such a person who aspires to blend his creative output in one totality knows that the art of composing and its techniques have but a one and a half to two centuries worth of tradition within Armenian music. He also knows that the legacy reaching him today is working within the borderline of Eastern-Western musical interactions. There are also other conditions that are within the mastery of the Armenian composer.

So this “toy box” indeed permits the freedom enjoyed by the composers of today. However, for the Armenian musician, that “toy box”, naturally, does not only emerge as a result of mastering compositional trends, but also from the aforementioned multiplicity of the various sources he has to work with.

Therefore, the composer who is aspiring to create from his work a totality should have no reason to feel inappropriate [for utilizing this “toy box”], though I believe that the feeling of anxiety is a natural sensation for every creator. The author who deems that as a result of his experiences and explorations he was able to create a more or less perfect work, then the entirety of his various experiences encountered on his path will have achieved its goal.

N. C.: Serialism was officially censured for decades in the former Soviet Union, then later clandestinely disseminated by Filipp Gershkovich to the younger composers of your generation, and finally being adopted for a time by the most important ones among them. Yet by the 1970s, you, Alfred Schnittke, and Arvo Pärt, for example, moved on in very different and original ways, each of you seeking inspiration from the past, albeit in a radical manner unimagined by the Romanticism-inclined Soviet cultural gatekeepers. What do you recall about the musical atmosphere in the Soviet Union of that time that drove your generation to view the past through the lens of the present?

T. M.: I remember with affection my contacts with Filipp Moiseyevich. I had been a guest in his home in Moscow and he at my home in Yerevan. During my student years I undertook organizing a series of lectures by him at the Yerevan Conservatory. My professor Saryan, who was the rector of the Conservatory during those years, encouraged [his students] to pursue the gaining of knowledge about Western modernist music, which diverged from that approved by the Soviet [cultural] “guardians,” as you say. During those years, I had succeeded in becoming on intimate terms with [Valentin] Silvestrov, Schnittke, [Andrei] Volkonsky, Pärt, and [Edison] Denisov. To answer your question about those years, I will speak about my memories of [Sofia] Gubaidulina. During one of my usual visits to Schnittke’s Moscow home, we listened together to Gubaidulina’s *Offertorium*. I remember the enormous effect that composition had upon us when we heard it for the first time. After listening for a while, [Schnittke] said, “Sonya (her friends referred to her by that nickname) does not come out of her house for days since she must save up money even for tram fare.”

I also remember that one time, when I saw Schnittke hurt and bitter (his music had once again been stoned in the press), I gifted him a Russian translation by Naum Grebnev of the *Book of Lamentation* by the 10th century Armenian mystic, Gregory of Narek, which had just been published in Yerevan, believing it would console him. His acquaintance with that book bore fruit in one of his most famous works, the *Concerto for Choir*.

I became very close to Prince Andrei Volkonsky. During the last years of his life, I would visit him often in Aix-en-Provence. One day he told me, “During the 1960s, long before

we met each other, I knew very well all of the hotels on the roads of Armenia, as well as the ancient churches spread throughout your country.”

The viewing of the past through the lens of the present has been woven into the creations of each of my friends’ works individually. We were all very impressed by a particular chamber work by Schnittke, wherein a peculiar combination of segments from his film music had been spun. This work was performed in Yerevan, and we all loved it. I remember, this work particularly became important for one of our friends, the pianist Alexei Lubimov. Equally unexpected was the creation of Silvestrov’s *Quiet Songs* for voice and piano. Arvo Pärt was also in this group of independents.

Thinking about these authors and their legacy, I cannot ignore the fact that all of them are united, in my opinion, by the vision of the Second Viennese School, as well as their subsequent attempts to master these elaborate musical techniques. I trust and have confidence in the compositional and auditory journeys these composers have tread upon, more than of those who do not have the experience of following this or that direction of contemporary music.

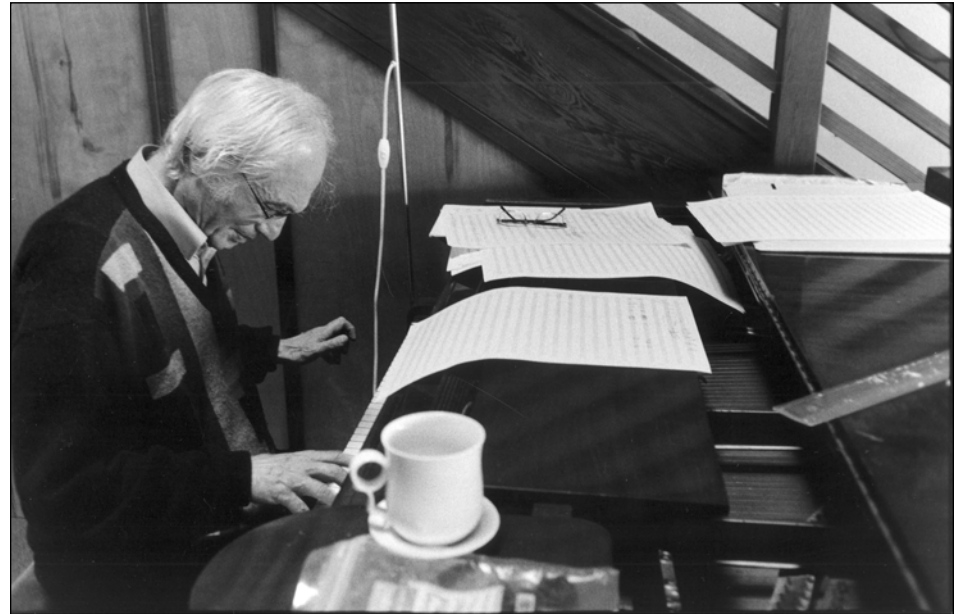
N. C.: Sibelius famously remarked that while his contemporaries presented exotic cocktails to their audience, he only served them pure ice water. Something of that quote comes to mind when listening to your music, which bears a discernible sense of economy and control, of saying only what needs to be said. These qualities are especially striking given that some of the most famous Armenian composers preceding you were noted for the lavishness and surface brilliance of their music. What do you believe accounts for this contrast between the flamboyance of Aram Khachaturian and Arno Babajanian, and the austerity of Komitas Vardapet or Armenian liturgical and folk music? How can such vastly divergent musical traditions be the product of the same culture? Do you regard one as being more “authentic?”

