

Kerry, Shaheen, Menendez Raise Key Policy Issues at Foreign Relations Committee Confirmation Hearing

WASHINGTON — Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry (D-MA) along with Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Robert Menendez (D-NJ) raised key policy issues during this week's Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing of Ambassador-designate to Azerbaijan Richard Morningstar.

Kerry, who introduced the panel of nominees, expressed the importance of a lasting and peaceful solution to the Nagorno Karabagh conflict. Shaheen, who chaired the hearing, raised concerns about Azerbaijan's ongoing human rights abuses and called on all sides to find a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno Karabagh conflict.

Menendez Expresses Strong Concerns about Continued US Military Assistance to Azerbaijan Given Latest Cease-Fire Violations

Morningstar stated that there is no higher US priority in the region than "the peaceful solution of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict."

Menendez raised serious concerns about Azerbaijan's cease-fire violations that coincided with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's recent visit to the South Caucasus region, "including," Menendez said, "a cross-border incursion that killed three Armenian soldiers and wounded five others, as well as a breach along the Nagorno Karabagh line of contact. These actions

confirm the President of Azerbaijan's threats... 'Armenia will live in fear.'"

Citing a speech by Azerbaijan's president, wherein

Ilham Aliyev stated that "our enemies are Armenians of the world," Menendez asked nominee Morningstar, in light of this type of heightened rhetoric, if he thought that proposed US sales of military hardware is in the national security interest of the United States. In his response, the ambassador-designate stated that if confirmed, "I will do everything that I can to discourage that" and any similar language that is contemplated, or any "actions that bring about loss of life," and create increased tensions or instability.

Further, Morningstar supported strict compliance with Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act and added that any security assistance provided to Azerbaijan "cannot exacerbate any situation with respect to Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh."

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David Nalbandian shows his concern after line judge Andrew McDougall is left with a gashed leg.

Police Investigate Assault Allegation Made against Tennis Star Nalbandian

LONDON (CNN) — David Nalbandian is under police investigation for an alleged assault after a line judge was injured when the Argentine tennis star kicked over an advertising board in Sunday's Queen's Club final.

London's Metropolitan Police confirmed to CNN Monday that a complaint had been received following the incident, which led to Nalbandian's disqualification, with Croatian Marin Cilic awarded the title.

"We are aware of an incident which took place at the Aegon Championships on June 17," said a police spokesman.

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500th Anniversary of 'Church of Miracles' in Romania to Be Celebrated in August

By Florence Avakian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

SUCEAVA, Romania — The Hagigadar Armenian Monastery built in 1512 on a hill outside of this Romanian town has been called a "church of miracles," known for its power of granting the wishes of believers, who over the centuries have come from all over the world to pray there. On August 12, the church's 500th anniversary will be celebrated with the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II traveling from Armenia for the first time to Romania to consecrate it. It is being completely restored through Romanian-born benefactors Hagop and Ica Kouyoumdjian of New York.

"This church is a place of pilgrimage, like Lourdes in France. It's a place for all Christians, not just Armenians who ascend the hill on their knees and circle the church three times as they pray," stated Romania's Primate Bishop Davev Hagopian, in an

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Israeli Lawmakers Discuss Commemorating Armenian Genocide

JERUSALEM (*LA Times*) — Israeli lawmakers dedicated a session of parliament Tuesday to discussing whether to commemorate the Armenian Genocide, a controversial and sensitive issue that could further aggravate the country's strained relations with Turkey.

When ties were stronger, Israel refrained from official recognition of the killings of minority Armenians early in the 1900s as genocide, citing diplomatic reasons. But diplomatic relations have been strained since Israeli soldiers killed nine Turkish activists in 2010 during an attempt to block a flotilla of aid bound for the Gaza Strip.

Some Israeli lawmakers say the time has come for their nation to finally divorce the

issue from diplomatic concerns and take a clear, moral stance.

"The Armenian Genocide has been swept under the rug" for fear of upsetting foreign relations, said Zehava Galon, who initiated the debate. "We must not politicize this matter," said Reuven Rivlin, the Knesset speaker, a long-time supporter of Israel making a clear statement of recognition.

The Knesset came to no decision on the motion Tuesday but plans to hold another session on the issue.

The genocide of 1915 to 1918 claimed the lives of about 1.2 million Armenians under the Ottoman Empire, which became the modern republic of Turkey. The Turkish government disputes that a genocide took place,

saying the number of deaths was much smaller and the victims were killed in chaos of World War I and its aftermath.

The issue has strained Turkey's ties with several countries advancing legislation to recognize the genocide. In Israel's case, this might push the relations beyond repair.

The Israeli motion calling for a commemoration, which was filed by left-wing opposition lawmakers but supported by some conservatives as well, drew criticism from some members of the Knesset. Robert Tivayev, who recently joined Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition, said the issue was being used for political purposes.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Mirror-Spectator to Close for Holiday

WATERTOWN, Mass. — The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* will close for two weeks in July for its annual summer holiday.

The issue of June 30 will be the last before the summer break. The issue of July 21 will be the first upon return.

Minsk Group Stresses Need for Ceasefire

PARIS (Armenpress) — The co-chairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group — Ambassadors Robert Bradtke of the US, Igor Popov of Russia and Jacques Faure of France — met this week jointly with the Foreign Minister of Armenia Eduard Nalbandian and the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov.

The co-chairs discussed with the ministers the way forward on resolving the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict, as well as further work on development of humanitarian contacts and the creation of a mechanism to investigate ceasefire violations, as well as the preservation of sites of historic and cultural value. The co-chairs also reiterated deep concern over recent incidents along the front lines and stressed the need to respect the 1994 ceasefire agreement.

Schmidt Got More than \$150K from Turkish Coalition in 2011

WASHINGTON (*Cincinnati Enquirer*) — Rep. Jean Schmidt received \$582,768 over three years from the Turkish Coalition of America, according to her most recent financial disclosure report. The Republican reported three debts, all to law firms that represented her against opponent David Krikorian and the ethics case that ensued.

Last summer, the House ethics committee found that Schmidt had accepted an improper gift from the Turkish Coalition. Although the panel found that she didn't know the coalition was paying her legal fees, it ordered her to repay the funds and report them on her disclosure form.

Schmidt sued Krikorian after he claimed that she had taken "blood money" from the government of Turkey in exchange for her opposition to efforts that would label as "genocide" the killings of Armenians living in Turkey during World War I.

The Ohio Elections Commission ruled in her favor; she also filed a defamation lawsuit against Krikorian in June 2010. She has since dropped that case.

To comply with the ethics ruling, Schmidt reported receiving about \$430,000 in 2009 and 2010 from the Turkish coalition. And her latest report shows she got another \$152,658 in 2011.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Russia to Double Personnel at its Military Base in Gumri

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Russia will double the number of contract personnel at its military base in Armenia, according to RIA Novosti. “The number of contract servicemen at the Russian base at Gumri will be doubled by the end of 2012,” Col. Igor Gorbunov, a spokesman for Russia’s Southern Military District, said in Moscow. Permanent staff numbers, however, will remain at the current 5,000, Gorbunov added. Russia’s parliament voted last year to extend the country’s lease of the base through 2044. The base, near Armenia’s border with Turkey, is part of the post-Soviet Commonwealth of Independent States air defense system and is home to S-300 anti-aircraft missiles and Mikoyan MiG-29 fighters.

TEDxKids@Yerevan Event Draws Greater Attention To Kids’ Issues

YEREVAN – On June 1, the International Day of Children, the inaugural TEDxKids@Yerevan event took place in the Caucasus region at TUMO Center for Creative Technologies. Licensed by Technology Entertainment Design (TED), the nonprofit devoted to “Ideas Worth Spreading,” the independently-organized event brought together more than 300 participating children from Yerevan and Armenia’s provinces and featured 22 speakers.

Throughout the spring the TEDx team in Yerevan worked with 10-18-year-old children and students from various schools, including children with special needs, to audition and develop their talks according to TED commandments.

The 22 live speakers had one thing in common – they had something remarkable to share, and they were able to share it in an engaging way. While some of the talks featured their interests and dreams in life, such as bionic architecture, sports and acting, other talks focused on certain things in the society that they want to change, such as enabling a healthier environment and lack of invisible walls in interpersonal communication with stigmatized groups. The recorded talks will be available on the Internet at the end of June to continue sharing ideas from Armenian kids that are worth spreading. Moreover, some of the ideas the speakers voiced at the event will be further pursued to bring them to life in the near future.

Hovnannian Expects Better Control of Monopolies

YEREVAN (Arminfo) – President of the Hovhannian International company, American-Armenian businessman Vahagn Hovhannian, said this week he expects the new Armenian government to better control monopolies and to foster competition among importers.

During a press conference on Tuesday, June 12, he said that the May 6 parliamentary elections were transparent.

Hovhannian noted that Armenia’s business and tax laws are rigid but this helps to support the army.

He said that the current economic decline in Armenia is the result of geopolitics rather than government policies. Expressing concern for possible military actions in Iran and the current situation in Syria, Hovhannian said that the United States should no longer impose democracy and should give countries a choice.

Armenia’s key problems are the blockade and the shortage of human resources. Also, growing emigration is hurting sales of real estate, he said. The key buyers of housing in Armenia for the moment are Armenian families from Syria, Iran and Egypt, while most of the locals have no money for buying immovable property. Still, 63 percent of the houses sold by Hovhannian International are Armenian citizens.

The Hovhannian family came to Armenia 12 years ago and have business in construction, real estate, production of construction materials and tourism.

US Offers New Scenario on Improving Turkish-Armenian Relations

By Naira Hayrumyan

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – US Ambassador to Armenia John Heffern has spoken about “three tracks” for Yerevan and Ankara to settle their historical feud until 2015, the year when the centennial of the Armenian Genocide will be marked.

“Hopefully Turkey and Armenia will find a way to make 2015 an inclusive affair and part of a constructive process. 2015 will be a sensitive year. Therefore, it will be an opportunity to bring the two nations together,” said Heffern in an interview with *Today’s Zaman*, recommending “three tracks” to be taken between the two countries.

The first track, he said, is the ratification and the implementation of the protocols. The US hopes, in this sense, that both sides will ratify and implement the signed protocols.

The second track involves economic measures, including the reopening of railroads between Kars and Gumri. “If the railroad reopens there will be a tremendous boost in trade and tourism,” said Heffern, adding that the railroad could be opened without opening the full border.

The third track outlined by Heffern is the reconciliation of the people and cross-border exchanges. “We [the US] will continue to stimulate cross-border exchanges between journalists, students and businesspeople,” he said.

Heffern makes a key point that the railway can be opened without the opening of the entire border. This is part of the so-called “settlement with-

out settlement” project, which is now being actively lobbied also by the European Union. Its essence is that the conflicts between Armenia and Turkey and between Armenia and Azerbaijan may remain without final settlement or without peace agreements, but the borders should be opened up for regional energy and transport projects.

The Karabagh conflict appears a sticking point in this scenario. Azerbaijan and Turkey are trying to achieve an Armenian withdrawal from at least a couple of districts now being held by the Karabagh military, promising to open the border in that case. However, this position seems unacceptable to many. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who made a regional tour last week, clearly stated that such a price is not acceptable for her country and that processes in the Karabagh conflict and Armenian-Turkish relations should be evolving separately.

Meanwhile, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu reiterated that the Turkish-Armenian relations will not be normalized “until Armenian forces leave the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.” In addition, in the Turkish city of Trabzon, the foreign ministers of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia signed an agreement on energy cooperation, again bypassing Armenia.

At a joint press conference, the foreign minister of Turkey, a country that occupied the northern part of Cyprus

nearly four decades ago, again called “unacceptable” the “occupation of 20 percent of Azerbaijani territories.” “Frozen conflicts can turn into a hot



Ambassador John Heffern

spot any moment. It is very important that instead of freezing the conflict a speedy solution to it be sought,” said Davutoglu.

Turkey itself has temporarily ceased contacts with the EU for the duration of Cyprus’s presidency in this organization. Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia Ruben Safrastyan reminds that the Cyprus problem is a major obstacle to Turkey’s European integration. “Turkey keeps its occupation troops in Cyprus, which is actually an act of aggression against a member of the EU, an organization that Turkey is seeking to accede,” said the expert.

Some experts suggest that as a price for Turkey’s accession to the Schengen agreement, Europe may demand that Ankara open up a railway with Armenia and “convince” Azerbaijan to partially list the blockades of Karabagh.

Syrian-Armenians Move to Yerevan

By Arpi Harutyunyan and Haykuhi Barseghyan

YEREVAN (CRS) – Several hundred people have already arrived in Armenia to escape rising violence in Syria, and they say thousands more could be on their way.

“We never thought we’d be able to move from one country to another in just a few months,” said Harutyun Ashakertyan, 58, who has moved to Armenia with his wife and three children. “The situation changed so sharply that it was the best decision. Our prime duty was to ensure the family’s safety.”

His wife Lisa Ashakertyan, 50, said most of the people she knew back in Syria were planning to move to Armenia, as well.

Syria is home to around 80,000 Armenians, most descendants of the survivors of mass killings in the Ottoman Empire from 1915 onwards. Although they are well integrated in Syria, the violence of the last year has forced many to consider leaving.

The influx is likely to increase as President Bashar al-Assad’s forces continue attacking towns around the country and as his armed opponents put up more resistance. Concentrated in Aleppo, the Armenian minority is seen as supportive of the Assad government.

Emigrating is difficult when there are few buyers for homes and businesses.

Madlen Sepetjyan, 59, is keen to leave Syria, but is unable to sell her house.

“A few months ago my house was robbed. Every last coin was taken, and it’s just lucky I wasn’t at home or they would have killed me,” she said. “They took all my savings and my gold, and I can’t go to Armenia until I sell my house. We wait for

buyers all the time, but no one is coming forward at this tense time.”

Sepetjyan worries how she will support herself in Armenia, since her son has lived there for three years but has yet to find a long-term job that pays decent money.

It is not clear how many of the arriving Syrian Armenians have found work.

According to member of parliament Artsvik Minasyan, they will need help integrating, not least because they speak a different dialect of Armenian.