T. M.: Komitas played the most influential role in the incorporation of the strength and beauty of Armenian monody into the arena of Western classical composition. We know that he is the founder of the modern Armenian school of composition. Indeed, it is an interesting phenomenon that the establishing of a composing school applying the art of the European musical tradition [in Armenia] should have been built upon the millennial foundation of Armenian monody. Some may disagree, but I consider this to be the establishment of a new kind of “composership.” To make myself clearer,

let me say that in today’s European music, for instance, the synthesis of Dufay and Wagner is not a road to the development of that art, but the succession of compositional styles. Time has created this succession. In the case of Komitas, the geographic factor has replaced time. If time is capable of giving birth to such different disciplines, then I believe that in the same manner it is a possibility to have a new discipline that traverses different geographical territories, which I would wish to name as the “new composership”: From the 15th century

Lark Musical Society and Dilijan Chamber Series. I regard highly the artistic achievements of my friends Vatsche Barsoumian and Movses Pogossian. That Lark and Dilijan are a part of international musical processes, while remaining faithful to Armenian musical traditions is admirable.

I have composed so many works at [their] request. I am happy that [through them] I have had occasion to enjoy the superior artistry of Kim Kashkashian, Rohan de Saram, Tony Arnold, Varty Manouelian, and my other



Dufay to the 19th century Wagner (development in time), from Armenian spiritual monody to Komitasian “composership” (development of Eastern and Western modes of musical thinking). It is my orientation to follow this Komitasian tradition, which I find essential, if I may say, to establish this “new composership” in relation with the newest European music making. This approach is sharply different from folklorism.

N. C.: You have long enjoyed a warm and productive relationship with Dilijan Chamber Music, as well as personally with Vatsche Barsoumian, Movses Pogossian, and others associated with the group. What do you believe accounts for the closeness of this collaboration? What is it about the musicians of Dilijan and the Lark Musical Society that elicits your attention, admiration, and respect? Please tell us a little bit also about the history of your relationship with Dilijan and Lark, how it came to be in the first place.

T. M.: For many years I have had close creative and human ties with the musicians of

friends.

Vatsche Barsoumian is not only a marvelous conductor, educator, publisher, and organizer, but, in my opinion, a skilled professional who fully commands his realm.

In the artistry of Movses Pogossian, the performance principles of Western classical and contemporary music are highly enriched. Precious to me are the broad intellectual horizons of my friends. I consider myself a member of the extensive Lark and Dilijan family.

Dilijan’s concert commemorating the 80th birthday of Tigran Mansurian took place Sunday, January 27 at the Herbert Zipper Concert Hall (200 S. Grand Ave., Los Angeles, CA, 90012) beginning at 3:00 p.m.

(The author gratefully thanks Hovhannes Ayvazyan for transcribing Mansurian’s spoken answers and Sylva Natalie Manoogian, PhD for providing their translation into English.

Deepest gratitude is also owed to Movses Pogossian and Vatsche Barsoumian for arranging the interview.)



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ARTS & LIVING

Boy Hopes to Be Saved by Magic of Streisand

By Kay Mouradian

Who is Barbra? And what is the significance of this girl...or woman?

Within the first few pages I learn she is Barbra Streisand, the famed American singer and the writer is a 9-year-old Armenian boy, Adam Terzian, who lives in Beirut. He is in constant fear that the falling bombs from the 1975 civil war will maim him or maybe even kill him like his young neighbor who died when one of those bombs exploded and burst his school bus into little pieces. In his first letter to Barbra, Adam asks her, "Can you stop the war before I die?" Writing to Barbra and listening to Barbra's music becomes Adam's escape from

Letters to Barbra Launch With Author Paul Chaderjian

FRESNO – Writer and broadcast journalist Paul Chaderjian will speak about his newly published book, *Letters to Barbra*, at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 12, in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, at Fresno State.

The presentation is part of the Armenian Studies Program Spring 2019 Lecture Series and is supported by the Leon S. Peters Foundation.

Letters to Barbra is the story of an outsider, told in disjointed, Facebook-like timeline spanning from the aftermath of the first world war to the Soviet Union, from the Lebanese Civil War in the 1970's to the futuristic class segregated dystopian society 300 years from now. The narration style is cinematic, influenced by Bret Easton Ellis, Micheline Aharonian Marcom and Atom Egoyan.

It depicts the protagonist, Adam, in his boyhood writing letters to his idol Barbra (Streisand) in war-ridden Beirut. Rescued as a war refugee, he becomes the odd, marginalized kid in Central California schools. Friendless and ridiculed for his foreignness, he finds solace in the darkened theaters of cinemas. This addiction leads him to film school in Southern California, after which his early artistic awakening fails to survive the soul-crushing jobs, those 'necessary' stepping stones to his dream. As for all of us, reality comes knocking, and Adam seizes the chance to report from his historic homeland, hoping to get to the root of his discontent.

As the reader pieces Adam's life together, it becomes obvious that some men and women are merely destined to perpetually seek a home and doomed to a journey without destination.

Chaderjian is writer and broadcast journalist and has reported for Al Jazeera, CNN, ABC News and television stations in Fresno, New York, Yerevan, Los Angeles and Honolulu. For the past five years, he was a senior producer (in-house reporter and field correspondent) for the Al Jazeera Media Network (AJMN), based in Doha, Qatar.

Some of the interviews he has landed for international Armenian media include celebrities Cher, Kim Kardashian, Charles Aznavour; several high-ranking House and Senate members, State Department officials; and a number of US Foreign Service representatives.

Chaderjian has a graduate degree in mass communication and journalism from Fresno State, and an undergraduate degree in Cinema-TV production from the University of Southern California.

Copies of *Letters to Barbra* will be on sale at the lecture.

The lecture is free and open to the public.



Paul Chaderjian

that horrific time.

Adam's father decides they must leave war-torn Beirut. He has relatives in America, but American visas take time, and four years later Adam finds himself in Fresno. He has difficulty adjusting to his new world. He tells Barbra he misses his father still in Beirut selling the family business and arrives in Fresno two years later. Finally! But the trauma of the war affects Adam's outlook for the rest of his life.

The story line follows Adam from Beirut to Fresno, to the University of Southern California (USC), to Hollywood, Armenia and the Middle East as he becomes a film director and a journalist. Adam loves words and loves the magic of writing, but the trauma from his young Beirut life never leaves him.

By the time he enters USC, every world tragedy affects him as if it were his own and he asks WHY? Then, in Armenia for his first time, the pain of the Armenian Genocide overwhelms him and he reflects on the huge loss of Armenian humankind and the loss of the country of Western Armenia. His own Armenian grandparents had been forced from their homeland, never to see it again. Adam keeps his pain inside, but always "talks" to Barbra as he pens words onto paper – his therapeutic release.

Adam writes about individuals with whom he works, increasingly frustrated that every one of

his colleagues, and himself as well, are trying to find their voice and identity. All around him, hopes and dreams are beyond reach.

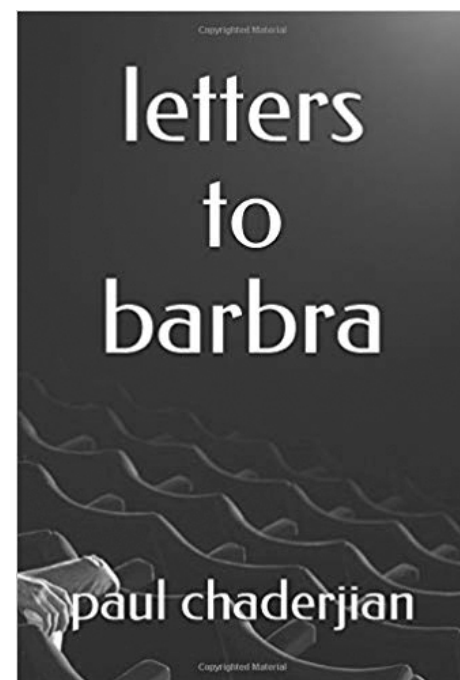
"Is this all there is?" Adam asks. "Is it meaningless?" he asks Barbra.

It is here the reader has an opportunity for self-reflection...to follow the chase for fame or power as each of the story's characters' road to success is dimmed. Not finding "success" their hearts heavy yet empty, they tend to berate themselves and never find contentment.

At first I enjoyed Chaderjian's writing style with his double-spaced short paragraphs, but as the author introduces characters as Adam travels the world, the reader can become easily confused because time frames skip from today to far-away yesterdays, and even into the future. Characters are everywhere and anywhere, and it takes a lot of concentration to know where or when, and whose point of view is speaking.

Letters to Barbra is a story about how early trauma affects one's life. I would like to have seen more written about how war affects children like Adam. Maybe even written as a children's story...to understand how lives are traumatized even after the bombings stop. I have been told that children whose lives are terrorized in war never understand that hope and fulfilling dreams are a possibility. I would love to know if there is a

BOOK REVIEW



study substantiating that theory.

I think of my mother, who survived the Armenian Genocide as a young girl. That shadow of pain never left her until she was in her 80s. But that is another story.

(Kay Mouradian EdD, author and filmmaker of *My Mother's Voice* is currently a consultant for "A Journey of Angels," a play based on her mother's survival from the Armenian Genocide.)

Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian



Eggplant, Lamb and Garbanzo

INGREDIENTS

1 medium eggplant, about 2 pounds
3/4 pound lamb stew meat (shoulder) cut into 1-inch cubes*
1 3/4 cup canned garbanzo beans, washed and drained
1 large onion, diced or sliced
2-3 cloves garlic, minced
2 medium zucchini, cut into 1-inch pieces
2 medium carrots, peeled, cut into chunks
1 medium green bell pepper, sliced or diced
2 medium tomatoes, chopped or 1 cup diced or stewed tomatoes
2 tablespoons tomato paste (or harissa paste)
1/3 cup fresh oregano leaves
1 1/4 cup lamb, chicken or vegetable broth, plus extra
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
Salt, pepper, smoked paprika, dried mint, cumin
1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar or red wine vinegar
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
Chopped parsley, red pepper flakes, fresh lemon wedges

PREPARATION

Slice eggplant into 1-2-inch chunks. Place eggplant into a colander and sprinkle with salt. Let eggplant sit in the colander for 30 minutes or until beads of liquid rise to the surface.

In a medium pan, brown lamb in olive oil (or butter), season with salt and pepper, and set aside.

Rinse eggplant thoroughly to rid it of excess salt, shake dry.

In a large pot, sauté the onions in olive oil (or butter) for 10-12 minutes, stirring frequently. Cook until onions are translucent, tender, and starting to caramelize. The longer you cook the onions, the sweeter the onions will become.

Add the garlic, and sauté for another minute.

Add the tomato paste or harissa paste, stir, and cook a few minutes longer.

Add the lamb, eggplant, vegetables, oregano leaves, broth, cinnamon, seasonings, and vinegar, and bring to a boil.

Cover and cook for 35-45 minutes, stirring, until lamb and vegetables are tender. Uncover, check seasonings, and continue to cook for 10 minutes until mixture is thick and stew-like.

Serve over rice, lentil, or bulgur pilaf, pasta or roasted vegetables, and garnish with parsley, red pepper flakes, and fresh lemon wedges.

May be served at room temperature.

*Christine's recipes have been published in the *Fresno Bee* newspaper, *Sunset* magazine, *Cooking Light* magazine, and at <http://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/>



ARTS & LIVING

Creative Armenia and AGBU Announce 2019 Fellows

Five Exceptional Artists Selected for Career Acceleration

NEW YORK – Creative Armenia and the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) announce the five recipients of the inaugural Creative Armenia-AGBU Fellowships, a year-long program of funding, mentorship and tailored promotion strategies for talented artists from all fields.



Burçin Basar

The fellows selected for the 2019 term are: theatre and opera director Arthur Makaryan (New York), musician Arik Grigoryan (Gyumri/Yerevan), painter Burçin Basar (Istanbul), writer and comedian Narek Margaryan (Yerevan), and filmmaker Victoria Aleksanyan (Yerevan).

“We had hundreds of fascinating applicants who are creating vital art around the world,” said Alec Mouhibian, VP of Programs at Creative Armenia. “We are grateful to all of them, and very excited to help our first class of fellows reach new levels in their careers.”

The Fellowships represent the first collaboration of AGBU and Creative Armenia, which entered into a strategic partnership in May. Creative Armenia, a global arts foundation for the Armenian people, pursues a mandate to discover, develop, promote, and produce innova-



Narek Margaryan



Arthur Makaryan



Victoria Aleksanyan



Arik Grigoryan

tive talent. A trusted bedrock of the Armenian diaspora, AGBU has been creating opportunities for Armenian artists for decades to extend their education and showcase their talents to diverse audiences across the globe.

“Empowering Armenian artists fortifies the evolution of Armenian culture,” said Hayk Arsenyan, Director of the Performing Arts

Department at AGBU. “We are looking forward to the original work our fellows will create with this support.”

Creative Armenia and AGBU will showcase the work of the 2019 fellows through a variety of platforms in the course of the next year. Stay tuned to our websites and social media pages to learn more about the 2019 fellows.