“The problem is that there is no single strategy for arriving Armenians who need help from the state – from assistance with economic, social and financial issues, to organizational and citizenship questions,” he said.

In response to an opposition question this February, Armenia’s Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian said the government would be prepared to help the Armenian community in Syria.

Tevos Nersisyan, of the Diaspora Ministry, said no resettlement plans had been drawn up, and was still not anticipating a massive influx from Syria.

“It’s impossible to predict how many people will move to Armenia,” he said. He confirmed, however, that Syrian-Armenians were constantly getting in contact with his ministry over visas, financial matters and help getting their property through customs.

Analysts say the new arrivals should not put too much strain on the system, especially considering the number of people who have left Armenia in search of work in recent years.

“So many people have left Armenia in recent years that a big influx now wouldn’t cause any economic problems. The reverse is true – the arrival of compatriots will give us new stimulus,” Andranik Tevanyan, director of the Politeconomia think tank, said.

(Arpi Harutyunyan is a correspondent for Armnews television. Haykuhi Barseghyan is a correspondent for the *Ankakh* weekly and www.Ankakh.am.)

Prime Minister Meets With Outgoing German Ambassador

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Prime Minister of Armenia Tigran Sargsian held a farewell meeting with German Ambassador to Armenia Hans-Jochen Schmidt, who is completing his diplomatic mission, the government’s press service announced.

Sargsian said that Armenian-German joint projects are singled out for their productivity and voiced hope that their number will grow in future. “We are interested in strengthening and expansion of Armenian-German bilateral relations. That cooperation is of high significance to us in regard to Armenia’s Euro-integration process as well,” the premier said.

Hans-Jochen Schmidt thanked Sargsian for his cooperation and stressed his assistance in involvement of German investments. The ambassador added that Germany is interested in extending productive activity with Armenia in various spheres.



INTERNATIONAL

Montreal Manuel Keusseyan Armenological Lecture Series Enjoys Broad Appeal in its Ninth Year

MONTREAL — This spring, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Manuel Keusseyan Armenological Lecture Series, an initiative of the Armenological Studies Program here, added several distinguished speakers to its already impressive list of participants, who have made it the longest-running project of its kind.

Viken L. Attarian, Gargein Choogaszian, Dr. Movses Herkelian, Peter Hrechdakian and Rouben Malayan were some of the many guests featured in the 2012 lecture series, which was created by the AGBU Montreal Chapter in the fall of 2003. That year, the late Manuel Keusseyan, a literary expert, poet and teacher, approached the then-chairman of the Montreal Chapter, Paul Kichian, and AGBU patron Jirair Dervishian, with the idea of creating a public forum that would engage the Armenian community on various subjects ranging from the arts to politics and everything in between. Keusseyan began hosting the weekly events, occasionally joined by colleagues and quickly gaining a core following of 30 to 40 attendees every Wednesday evening for nine months out of the year.

November 2006, when Keusseyan was befallen by an illness that would take his life a year later, Chahé Tanachian, currently the chairman of the Armenological Studies Program and director of the AGBU Alex

Manoogian School, assumed the responsibility of organizing the events. While the series' format changed — a different lecturer was invited each week — Tanachian has ensured that it maintains the spirit and energy that Keusseyan brought to it. He said, "this project's objective from day one has been to present the cornerstones of Armenian culture in order to strengthen Armenian identity in the diaspora and to better educate about the richness of Armenian culture and heritage. As a nation, we must first appreciate our own rich culture in order to present it to other nations and share it with the world community."

The series has helped share Armenian culture over the past nine years, producing more than 250 presentations on numerous topics, at times drawing crowds exceeding 100.

Both local speakers and those visiting from overseas have helped the lecture series remain varied and thought-provoking. Recent presentations include "The Armenian DNA Project" by Hrechdakian, which gave an overview of new resources that allow Armenians, especially descendants of orphans from the Genocide who are searching for relatives, to trace their genealogy. Shifting from the hard sciences to science fiction, in February, Attarian, the former chairman of the AGBU Montreal Chapter, discussed the obscure but interesting world of Armenian science fiction. A few weeks later, in March,



Leading information technologies expert Garegin Chugaszyan engages an audience at the AGBU Montreal Center.

Choogaszian led an informative talk on the Armenian composers, Komitas and Khachaturian.

Armenian art has also been a recurring topic throughout the series, with Malayan joining the program in April for his presentation, "Armenian Calligraphy as Art," and art critic and artist Herkelian preceding him. After receiving an AGBU scholarship, Herkelian pursued a successful career as an art critic and pledged to give back to AGBU. Pieces from his own gallery, which he has donated to exhibition sales, have raised tens of thousands of dollars for the AGBU Lebanon Education Fund. During his lecture, Herkelian drew from his own experiences in the art world to highlight those of painters Arshile Gorky and Ivan Aivazovsky.

Police Investigate Assault Allegation Made against Nalbandian

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"A complaint of assault has been made and the Metropolitan Police Service is now investigating."

Nalbandian was a set up, but trailing in the second, when his frustrations boiled over after failing to return a Cilic service.

He lashed out at a courtside advertising board, behind which line judge Andrew McDougall was sitting.

The force of the kick dislodged the display, which hit McDougall and left him a nasty gash to his left leg.

McDougall was seen to angrily remonstrate with Nalbandian, who was defaulted for "unsportsmanlike conduct."

ATP supervisor Tom Barnes confirmed that he had been left with no other choice, much to the disappointment of a capacity crowd who had been enjoying a closely contested final.

"Once I saw the injury it was not a judgment call. I didn't have any other option," he told the official ATP Tour website.

Nalbandian forfeited the \$56,802 prize money and the 150 ranking points he would have received and later Monday was fined \$12,564 by the ATP for his actions.

Nalbandian, who was defaulted for insulting a linesman at tournament in Chile in 2002, said he regretted the latest incident. "I made a mistake and I apologize," the 30-year-old told the official ATP Tour website.

"I feel very sorry to the guy. I didn't want to do that. This is a bad situation for everybody that I really apologize for."

The official tournament website said McDougall had been tended to by St John's Ambulance and ATP medical staff but did not need any further treatment.

Israeli Lawmakers Discuss Commemorating Armenian Genocide

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"This is not a matter for politicians but for academics," he said. "They alone must determine whether genocide took place or not."

If academics and historians rule the events as genocide, Tivayev said, "Israel should be the first to recognize it."

The Knesset debate came a day before the state comptroller was scheduled to publish a report on the 2010 flotilla deaths. According to early reports, the report will criticize Netanyahu for underestimating the potential seriousness of the flotilla interdiction.

Last month, Turkey drafted a 144-page indictment of senior Israeli military officers, including Gabi Ashkenazi and Eliezer Marom, then chief of staff and navy commander, respectively. Turkish news reports say the trial of Israeli generals will start in November,

after authorities approved the indictment seeking multiple life sentences for the officers, who have been advised by Israeli authorities to refrain from visiting Turkey.

Despite a desire to mend relations with Turkey, Israel has refused to apologize to Turkey for the flotilla events. The standoff has left diplomatic and military relations strained, although civilian trade continues.