Founded in 2017, Creative Armenia is an innovative arts foundation that develops – and realizes – the strategies of a cultural awakening. Its founding advisory board includes Serj Tankian, Eric Esrailian, Arsinée Khanjian, Eric Bogosian, Carla Garapedian, Simon Abkarian and Michael Aram. For more information, visit www.creativearmenia.org.



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ARTS & LIVING

C A L E N D A R

CALIFORNIA

FEBRUARY 9 — Ara Dabandjian Quartet of Element Band, Saturday, 8 PM Dinner, 9:30– 10:30 p.m. Ara Dabandjian Quartet of Element Band. 11 p.m. International Singer Koko Hayitian. Phoenicia Restaurant • 343 N. Central Ave, Glendale. Admission •\$80 • www.tekeyanla.eventbrite.com. Contact • The Tekeyan Metro LA Chapter at info@TekeyanLA.org for group seating. Tickets must be pre-purchased. • No tickets will be sold at the door.

FEBRUARY 17 — Lecture by Aram Arkun of Boston, Executive Director of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada, on Roupen Herian: “Rescuer of Armenian Orphans.” Sunday, 5 p.m. at the Tekeyan Center in Altadena. Sponsored by the Metro LA Tekeyan Chapter.

APRIL 4 and 7 — One of the opera world’s hottest stars, Alessandro Safina, will bring in his pop-opera to USA during his upcoming concert tour in April. Safina appeared with Elton John, Cher and Jennifer Lopez for Queen Elizabeth’s 73rd Royal Variety Performance. He also performed for the Pope, sang duets with Andrea Bocelli, Sarah Brightman, and Rod Stewart. Safina when he performed Elton John’s “Your Song” with actor Ewan McGregor for the Oscar-nominated soundtrack of “Moulin Rouge.” Safina will be accompanied by Victor Espinola and the Forbidden Saints. The tour will also feature Armenian Duduk Soloist and Classical Clarinetist Mher Mnatsakanyan and Bassist Hova Burian will take part. Official FaceBook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/AlessandroSafinaUSA/> Official Promo Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHHKpxTCSSY> The performance will be held at City National Civic in San Jose on Thursday, April 4. (Times 8:00-9:30pm) <https://www1.ticketmaster.com/event/1C005554CB5A7778> Dolby Theater in Los Angeles on April 7. (Times 8 : 0 0 - 9 : 3 0 p m) <https://dolbytheatre.com/events/details/alessandro-safina> <https://www1.ticketmaster.com/alessandro-safina-with-victor-espinola-the-forbidden-saints/event/3B005546FA735928>

FLORIDA

APRIL 11 — One of the opera world’s hottest stars, Alessandro Safina, will bring in his pop-opera rhythms to USA during his upcoming concert tour in April. Safina appeared with Elton John, Cher and Jennifer Lopez for Queen Elizabeth’s 73rd Royal Variety Performance. He also performed for the Pope, sang duets with Andrea Bocelli, Sarah Brightman, and Rod Stewart. Americans first became familiar with Safina when he performed Elton John’s “Your Song” with actor Ewan McGregor for the Oscar-nominated soundtrack of “Moulin Rouge.” Safina will be accompanied by Victor Espinola and the Forbidden Saints. The tour will also feature Armenian Duduk Soloist and Classical Clarinetist Mher Mnatsakanyan and Bassist Hova Burian will take part. Official FaceBook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/AlessandroSafinaUSA/> The performance will be held at Fillmore Miami Beach in Miami on Thursday, April 11th. (Times 8:00-9:30pm)

MASSACHUSETTS

MARCH 2 — St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School (SSAES) PTO will present its annual fundraiser. We hope you can join us in support of SSAES for an evening of food, drinks, art, music and fun! 7 to 11 p.m., Sanborn House, 15 High St., Winchester. SSAES is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax-deductible. For additional information and sponsorship please e-mail: event@ssaes.org. Note: This event is 21+.

MARCH 2 — Poon Paregentan Family Kef Night, Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford, MA. Featuring the Fabulous Jason Naroian Ensemble: Jason Naroian – Vocals and Dumbeg, Ara Jeknavorian – Clarinet, Dave Anisbigian - Guitar and Brian Anisbigian – Oud. Armenian Dance Class - 5 p.m. Dinner and Dancing at 6:00 pm. Paid in advance tickets must be received by February 26: Adults \$25, Students \$10, and 5 & under Free. At the door: Adults \$35 and Students \$15. For reservations, contact Maria Kazanjian (617) 240-3686 or Ria.tk@verizon.net. Tables of 8 can be

reserved in advance with full payment Checks made payable to: Sts Vartanantz Armenian Church.

MARCH 4 — St. James Men’s Club Dinner Meeting - social hour and mezza at 6:15 PM and dinner at 7:00 PM, St James Armenian Church Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA. The speaker will be Dick Flavin, poet laureate of the Boston Red Sox. He is the senior ambassador of the Boston Red Sox and voice of Fenway Park, serving as public address announcer for Red Sox day games. His television commentaries won seven New England Emmy Awards. He is a nationally known speaker and is a member of the Massachusetts Broadcasters Hall of Fame. Mezza and a Losh Kebab & Kheyra Dinner \$17/person. Ladies invited. For additional information call the St James Church office at 617-923-8860 or call Hapet Berberian at 781-367-6598

MARCH 9 – Commemoration of the February 18th Against Soviet Rule and Commemoration of the Baku/Sumgait Pogroms. Buffet Dinner and Program. Narrated Slide Presentation by Joe Dagdigian on “Unseen Armenia – Two Sides of the Border.” Rare images of Armenian Homeland on both sides of Armenia’s and Artsakh’s borders, as well as the patriotic Armenians who inhabit these lands. Jaffarian Hall, St. Gregory Armenian Church, 158 Main St., No. Andover, MA. 6:00 pm. Adults - \$15; Students - \$5. For information and reservations, please contact armenj@comcast.net or call 978-256-2538. Sponsored by the Lowell Aharonian Gomideh of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

APRIL 5 — Friday, City of Smile Boston Friends will host an evening to benefit children with cancer in Armenia. Special guest Anna Hakobyan, the City of Smile Charitable Foundation’s Honorary Chair, wife of Armenia’s Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, at the Westin Waltham Hotel for her inaugural visit to Boston. The City of Smile Charitable Foundation is based in Armenia providing financial support to children with cancer. In addition, the foundation is dedicated to training doctors to provide the best cancer care in treating oncological and hematological diseases. To learn more about the City of Smile Charitable Foundation, visit www.cityofsmile.org. Tickets-\$150 each. For reservations, contact Postaljian@hotmail.com 617/921-8962 or Manuk0102@gmail.com 781/883-4470. Deadline to RSVP is March 22. Tickets will not be sold at the door. Cocktail Reception/Cash Bar - 6:30pm, Dinner and Program - 7:30 p.m.

APRIL 25 — 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/.

MAY 3 – 117th Diocesan Assembly Gala Banquet – V. Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan, Primate, presiding. Boston Marriott Burlington. Hosted by St. James Armenian Church in Watertown. Save the Date – Details to Follow.

JUNE 28 – July 10 – St. James Armenian Church 7th Pilgrimage to Armenia. Led by Fr. Arakel Aljalian. Join us and Discover the Land of our Ancestors. All are welcome. Registration deposits due March 1; Full Payment due April 1. For full details visit www.stjameswatertown.org/armenia.

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

OCTOBER 19 — The Vosbikians are coming to the Merrimack Valley. The Armenian Friends of America proudly present their Annual HYE KEF 5 Dance, featuring The Vosbikians. The DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, Andover, MA. Tickets Purchased before 9/13/19 will include the Great Venue, Outstanding Buffet, The Vosbikian Band and 5 Free Raffle Tickets Adults \$75.00 & Students 21 & under \$65 Specially priced AFA Rooms available through 9/17/19. For Tickets and more information, Contact: Lu Sirmaian 978-683-9121 or Sharke’ Der Apkarian at 978-808-0598 Visit www.ArmeniaFriendsofAmerica.org

NOVEMBER 16 — St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School 35th Anniversary Celebration. 6:30 PM Cocktail Reception, 7:30 PM Dinner and Program. The Westin Waltham - Boston, MA \$150 per person.

MICHGAN

FEBRUARY 27 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association and the AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School jointly sponsor a lecture and discussion featuring Philippe Raffi Kalfayan, international law expert, and regular contributor to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*. Talk titled “Self-Determination of Nagorno Karabakh: Armenians Under International Law.” Kalfayan is the former deputy secretary general of the International Federation for Human Rights and still plays an active role in the organization. Since 2003, he has been a consulting legal expert for the Council of Europe’s Directorate General for Human Rights and the Rule of Law. Opening remarks by moderator Prof. Ronald G. Suny of the University of Michigan. 7 p.m. AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School Hall, 22001 Northwestern Hwy, Southfield. Program will be on eve of anniversary of the Baku and Sumgait pogroms. Very Rev. Aren Jebejian of St. John’s Armenian Church, will offer a memorial prayer for the souls of the victims. Free. Reception to follow.

NEW JERSEY

FEBRUARY 9 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association of New York, under the aegis of the TCA Board of Directors of the US and Canada, will present a Valentine’s Dance featuring international Armenian singer Andre. The Elan, Lodi, NJ. Tickets are \$125 before February 2, and \$150 after, while tickets for young professionals are \$100. To reserve seats, visit https://ticket-stripe.com/TCA_ValentinesDayDinnerDance. For further information and seating, write to rsvptaliab@gmail.com or call 917-238-3970.

May 18 - SAVE THE DATE! St. Nersess Armenian Seminary invites you to A Celebration of Gratitude & Hope, honoring Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and Bishop-elect Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan. 6:30pm. Old Tappan Manor, Old Tappan, NJ. For more info, please go to www.stnersess.edu.

OCTOBER 25, 2019 — SAVE THE DATE. Honoring Dr. Taner Akçam. Abajian Hall St. Leon Armenian Complex, Fair Lawn. Sponsored by Knights and Daughters of Vartan, Under the Auspices of Primate Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan.

NEW YORK

APRIL 9 — One of the opera world’s hottest stars, Alessandro Safina, will bring in his pop-opera rhythms to USA during his upcoming concert tour in April. Safina appeared with Elton John, Cher and Jennifer Lopez for Queen Elizabeth’s 73rd Royal Variety Performance. He also performed for the Pope, sang duets with Andrea Bocelli, Sarah Brightman, and Rod Stewart. Americans first became familiar with Safina when he performed Elton John’s “Your Song” with actor Ewan McGregor for the Oscar-nominated soundtrack of “Moulin Rouge.” Safina will be accompanied by Victor Espinola and the Forbidden Saints. The tour will also feature Armenian Duduk Soloist and Classical Clarinetist Mher Mnatsakanyan and Bassist Hova Burian will take part. Official FaceBook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/AlessandroSafinaUSA/> Official Promo Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHHKpxTCSSY> The performance will be held at Beacon Theater in New York on Thursday, April 9th. (Times 8:00-9:30pm) <https://www1.ticketmaster.com/alessandro-safina-with-victor-espinola-the-forbidden-saints/event/3B005546FA735928>

APRIL 28- Sunday at 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Armenian Genocide Commemoration at Times Square, NYC Sponsored by : Knight & Daughters of Vartan, AGBU, ADL-Ramgavars. Armenian Assembly of America, ANCA and Armenian National Council

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.

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COMMENTARY

Armenia Could Be Left in the Cold with Growing Turkish, Russian Ties

By Edmond Y. Azadian

During the two world wars, Turkey was allied with Germany. During World War I, Ottoman Turkey was Germany's strategic ally. During World War II, it was Germany's tacit ally, supplying metals to the Nazi war machine.

Germany was defeated in both wars, but its Turkish ally survived and maneuvered its way to become a major player in regional politics.

The Cold War proved to be a panacea for Turkey which joined NATO to execute all the dirty activities of the alliance in the Middle East, while tending to its own business by arming itself, reviving its economy and settling historic scores with neighbors.

Today, Turkey has its occupation army in Cyprus, courtesy of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, as well as military bases in Qatar and Djibouti, plus its unwelcome military presence in Iraq and Syria. It plays an active role in the Libyan conflict, supporting Islamist extremists and agitating that country's neighbors, Egypt and Algeria, which have paid a high price in containing those extremists within their own borders.

As a NATO member, Turkey is deeply involved in the Balkans, where the West destroyed the former Yugoslavia in response to the genocidal actions of Serbia, to create a constellation of client states in the heart of Europe.

Turkey has been mustering all this power to rise to the level of impunity. Last week many European countries commemorated the anniversary of the Holocaust, which was covered by the news networks. It was interesting to note that along the Jewish Holocaust, almost all other mass atrocities were mentioned, except the Armenian Genocide, certainly in deference to Turkey, which wields tremendous political power internationally.

Turkey's westward expansion should concern Armenia and

fy as a political and legal padlock for the Armenian side. Through Turkey's insistence, Article 5 of the Kars Treaty forbids Azerbaijan from ceding the territory of Nakhijevan to a third party, meaning Armenia, without the consent of the other signatories, Russia, Georgia and Turkey.