On occasion, the strain spills over into other arenas. Recently, Israel was excluded from the Global Counterterrorism Forum meeting after the US reportedly accepted a Turkish veto. Israel's claims that Turkey had blocked its officials from participation in a NATO summit were denied by the US.

US officials have urged Israel to repair its ties with Turkey to enhance regional strategic stability.

Turkish Police Detain Van Mayor

ISTANBUL (Hetq.am) — Turkish law enforcement officials detained Bekir Kaya, the mayor of the southeastern city of Van, and five other district mayors this week, as well as 10 members of the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), as part of a probe into the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK).

The KCK is a Kurdish organization founded by Abdullah Öcalan, formerly named Koma Komalen Kurdistan (KKK) (Peoples' Confederation of Kurdistan), to put in practice his ideology of democratic confederalism.



Bekir Kaya

International News

Azerbaijan Jails Iranian Journalist on Drug Charge

BAKU (Reuters) — A court in Azerbaijan sentenced an Iranian journalist to two years in prison for drug possession on Tuesday in a case that his family says is politically motivated.

Anar Bayramli, 31, a reporter for Iran's Sahar TV and the Fars news agency, was arrested in February 2012 after police found him in possession of a small amount of heroin.

His brother Eldar Baylami told reporters the drugs had been planted. Shortly before the arrest, the speaker of Azerbaijan's parliament suggested Sahar TV was "preparing anti-Azerbaijan provocations" but gave no details.

The Iranian authorities did not immediately react to the sentence, which was announced by a court spokesman.

Tensions between Iran and Azerbaijan have risen this year, with each side accusing the other of meddling in its affairs.

Iran has accused Azerbaijan of assisting Israel in the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientists, but Baku has denied this. Azerbaijan has arrested dozens of people this year on suspicion of links to Iran's Revolutionary Guards and of plotting attacks, including on the Israeli ambassador to Baku.

Iran withdrew its ambassador from Baku last month after clerics criticized Azerbaijan for hosting an annual pan-European song contest.

Azerbaijani FM Whips up Hysteria over NKR Visit To UK

LONDON (Arminfo) — The Azerbaijani Embassy in Great Britain sent a letter to the British Foreign Office in the wake of Armenian media reports regarding the participation of "separatists of Nagorno Karabagh in the parliament of this country," Press Secretary of Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry Elman Abdullayev told APA.

According to him, along with this, the embassy held several meetings and stressed the inconvenience on participation of "separatists" in the meeting of Armenia-Britain Friendship Group.

To calm the Azeris, the British Foreign Ministry noted in their letter to the Azerbaijani Embassy that they supported Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. The letter says that the parliamentary group is a non-formal group of interests and does not reflect the official position of British government and parliament.

Aronian Defeats Caruana

MOSCOW (Armenpress) — Armenian Grandmaster Levon Aronian defeated Italian Grandmaster Fabiano Caruana in the last (ninth) round of the Mikhail Tal Chess Memorial, which took place June 7-18, according to the Chess Federation of Armenia. Aronian scored 4.5 points with white figures.

The winner of the tournament was Magnus Carlsen from Norway, who defeated English chess player Luke McShane.

Turkey Is Trying to Close Metsamor

ISTANBUL (Arminfo) — Turkey is aiming for the closing of Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant in Armenia and is taking measures in this direction, Turkish Energy and Natural Resources Minister Taner Yildiz said in an interview with TRT Haber TV channel last week.

"Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant [NPP] and other nuclear power plants which have already expired their period of service pose a threat to the region and the entire world. Therefore, Turkey is taking the necessary steps to stop the operation of Metsamor NPP," Yildiz said.

Earlier, the minister said that Turkey will turn to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with the requirement to close Metsamor NPP.



Community News

Five Armenian Men Charged With ID Theft In US in LA

LOS ANGELES (*Glendale News-Press*) – Five Armenian men were charged Friday, June 15, with multiple counts of identity theft after they allegedly used re-encoded credit cards to buy and resell gas for profit, police said.

The men – Norik Tergalstanyan, 45, Arman Karapetyan, 24, Andranik Tashchyan, 57, Allen Babakhanian, 19, and 48-year-old Ruben Petrosyan – were named in the 17-count Los Angeles County Superior Court criminal complaint, which included felony identity theft and grand theft of access card charges for allegedly stealing personal bank account information belonging to 13 victims from Washington state.

“These guys were using credit cards out in the open,” Glendale Police Det. Jonathan Owen said. “They weren’t scared to even use the cards.”

The five-week-long investigation began after police received an anonymous tip that the men were using re-encoded cards and buying gasoline, Financial Crimes Sgt. Harley Wing said.

While monitoring the men, detectives saw and photographed them using the cards at a Shell gas station on the 600 block of North Pacific Avenue, police said.

Police also spotted them using the cards at gas stations in Burbank and Van Nuys, Wing said. During the surveillance, detectives saw the men buy \$2,000 to \$3,000 worth of gas, he added.

At one point, detectives saw the men exchanging what appeared to be credit cards with long-haul truck drivers, police said.

Police said they believe the men were selling the re-encoded cards for about \$2,500 to truck drivers, who would then use them to buy gas. Detectives did not obtain enough evidence to file charges related to that alleged scheme.

Tergalstanyan, who is on probation for forgery, was running the operation, Owen said.

Detectives obtained warrants and searched their homes, where they found about 23 five-gallon tanks of gasoline and tubes used for siphoning, Owen said.

“Gas is a hot commodity right now,” Owen said.

He said the men were siphoning gasoline into the tanks from their vans and filling up the tanks.

Detectives also found about 100 re-encoded cards and nearly \$15,000 in cash, police said. Of the 100 cards, 10 gift cards were re-encoded with the identities of Antelope Valley residents, Owen said.

Investigators later discovered some of the cards being used to buy gas were used by means of a credit skimmer placed at a Shell gas station in Olympia, Wash., he said.

Following the theft, the gas station has upgraded its security system and replaced any locks to access credit skimming devices to protect its patrons from identity theft, Owen said.

All five men pleaded not guilty and are due back in court on June 26.



ATP Managing Director Tom Garabedian plants a tree with family member Gail O'Reilly (right) at the opening ceremony of the new Michael and Virginia Ohanian Center for Environmental Studies in northern Armenia.

ATP Opens Michael and Virginia Ohanian Center for Environmental Studies in Northern Armenia

MARGAHOVIT, Armenia – On June 13, Armenia Tree Project (ATP) and representatives of the Ohanian Family hosted the ceremonial opening of the new Michael and Virginia Ohanian Center for Environmental Studies. Vice Prime Minister Armen Gevorgyan and Lori Gov. Arthur Nalbandyan were the guests of honor at the ceremonial opening, along with ATP Executive Committee member Anthony Barsamian and organization founder Carolyn Mugar.

Following its successful model of the environmental education center in Karin village, ATP will host students, eco clubs, teachers, farmers and professionals from Armenia and abroad at the new Ohanian Center in northern Armenia. The first beneficiaries of the center will be the population of Lori and Tavush provinces. The educational facility is located close to ATP's Mirak Reforestation Nursery, which will allow theory and practice to be combined.

In his opening remarks ATP Managing Director Tom Garabedian stated, “To construct a center like this, you need a strong sense of mission and purpose; you need the financial means for which we thank Mrs. Virginia Ohanian, her late husband Michael and her family; and you need the cooperation of a community which values learning and the importance of environmental conservation. We fully expect that all of these elements are present here.”

Commenting on the site, he added, “As it matures, the center's landscape will both beautify Margahovit and provide a hands-on learning experience for the children of Armenia. We all want the youth of Armenia to care for their environment, and this center will play an important role in educating them.”

Mugar welcomed guests at the opening and recalled the establishment of ATP

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From left, family members Charles Talanian and Gail O'Reilly, the nephew and niece of project benefactor Virginia Ohanian, unveil the plaque with ATP founder Carolyn Mugar of the new Michael and Virginia Ohanian Center for Environmental Studies.

Tark's Daughters Jog Memory Lane On Father's Day

By Ron Kantowski

LAS VEGAS (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*) – It was Wednesday, a few days before former University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) basketball coach Jerry “Tark” Tarkanian would celebrate Father's Day for the 55th time. The woman responsible for his first one – his daughter, Pam Tarkanian – was sitting alongside me in a cozy booth in the back room of an old Las Vegas watering hole called Four Kegs.

Jerry Tarkanian's other daughter, 52-year-old Jodie Diamant, was sitting across the table. Next to her was her niece, Pam Tarkanian's 22-year-old daughter, Audra, who recently graduated from Penn State. Audra is one of Jerry and Lois Tarkanian's 11 grandchildren.

A staggering amount of food was on the table. One of everything, it seemed, and two strombolis: one regular, one with turkey and Swiss. Chicken wings, thick-cut French fries with spicy Cajun seasoning, frosty goblets of beer – if a sports writer ever committed a heinous crime and was sentenced to the electric chair, this could have been his last meal.

The meeting was my idea. I had told Jodie and she had told Pam that for some time I had wanted to write about what it was like growing up female in the male-dominated world of Jerry Tarkanian.

The meats and cheeses and chicken wings were Diamant's idea. I guess we were going to be there awhile.

We were there for four hours, during which some of my preconceptions were confirmed.

There were times, said his daughters, when Jerry Tarkanian was so absorbed with breaking Georgetown's press that he didn't always notice things at home.

Such as when Diamant's friend Susan McDaniel gave her a pet rabbit, which she kept for two years – unbeknownst to her father. Or the family cat, which would run into the house when someone left the door open and Jerry Tarkanian thought was a stray.

“Once I had a friend who had stayed with us,” Jodie said, “and when she left, she thanked dad for being so nice. And he said, ‘What's she thanking me for?’ And I said, ‘Dad, she's been here for four days.’”

Everybody at the table laughed long and hard at that one. But when the merriment subsided, Jodie smiled softly and said, “Maybe dad was out of town a lot, but I always felt and knew he loved me.”

During the early days in Las Vegas, when the Tarkanians rented a house on 17th Street, the Rebels sometimes would go on the road for weeks at a time. Pam Tarkanian was starting her senior year in high school and had been none too pleased about leaving behind her friends when her dad took the UNLV job after a successful run at Long Beach State.

She would wait until her dad, and the team, hit the road.

Then she would do the same.

“I wouldn't dare do it when he was home,” Pam Tarkanian said about her covert trips back to Huntington Beach, Calif., to see her friends. “I'd call from Barstow to tell Mom I was OK. She had tell me to come back. I'd say, ‘Come back? I'm halfway there.’”

She said her father could be stern, but then she was his first. His first-born girl. That is why Pam Tarkanian's boyfriends had to dive behind the sofa when they saw the whites of her old man's headlights coming up the driveway.

“He was pretty hard on me – when the streetlights come on, you're home,” said Pam Tarkanian, director of student support services for the Clark County School District.

To which Diamant, a registered nurse, said: “I got away with a lot of stuff.”

see TARKANIAN, page 5



COMMUNITY NEWS



10-Year-Old Donates \$1,000 to Armenia Children's Program

Four years ago, Nellie Soames, journeyed to Armenia with her British father and Armenian mother, where she witnessed the abject poverty of Armenian children – many her own age. Deeply impressed by those who had so little, Soames vowed to give them all her savings and birthday gifts. This week, the 10-year-old donated \$1,000 to the Armenian Missionary Association of America's Orphan/Child Program. The AMAA thanks Soames and congratulates her for her mature sense of humanity, regardless of age.

Tark's Daughters Jog Memory Lane

TARKANIAN, from page 4

To which Pam Tarkanian said: "I got grounded a lot."

Pam Tarkanian had played basketball and other sports in middle school but lost interest in high school. Diamant didn't play, but by then it didn't matter. She had a little brother who would go on to play sports, and play them well, and this made Tark happy and proud.

"When Danny was born, the story goes that dad ran down the hall saying, 'It's a boy! It's a boy! It's a boy!'" Pam Tarkanian said.

Two years after Danny Tarkanian was born, a second boy, George, completed the family. The girls told stories about six Tarkanians cramming into a Volkswagen bus and going on camping trips to Flathead Lake in Montana, where it was beautiful and they had loads of fun – just like kids who didn't have a soon-to-be famous basketball coach for a father.

And though Jerry Tarkanian wasn't much of a fisherman, he tried, and when he couldn't catch anything, he'd pull off at one of those trout farms along the way so his kids – even the girls – got to catch one.

As Jerry Tarkanian's stature continued to grow and summer vacations became harder to plan, he would haul his offspring to the Nike meetings at exotic locales such as Bermuda and Hawaii and Sun Valley in Idaho. And when guys such as Gene Keady saw that Jerry

Tarkanian had brought his kids – and they seemed to have such a good time – he started bringing his kids to the Nike meetings, too.

Jerry Tarkanian wasn't much for telling bedtime stories or going to recitals, his daughters said. But when he came home after practice, he would make popcorn, and the kids would join him on the couch and watch "Columbo" or "The Untouchables" or some John Wayne movie. And Jerry Tarkanian would have a glass of wine with his popcorn.

When the girls got a little older, he would give them a sip of wine, too.

Oh, the stories we could tell you, Jerry Tarkanian's daughters said. And then they did. For four hours. Until there was only one slice of stromboli left.

They reminisced and told stories about their old man that mean even more now, what with today being Father's Day, what with Jerry Tarkanian having turned 81 and his health having taken a turn for the worse.

And even when the girls were starting families of their own, and the dreaded telephone would ring, and it would be about the NCAA – and it fouled up Christmas or a birthday or some other special occasion – it could never take away from those camping trips, from those nights spent on the couch watching "Columbo" and eating popcorn with their dad.

Allukian Receives Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine

GRAFTON, Mass. – Alison Ruth Allukian, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Myron Allukian Jr., received her doctorate of veterinary medicine degree on May 20, from the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, Tufts University.

During her graduation ceremony, her father, a Tufts College graduate and Dental School faculty member, placed on her the ceremonial hood.

The younger Dr. Allukian also received a certificate of clinical excellence in cardiology from the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine for her outstanding work in cardiology.

In the summer 2011, she did research in Tanzania on the cold storage of chicken vaccines. She recently returned from Ethiopia where she attended the World Federation of Public Health Associations meeting.