The treaty also recognized Ajaria as the Ajarian Autonomous Republic under Georgian tutelage, in consideration of Ajaria's Muslim population. Similarly, Nakhijevan became an exclave called the Autonomous Republic of Nakhijevan, because of its majority Armenian population. When Azerbaijan became independent in 1991, it declared itself the successor state of the Republic of Azerbaijan (1918-1920), which existed before the Treaty of Kars. Thus, it unilaterally absorbed the territory of Nakhijevan, in violation of the Kars Treaty.

Now, Turkey has come to violate the same treaty by virtually taking over Nakhijevan and establishing a military base there. One does not have to wonder against whom that base operates – Armenia and Iran.

Incidentally, only Armenia is beholden to the tenets of the treaty which defines its border with Turkey. The unsigned Zurich Protocols of 2009 were intended to replace or consolidate the terms of the Kars Treaty as far as the border issue between Armenia and Turkey was concerned.

Of course, it would sound politically correct to Turkey's NATO allies if Ankara alleges that its military base in Nakhijevan serves as a counterbalance to the Russian base in Gyumri, Armenia.

Turkologist Ruben Safrastyan, the director of the Institute of Oriental Studies at the National Academy of Sciences in Armenia, has stated, "In my opinion, the Turkish military-political activity observed in recent years in Nakhijevan pursued far-reaching geopolitical goals. ... The base in Nakhijevan is called upon over time to perfectly complement the already-established military-political axis of Turkey-Georgia-Azerbaijan."

Safrastyan issued a further warning about the fallout from those developments in Armenia as he concluded his analysis: "Together with the above circumstances, all these create prerequisites for the emergence of a fundamentally new situation, and, accordingly, for the emergence of new challenges and threats to Armenia's security. Both Armenia and Artsakh should be ready for this and raise the combat readiness of the armed forces."

While the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group co-chairs representing the US, Russia and France, as well as Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov invite the governments of the parties in the conflict to prepare their citizens for peace, we see on the other hand the emergence of an alarming situation. Either false hopes are being raised by the people in charge of overseeing the settlement or peace will be enforced at a very stiff price.

Can Armenia rely on its own armed forces to face the challenge or does it have to rely on the

Russian military base to thwart this existential threat?

However, currently there is growing anti-Russian sentiment in Armenia. In fact, there is a very obvious and orchestrated vilification of Russia saturating the airwaves. Unfortunately, that campaign is fueled by recent crimes committed by Russian soldiers. In December, a woman was killed by a Russian soldier in Gyumri. A few years back, an entire family, including a baby, was slaughtered by another Russian soldier there. These painful incidents are being politicized and are used to call for the abrogation of the Russian-Armenian treaty regarding the military base.

Similar high-profile incidents take place near and around US military bases in Germany, Turkey, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, etc. Yet no party questions the existence of those military bases nor their significance for the security of the country.

This media campaign, coupled with some actions by the new government, have created distrust among the Kremlin's strategic planners against Armenia.

A commentator, Yuri Simonyan, writing in the Russian *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, states that "The Kremlin seeks proof of allegiance from the new authorities to keep developing the strategic alliance high on its agenda."

Citing "well informed" sources, Simonyan writes that Russia's trust in Armenia's new government is still on "shaky ground" in light of recent inspections at Russian-owned companies operating in Armenia. Certainly it did not sit well with the Kremlin when Armenia sought trade and military ties with China and Sweden, nor Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's statement to John Bolton that Armenia "is open" to consider its options for buying military hardware from the US.

continued on next page



Armenians, but it should not worry them as much as Turkey's eastward thrust.

The Cold War had an ideological veneer and it pitted blocks of nations against each other. Post-Cold War, politics has evolved in another direction; nations do not have ideological axes to grind any more with each other – they oppose each other and they undermine each other's positions as the case may require, but they cooperate with each other on common interests. Throughout modern history, Turkey has been an arch enemy of Russia and Iran. Yet, today, they cooperate on the Syrian battleground, never refraining from skirmishes in the process, wherever their interests conflict. This is micromanaged by diplomacy, which Armenia has yet to learn and apply.

Armenia is locked in a conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh). But that war is managed by Ankara. It was historic luck that Armenia won the war but we have not yet celebrated that victory because the conflict has become part and parcel of the political web in the Caucasus. We cannot discount a direct involvement by Turkey, should the conflict heat up again, particularly in light of the recent Moscow-Ankara honeymoon over mutual interests.

A recent development made Armenia painfully aware how closely the enemy has surrounded it. Alarm bells have been ringing since Turkey began to build its military base in Nakhijevan (Nakhichevan), in violation of the Treaties of Moscow and Kars of 1921. Those two interlocking treaties not only define the border between Armenia and Turkey but they also have many more implications for the signatories.

Although at the time Mustafa Kemal's Grand National Assembly was not yet recognized internationally as a government, the Turks managed to introduce clauses which will quali-

COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Turkish President Erdogan Legalizes Drugs Contrary to his Islamic Faith

Pinar Tremblay, a Turkish reporter for the Al-Monitor news website, exposed President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s recent announcement to legalize the growing of cannabis (a form of marijuana). Tremblay wrote in the January 24, 2019 issue of Al-Monitor that the Turkish leader has been an outspoken opponent of selling or using alcohol, tobacco, and drugs due to his Islamic beliefs, however, he has now decided to advocate the growing of cannabis in order to boost the country’s failing economy and provide farmers with additional income on the eve of municipal elections in Turkey. Tremblay explained that for decades the Turkish government burned cannabis fields using the excuse that this was a fight against the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). Erdogan is now presenting the growing of cannabis as resistance to the West! “Drug wars are enforced with harsh punishment for users and dealers. [Turkish] government spending to prosecute drug dealers has gradually increased, reaching up to \$140 million. That is precisely why Erdogan’s advocacy for cannabis cultivation in his campaign speeches surprised audi-