A Boston Latin School graduate, Allison Allukian, is an accomplished athlete. She is also a graduate of Bowdoin College, where she was a member of the Varsity Squash Team, which won the United States Junior Nationals in 2003.

She is now doing a one-year internship at Angell Animal Medical Center in Boston.



Dr. Alison Ruth Allukian

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian-American Doctors Introduce Karabagh Colleague to Local Technology

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Massachusetts is a Mecca of medical schools and doctors. Therefore, it is no surprise that there is a medical group — the Armenian American Medical Association, Inc. (AAMA) — whose membership is composed of local Armenian-American doctors. The members of the group gathered earlier this month at the Elephant Walk restaurant in Cambridge to introduce a colleague from Stepanakert, Karabagh, who was visiting for a month to learn about the latest techniques in emergency medicine.

Dr. Mher Musaelian is a pediatric anesthesiologist at the main hospital in Stepanakert. He had come here through the efforts of Dr. Armen Arslanian, the president of the AAMA, for a month-long study of emergency medicine at Winchester Hospital. His visit was facilitated through Armenia Fund.

Musaelian, who was born and raised in Stepanakert, witnessed war as a young boy. Because of his education, he has had the opportunity to leave his homeland, but has chosen to stay and to try to improve the state of emergency medicine there.

As Arslanian said, "His ideal life is in Karabagh. He is proud of being from there." He explained some of the difficulties that medical staff experience there, the majority of which

can be summed up by lack of funds and equipment.

"They don't have the stuff we take for granted, such as CAT Scans," which he said can typically provide physicians with a lot of information that can help speed up diagnosis and thus medical aid.

The nursing program, Arslanian said, is a short two years. It is during work in the hospitals that the nurses learn what to do. And finally, there are no emergency medical technicians (EMTs). Patients with especially difficult situations are loaded into an ambulance and sent off to Yerevan, which is about seven hours away, along with a doctor and nurse.

"His [Musaelian's] training is going to be crucial if and when war happens," he added.

Musaelian himself spoke, thanking his colleagues and explaining about the existing hospital in Stepanakert, as well as a new one that is scheduled to be finished soon, sponsored by Russian-Armenian benefactor Samvel Kapartian.

Musaelian explained there are three ambulance teams on call at any point, consisting of a doctor, a nurse and a driver, who go to the address of the callers who dial the emergency number (103). He explained that part of the plans for the future is for Karabagh to have EMTs, with doctors staying in the hospital and advising the EMTs on the phone. In addition, he explained that ambulances have basically no

equipment that can help patients, but are instead simply modes of transportation, unlike the ones here.

Musaelian thanked Arslanian and Armenia Fund for giving him a chance to study in the US for a month, as well as AAMA Vice President Dr. Armineh Mirzabegian for her hospitality. He also expressed his gratitude to Dr. Gregory Ciottoni, the director of the Intentional Disaster and Emergency Medicine at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, for giving him suggestions and helping him.

Ciottoni, who is not Armenian but married to one, Amalia, a registered nurse, spoke about his more than 20 visits to Armenia to help with emergency medicine there and said he would be happy to do the same in Karabagh.

Mirzabegian next surprised the outgoing treasurer of the group, Dr. Varant Hagopian,

with a tribute. She noted that Hagopian has been active not only in the medical circles but in other organizations, including the Friends of Armenian Culture Society.

"The meetings would not be the same if we did not have the treasurer's report, with Varant asking us to contribute to the scholarship fund by reminding us that 'education is the salvation of our people.' His love of poetry has been evident when he presented gifts to our speakers with the use of such eloquent words," Mirzabegian said. "We thank you for all you have done and for your continued support and enthusiasm to keep alive the organization."

Fittingly, the group presented him with books from the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

A very emotional Hagopian thanked those gathered for their gift.

Group Thanks Veteran Board Member Varant Hagopian for 20-Plus Years of Service



Dr. Varant Hagopian, with his wife, Ruth, acknowledges the tribute to his leadership.

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Dr. Mher Musaelian, right, visiting from Stepanakert, Karabagh, with his American colleagues, including Dr. Armenian Arslanian, left, and Dr. Berdj Kiladjian, second from right

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Assembly Interns Meet with NKR Representative

WASHINGTON – Last week, as part of the Summer Intern Lecture Series, participants in the Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program attended a presentation by the Republic of Nagorno Karabagh's representative to the United States, Robert Avetisyan, reported the Armenian Assembly of America's (Assembly).

The intern class, the 35th since the inception of the program in 1977, had the opportunity to learn about some of the significant issues facing Nagorno Karabagh, as well as ask questions about this historically Armenian region.

One of the major topics of discussion was the ceasefire violation by Azeri forces on June 4 in the Tavush region of Armenia, as well as along the line of contact in Artsakh on June 6. These attacks, which coincided with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's visit to the region, killed three Armenian soldiers and wounded five others.

According to reports, an Armenian kindergarten in the border village of Chinari was struck by gunfire. Parandzem Aghasian, the principal of the kindergarten, told the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty news service: "When they fire [on the village] they usually hit the kindergarten because it's an easy target. But we keep

going about our normal business. We are practically not scared of gunshots, they have become an ordinary thing for us."

In its June 4 letter to Clinton, the Assembly urged her to roundly condemn Azerbaijan's latest attack and to also fully enforce Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, which was enacted by Congress to address Azerbaijan's hostile actions against Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh.

Alice Agulian, a graduate of the University of Manchester, who is interning with Policy Forum Armenia, stated: "Having visited the region some years ago, the discussion on Nagorno Karabagh was especially insightful in the view of the most recent cease-fire violations. I have gained an even greater appreciation for the challenges the people of Arstakh face on a daily basis."

The Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program was made possible by the Memorial Fund established through the generosity of Aram Terjenian, Annie Thomas and Florence Terjenian of Belmont, Mass. Additional support comes from the Richard Tufenkian Memorial Fund, the John Hanessian Scholarship Fund, the Armen Astarjian Scholarship Fund, the Ohanian Memorial Fund, James and Connie Melikian and the Knights of Vartan.



Assembly interns meet with Nagorno Karabagh Representative Robert Avetisyan (center).

Serj Tankian Marries Longtime Girlfriend

LOS ANGELES (PanArmenian.Net) – The former lead vocalist of System of a Down, as well as solo artist and political activist Serj Tankian got married on June 9. Pictures of the couple's wedding are posted on Tankian's Facebook account. Tankian got married at a ranch located 10 miles outside Los Angeles. The bride is Anzhela Madatyan from Vanadzor, Armenia. The couple had been dating since 2005.



Serj Tankian and his wife, Anzhela Madatyan

ATP Opens Michael and Virginia Ohanian Center For Environmental Studies in Northern Armenia

ATP, from page 4

in the early 1990s: "In those terrible years of the blockade, when everyone suffered from shortages of heat and energy, people had to cut down trees to survive, stay warm and cook. Tree stumps were everywhere. ATP was born in the midst of those difficult times. People asked me, 'How can you plant trees when people need kerosene and milk?' It was just at this low moment that we decided that now was the time to invest in the future of Armenia."

"Today we are opening the Michael and Virginia Ohanian Center for Environmental Studies," continued Mugar. "In this center, children and students will learn that wood is a renewable resource if grown and cared for responsibly. They can learn how crucial a sustainable environment is to the future of a secure and thriving Armenia. We can even ask, 'Is the long term risk of mining which destroys forests and pollutes rivers worth the cost?'"

Mugar concluded by extending her gratitude to Virginia Ohanian and her late husband, Michael, who have been leading benefactors of ATP since its founding. "I hope that their gift will inspire others to give to ensure the viability

and vibrancy of Armenia," she said.

Nalbandyan said that he greatly valued ATP's programs in Armenia. "I would like to thank ATP for their hard work in Armenia, especially in the Lori region. Their existence in Lori is of utmost importance as Lori is otherwise a center of industrial mining," he explained. "I would personally like to thank the donors of ATP for their support of sustainable development in Armenia."

Fr. Dajad Davidian then performed a traditional blessing ceremony for the new educational center. Schoolchildren from Margahovit accompanied Davidian in the blessing ceremony by singing *sharagans* and also drew pictures of the mountains nearby for the guests.

Family members Gail O'Reilly and Charles Talanian, the niece and nephew of Virginia Ohanian, then unveiled the center's plaque with Mugar to signal the official opening.

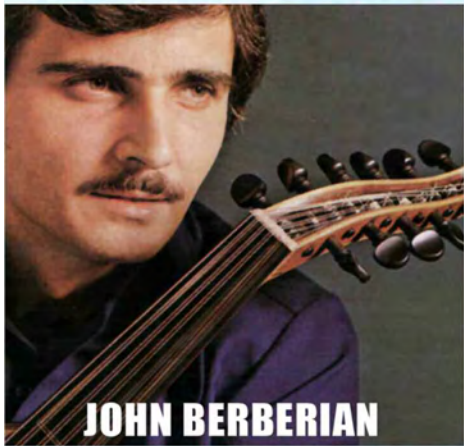
This year ATP celebrates its 18th anniversary. Through ATP's community tree planting and reforestation efforts, more than 4,000,000 trees have been planted throughout the country. ATP's environmental education program extends to hundreds of teachers and thousands of students in all regions of Armenia.



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New York METRO

500th Anniversary of Armenian Church Of Miracles to Be Consecrated in August

ROMANIA, from page 1

exclusive interview recently at the Armenian Diocese in New York. "Every day, at least 100 people come from places like the Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, Moldova, and of course, Romania. In 500 years, this monastery of pilgrimage (*oughtavayr*) has never been closed for prayers, with *Badarak* celebrated every week. In the diaspora, it is the only vank [cathedral], except for Jerusalem, Antelias and Bolis," he noted.

The Kouyoumdjians who were born in Romania, returned five years ago to visit the Armenian monasteries there. They visited the two Armenian monasteries in Suceava, and finding them in dilapidated condition, decided to renovate them "This is the only place of pilgrimage, and we felt that we had to do something," said Ica Kouyoumdjian. After receiving a "go ahead" from Karekin II, the plan was put into motion.

Revealing the origins of the Suheava Vank, Hagopian related that more than 500 years ago, the Donavag brothers who were Armenian businessmen, traveling to Vienna, rested on a hill and in a dream saw angels singing. They pledged that if they succeeded in Vienna, they would build a monastery on that hill outside of Suceava, which was the capital of Moldova



Bishop Datev Hagopian

until 1564, as well as an important trading center with a large Armenian population, and seven Armenian churches. The vank was built and became a residence for nuns. "To make a strong connection between Armenia and the vank, a bell made in 1288 was brought to the church in 1512 from the Datev monastery."

The whole church is filled with frescoes and there are three icons of Mother Mary, he continued. "We don't know which one of the icons is the one of miracles, but those worshippers whose wishes are granted have donated gifts of silver and bronze, some of which are hung on the altar icon. Others are kept in a safe, along with hundreds of archival materials about the Romanian Armenian community."

This community dates from the 10th century when Armenians traveled from Ani to the Ukraine, to Moldova and finally settled in Romania, he related. "It became a small Ani." In 1401, the archbishop's chair was established, becoming the oldest tem in the western diaspora. In the 1800s, there were as many as 80,000 Armenians in Romania, mostly wealthy businessmen. By the late 1940s, many sold their possessions and left when the Communists took over, a good number going to Armenia, and others emigrating to the US, Canada, Australia and Argentina.

Today, there are 18 Armenian churches and approximately 5,000 Armenians in Romania, mostly in the fields of art and culture. One of

the most revered individuals in Romania has been Levon Garabed Baljian who was born in Bucharest in 1908, became the Catholicos of All Armenians Vasken I in 1955.

Hagopian who was appointed Primate of Romania in 2010 and elevated to the rank of bishop during the 60th birthday ceremonies for Karekin II in 2011, was born in Mosul, Iraq in 1966, and ordained a celibate priest by

Archbishop Avak Assadourian in 1993.

He has served in Iraq, Echmiadzin, Geneva, the Netherlands, Loire and Lyon in France.

His trip to New York and Los Angeles recently was for the purpose of making the connection with the Romanian-Armenians in America and to invite them for the August 12 500th anniversary celebrations of this revered Suheava monastery, "a beacon on a hill."

Primate of Romania Visits Eastern Diocese

NEW YORK — The Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America welcomed the visiting Primate of the Diocese of Romania, Bishop Datev Hagopian, last week. He took part in several community events, including a worship service and met with diplomats in the company of Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian.

At New York's St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral on Sunday, June 3, Hagopian celebrated the Divine Liturgy, before a substantial crowd which included many members of the local Romanian-Armenian community. Hagopian delivered a homily and Barsamian presided.

Afterwards, in the Diocesan Center's Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium, Hagopian was the guest of honor at a luncheon reception organized by the New York metropolitan-area Romanian-Armenians.

Dr. Arthur Kubikian served as master of ceremonies for the day's program, which also included welcoming remarks by Bedros Givlekian.

Hagop Kouyoumdjian — who served as godfather at Hagopian's Episcopal elevation in 2011 — gave formal remarks introducing the guest of honor to the audience of around 175 people.

In his address, Hagopian spoke about current developments in the Romanian Diocese. Though he has only led the diocese since the autumn of 2010, Hagopian showed an impressive command of the centuries-long history of the Armenian communities of Romania. He has been energetic in preserving the treasures of the Armenian Christian presence in the country, with preparations underway for a celebration of the 500th anniversary of the restored Hagigadar Monastery in Suceava scheduled for this summer. Karekin II, the supreme patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, will preside over the ceremonies in August.

Barsamian closed the Sunday program with his own congratulatory words to the bishop.

On Monday, June 4, Barsamian hosted a luncheon at the Diocesan Center in New York for Hagopian and the United Nations ambassadors of Romania, Moldova and Armenia.

In words to welcome the guests, Barsamian conveyed good wishes to the people of Romania and Moldova, "whose long histories have given our own Armenian people an opportunity to live, prosper, and contribute — while allowing us to preserve our identity, and worship according to our traditions."

Attending the luncheon were Ambassador Simona-Mirela Miculescu of Romania; Ambassador Vlad Lupan of Moldova, and his wife, Rodica Lupan; Ambassador Garen Nazarian of Armenia, and his wife, Nana Nazarian, and Hagop and Ica Kouyoumdjian.