ences,” wrote Tremblay. The Turkish government relaxed restrictions on planting hemp since 1990. The Parliament adopted even more liberal laws in September 2016. “It is already legal to grow hemp in 19 cities, but you need government permits,” according to Tremblay. Erdogan has suddenly realized that there is a big profit to be made by the cultivation of marijuana, at a time when the Turkish economy is sinking. As the saying goes, “desperate times call for desperate measures!” On January 9, 2019 Erdogan criticized the “enemies of Turkey who pretend to be friends,” stating that they have forced Turkey to end its cannabis production. Amusingly, Erdogan recalled that in his ancestral hometown of Rize the locals used to make underwear from hemp which is more absorbent than any other material. According to Tremblay, most Turks interpreted Erdogan’s statement “‘enemies who pretend to be friends’ as a reference to the United States, which pressed to ban opium poppy production in 1971. Up until then, Turkey was a major producer of legal opium, but farmers were known to produce also significant amount of the plants illegally. Currently, Turkey has one alkaloid processing plant in Central Anatolian province of Afyon, which means ‘opium’ in Turkish. Afyon is known for its high-quality poppy seed production. The factory produces ingredients to be used in prescription drugs.” The Turkish media began obediently promoting Erdogan’s declaration about the benefits of cannabis production to the health sector and the economy. Sabah newspaper even wrote about the use of hemp by the Ottoman Turkish Navy. “Turkish government television TRT started airing infomercials about cannabis while referring to it as an ‘Anatolian plant’ and elaborating on countless uses of hemp. Islamist media particularly was quite eager to back Erdogan. For example, Mehmet Toprak, a columnist for Dirilis Postasi, wrote a piece titled ‘Cannabis will make the US dollar weapon explode in their own hands.’ Toprak emphasized that

‘President Erdogan’s decision on cannabis production is a turning point in our history. It is as revolutionary as the July 15 [2016 failed coup] victory. This decision shows us how crucial it is to stand behind Erdogan for the future of our country and the Muslim lands,’” Tremblay reported. “Cannabis production is now presented as a form of national resistance to the West,” stated a Turkish Agriculture Ministry official. However, several Turkish agricultural experts warned that the production of cannabis could have an adverse effect on the growth of food items. One government employee, an expert in this field, was quoted by Tremblay stating: “food prices have skyrocketed, particularly in the last year. For example, onion [which is a staple ingredient for most recipes in Turkish cuisine] prices went up 185 percent in 2018. While its population is increasing, Turkey is producing fewer basic crops like wheat, barley, chickpeas, beets, beans and potatoes now than it did five years ago. Plus, cotton and flax production, just like hemp, has been decreasing in volume gradually over the last 15 years. This can be blamed on the government’s lack of planning for the impact of climate change on crops; its policies to lift tariffs on these goods, encouraging cheaper imports; and the rise in pesticide and fertilizer prices, making production more expensive. The government has failed to support farmers almost every step of the way, leaving them alone to the whim of the weather, cheap exports and inadequate storage disasters.” Another expert at an Istanbul university told Tremblay: “These great promises on cannabis cultivation as a form of ultra-nationalistic stand against the West are exciting for the crowds ... but how about other staple goods people need to survive? The arable land and number of farming families are dwindling. In 2017, meat [red and white] consumption in Turkey per person was averaging around 30 kilograms. In the European Union, that average is almost 70 kilos per person. We are much more dependent on grains and vegetables in our diet. Now if we switch to cannabis, what will people eat?”

Armenia Could Be Left in the Cold with Growing Turkish, Russian Ties

from previous page

Pashinyan was in Moscow last week, when Armenia assumed the rotational presidency of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). He stated in his inaugural speech that he personally had voted in the past against the existence of the Russian base in Armenia but now it was his belief that the base was crucial for the country’s defense. That assurance was not sufficient to open the Kremlin doors to Pashinyan. President Vladimir Putin’s office announced that he was too busy to receive Armenia’s prime minister, though Pashinyan met with Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev. It looks like there is a lack of understanding about the geopolitical situation in the region. Not only by the media pundits, but even by some young parliamentarians who claim that the Russian base compromises Armenia’s sovereignty. Political naivete is not new in Armenia. In 1921, the February uprising was started against Soviet rule, and the last prime minister of independent Armenia Simon Vratzian appealed to the Turkish government to help restore his party in power. And this appeal was made when the Turkish government had just completed the Genocide. There is a long analytical article in *Statfor*, dated January 22, whose title is “What the Chill in Russian-Armenian Relations Means.” The significant statements in that analysis are the following:

- “If the Russian-Armenian relationship continues to fray, other powers, including the United States, Iran and Turkey, could make inroads in the Caucasus country and weaken Russia’s position.”
- “This in turn could force Russia to focus more on bolstering ties with one of Armenia’s biggest nemeses, Azerbaijan, raising the prospect of greater instability in the region.”

Pashinyan, the leader of the Velvet Revolution, had stated time and again that the sole purpose of the movement was to overthrow the corrupt regime and that it had no foreign policy agenda. It seems now that the movement indeed has a tilt, one which may jeopardize its strategic partnership with Russia. Political analysts were surprised that Russia moved its military base out of Georgia upon the request of the government, even before the expiration of the treaty. The same action was taken in Azerbaijan, from which the Russian listening post had been withdrawn. Local politicians believed that these military assets were essential for Russian forces to project their posture in the Middle East. But later on, they discovered that Russia had developed its arsenal to hit targets in Syria, even from the Caspian Sea. Therefore, it will be foolhardy for the pundits in Armenia to believe that the Russian base serves only Russian interests rather than Armenian ones. It is clear that storm clouds are gathering in the skies over the Caucasus. Russian-Turkish relations have almost returned to the days of Lenin and Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk). Armenia can only operate according to the existing facts on the ground. Issues of sovereignty are manufactured arguments, as it is beyond Armenia’s means to challenge the Russian colossus – and survive.

Black Swans Haunt Eurasia’s Great Game

By James M. Dorsey



The battle lines in the 21st century’s Great Game aimed at shaping the creation of a new Eurasia-centred world, built on the likely fusion of Europe and Asia into what former Portuguese Europe minister Bruno Macaes calls a “supercontinent,” are all but cast in cement. For now, the Great Game pits China together with Russia, Turkey and Iran against the United States, India, Japan and Australia. The two camps compete for influence, if not dominance, in a swath of land that stretches from the China Sea to the Atlantic coast of Europe. The flashpoints are multiple. They range from the China Sea to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Turkey, Iran, and Central European nations and, most recently, far beyond with Russia, China and Turkey supporting embattled Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro. The rivalry resembles Risk, a popular game of diplomacy, conflict and conquest played on a board depicting a political map of the earth, divided into forty-two territories, which are grouped into six continents. Multiple players commanding armies that seek to capture territories engage in a complex dance as they strive for advantage and seek to compensate for weaknesses. Players form opportunistic alliances that could change at any moment. Potential black swans threaten to disrupt. The black swans in the Great Game are multiple and far more numerous than those developed in a just published report by the Paris-based European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS). Nonetheless, the scenarios conceptualized in the report, ‘What If? Scanning the horizon: 12 scenarios for 2021,’ are grounded in recent trends and could prove to be game changers that radically rejigger the Great Game’s current line-up. The scenarios or grey swans in the report’s terminology, if they unfold in reality, suggest that alliances in Eurasia are opportunistic and transactional and like with

Risk can turn players on their erstwhile allies as interests diverge and re-converge. Analysis of five of the scenarios suggests that fragility is greatest in the efforts of China, Russia, Turkey and Iran to rebalance global power in their favor. They suggest that strains in the United States’ relations with Russia and Turkey are not immutable. Similarly, Russia’s effort to lock in former Soviet republics with its Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) that groups Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan Belarus, and Armenia could prove to be on shaky ground. Russia’s alliance with Turkey and China as well as Iran even if the report has not developed the latter possibility may be on thinner ice than meets the eye. The same can be said for grey swans in the United States’ ties to its long-standing allies as is played out in the report’s scenario for a withdrawal of US troops from Europe as a result of President Donald J. Trump’s accentuation of diverging trans-Atlantic interests. With a multi-polar world the likely outcome of the battle for Eurasia, the scenarios suggest that the perceived decline of the United States, despite Mr. Trump’s unilateralism, is not irreversible. Similarly, depending on how it plays its cards, Iran could emerge either as a winner or a loser. The four scenarios involve a renewed round of popular protest in the Arab world following the reversal of successful revolts in 2011 in Egypt, Libya and Yemen and the embrace of brutal repression; political violence in the Caucasus that pits Turkey against Russia and could threaten key nodes along China’s Belt and Road; the dissolution of the Eurasian Economic Union in an approaching post-Vladimir Putin era; a rejiggering of the political map of south-eastern Europe and a strengthening of European cohesion with the US troop withdrawal and resolution of tension between Serbia and Kosovo. The notion of renewed popular Arab protests, including resistance to the influence of militias in Syria and Libya, that could rewrite the political map of the Middle see EURASIA, page 20?

LETTERS

We Should Remember Manoug Young

To the Editor:
In response to NAASR to Name New Headquarters (Armenian Mirror-Spectator, January 12, 2019)...
God bless Manoug Young. I hope he is not forgotten.

Kevoork Marashlian
Washington, DC



Black Swans Haunt Eurasia's Great Game

EURASIA, from page 19

East is hardly far-fetched with mass anti-government demonstrations in Sudan persisting for more than a month; riots in Tunisia, the one relatively successful 2011 revolt; protests on the West Bank against a new social security law; and anti-government marches in Iraq.

If anything, the revolts highlight the risks that all players in the Great Game run by supporting autocratic regimes that have largely failed to sustainably deliver public goods and services and/or offer good governance and cater to the social, economic and political aspirations of young populations.

"Pressure for change across the Arab world is likely to continue to grow, keeping pace with the growth in populations, inequality and social injustice," concluded journalist Simon Tisdall on the eighth anniversary of the upris-

ing in Egypt that toppled president Hosni Mubarak but was ultimately defeated by a military coup two years later.

The European Union Institute's report imagines a massive attack on the Baku Kars rail line, a vital node in the Belt and Road's linking of China to Europe that rekindles dormant local animosities as well as competing Russian and Turkish economic and geostrategic interests, prompting both Moscow and Ankara to lobby Washington for US support.

Similarly, a scenario envisaging Kazakhstan and Belarus withdrawing from the Eurasian union because of its inability to live up to its ambition of furthering regional integration sparks fears in Moscow that the demise of the regional consortium could spark the collapse of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), a military alliance that groups the five Eurasian union members as well as Tajikistan and hosts Afghanistan and Serbia as observers. The dissolution of the two organizations would significantly undermine Russia's regional standing.

Likewise, a swap of land between Serbia and Kosovo that purifies two countries whose inter-communal relations have been poisoned by historic prejudices and recent wars opens a Pandora's Box across south-eastern Europe but eases their accession to the European Union while a US troop withdrawal would force EU members to focus on collective security.

It would only take one of these scenarios to unfold and potentially spark a revisiting of the current line-up in the Great Game. Any one of the scenarios is a realistic possibility.

Said European Union Institute deputy director Florence Gaub in her introduction to the report: "Grey Swans share with Black Swans a high level of strategic impact, but there is more evidence to support the idea that they are actually possible... The analogy with the 1985 film 'Back to the Future' is pure coincidence, of course – but just as in the film, we sometimes need to take a trip to the future to inform our decision-making today."

(This analysis originally appeared in the Eurasiareview.com on January 27.)

Ambassador, Speaker Discuss UK, Armenia Ties

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Speaker of Parliament Ararat Mirzoyan met on January 29 with UK's Ambassador Judith Farnworth.

Mirzoyan expressed his gratitude for the current level of relations between the two countries, attaching importance to the ambassador's role in the issue.

Mirzoyan emphasized the cooperation between parliamentary friendship groups, as well as mutual visits.

Farnworth noted that the UK has great experience in parliamentary administration and can assist Armenia in developing supervision mechanisms and strengthening democracy.

She highlighted boosting the partnership between friendship groups and strengthening cooperation in multilateral formats.

They also discussed opportunities for bilateral cooperation within the framework of the expanded European family, as well as the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) signed between Armenia and the European Union.



From left Ambassador Varuzhan Nersesyan, Military attaché Colonel Armand Mghrdchyan, Archbishop Vicken Aykazian and pastor Fr. Hovsep Karapetyan.

Armenian Army's 27th Anniversary Celebrated in Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON – On Sunday January 27, after the divine liturgy, the Office of the Military Attaché of the Armenian Embassy in the US celebrated the 27th Anniversary of the Armenian Army at St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church.

During the celebration, Ambassador Varuzhan Nersesyan, Military attaché Colonel Armand Mghrdchyan and Archbishop Vicken Aykazian spoke about the importance of having strong and brave army for the defense of the motherland and Artsakh.

During the Divine Liturgy, a requiem service was offered for the souls of Armenian freedom fighters and soldiers who sacrificed their lives for freedom and liberation of the homeland.



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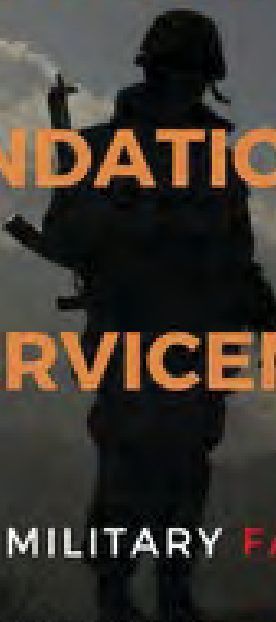
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