Hagopian, a native of Mosul, Iraq, has studied at Holy Echmiadzin's Gevorkian Seminary, as well as in his native land, Geneva, Switzerland, and Lyon, France. He served the church in Iraq, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands and Armenia, prior to his appointment as Primate of the Armenian Diocese of Romania in 2010. He was elevated to the rank of bishop by the hand of Karekin II in November 2011.



At the June 4 luncheon in the tahlj of the Diocesan Center in New York, from left, Hagop Kouyoumdjian, Ica Kouyoumdjian, Moldovan UN Ambassador Vlad Lupan, Primate of Romania Bishop Datev Hagopian, Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Romanian UN Ambassador Simona-Mirela Miculescu, Rodica Lupan, Armenian UN Ambassador Garen Nazarian and Nana Nazarian

ABN Hosts Networking Event for IT and Software Company Professionals

WATERTOWN — On Monday, June 11, the Armenian Business Network (ABN) and ArmTech Boston, hosted a networking event for IT and software company CEOs, representatives from Armenia and local high tech company executives at the Armenian-American Social Club. The event was well attend-



From left, Samuel Vartan, Arlet Yegumians and Jack Antounian

ed and provided an opportunity for the visiting delegates to network with their US counterparts to foster future business opportunities and projects.

This is a program sponsored by the US Department of Commerce as part of the Special American Business Internship Training (SABIT) Program. The attending executives were selected by the US Embassy in Yerevan: the IT industry is one of the most promising sectors of the Armenian economy.

Monday night's event focused on fostering new business partnerships between the Armenian IT industry and their US colleagues. The delegation, whose members are interested in exploring business opportunities in a number of areas, including, business software development, cloud comput-



Guests mingled at the IT event.

ing, web design and development, business intelligence, mobile applications and gaming and e-commerce, had the opportunity to discuss business collaborations in person with leading US companies, establishing valuable contacts and planting the seed for future commercial opportunities and collaborations.

For more information regarding the Armenian IT and software attendees, and/or the SABIT program, contact Jack Antounian at jantounian@gmail.com.



New York METRO

U.S. News & World Report Names AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School One of Country's Best High Schools

SOTUHFIELD, Mich. — The AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School is now in the national spotlight for its academic achievements, having just been named one of the country's best public high schools by the *U.S. News & World Report's* annual rankings.

The Manoogian School was one of close to 22,000 public high schools across the United States that were evaluated by the esteemed publication. The careful selection process took into consideration a range of factors, including state proficiency exams, performance of less advantaged students, and college preparedness. The charter school excelled across the board, and was honored with the bronze medal based on its high scores in math proficiency and reading proficiency, which is well above Michigan's average. The school's performance on state exams made it one of merely 13 percent of the total number of schools assessed by *U.S. News & World Report* to receive a bronze medal.

Since its founding in 1963, the AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School has given young, motivated students the resources to become global leaders. Its rigorous K-12 curriculum is designed to help students develop their intellectual, moral and physical skills and deepen their understanding of Armenian language and culture. The award by *U.S. News & World Report* is a testament to the success of the school's comprehensive program, and as Dr. Hoses Torossian, the principal of the Alex and Marie Manoogian High School comments, "We owe this honor to the selfless dedication of our faculty and to the students who remain focused on their mission throughout the year," pointing to the academy's four hundred students whose achievements have helped set the school apart.

Recognition by the *U.S. News & World Report* is one of many accolades that the AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School has been awarded in its illustrious history. The



The 2012 graduating class of the AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School

school has twice received the Golden Apple Award, based on the students' performance on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) test. In 2004, its academic excellence earned it a \$153,000 grant administered by the Walton Family Foundation, which was used to upgrade its science and computer labs. Such investments are reaping

great benefits; on June 4, the school held a commencement ceremony for its largest graduating class to date of 40 students. In the fall, they will arrive at some of the nation's top universities, a natural trajectory given the knowledge and skills they acquired at one of the country's leading high schools.

ACYOA Juniors Take Part in Hye M'rtsoom

WATERTOWN, Mass. — Some 200 Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) Juniors from across the Eastern Diocese gathered at St. James Church, over Memorial Day weekend, for the annual Hye M'rtsoom event. The program brought teens

together for worship, as well as for sports and other activities.

"It was such a pleasure to host so many ACYOA Juniors at St. James," said Maria Derderian, youth minister at St. James Church. "I am very proud of our St. James ACYOA

Juniors for working so hard and adding new programming to the weekend's events to incorporate service and outreach."

The weekend began on Saturday, May 26, with a matins service followed by an "Insights Message" on the significance of Memorial Day from Jennifer Morris, the Diocese's youth outreach coordinator.

Following a full day of athletic events — including basketball and volleyball games, a three-point shoot out, tavloo, ping-pong and Connect-Four tournaments — participants gathered for a "Hye Lights" dance.

On Sunday, the juniors participated in the Divine Liturgy, which was celebrated by Rev. Arakel Aljalian, parish pastor. Aljalian encouraged participants to focus on the importance of prayer in daily life and on worshipping in church as a community. He also reminded them that pastors and youth workers are people they can turn to for support and assistance.

Sports activities continued on Sunday afternoon. The weekend also offered youth-led, faith-based discussions and an outreach initiative with a local children's charity,



Young people took part in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, May 27, at St. James Church of Watertown, Mass.



A basketball game underway at the Hye M'rtsoom event organized for the ACYOA Juniors last month (Photo credit: Jonathan Dadekian)

Cradles to Crayons. The Boston-based organization provides school supplies, clothes and other items to low-income children. ACYOA Juniors members volunteered time sorting, cleaning and repairing toys donated to the organization.

A dinner dance, titled "Hye Society," was held on Sunday evening at the Hyatt Hotel in Boston, overlooking the Charles River. The evening featured award presentations for team and individual sports. In addition, Morris presented four awards on behalf of the ACYOA Central Council.

The weekend came to a close on Monday with a farewell breakfast, where Hye M'rtsoom Awards and ACYOA Central Council Awards were presented: Chapter A Award, Holy Translators Armenian Church, Framingham; Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan Vision Award, Taylor Carden, Fair Lawn, NJ; Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan Service Award, Ara Bablouzian, Framingham; Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan Leadership Award, Aline Beylerian, Fair Lawn, NJ; Sportsmanship Awards, Laura Dosch, Fair

Lawn, NJ, and Ari Kazanjian, Watertown; Overall Sports Champion, St Leon Church, Fair Lawn, NJ; Individual Sports Awards: Beginner Tavloo, second place, Aram Andonian, Watertown, first place, Nishan Papazian, Worcester; Beginner Chess, second place, Armen Arsenian, Bayside, NY, first place, Greg Dorian, Cambridge; Advanced Tavloo, second place, Lauren Wasgatt, Worcester, first place, Chris Artun, Bayside, NY; Advanced Chess, second place, Armen Andonian, Watertown, first place, Kami Findik, Bayside, NY; Girls' Ping-Pong second place, Nyree Kupelian, Fair Lawn, NJ, first place, Linda Yenigag, Bayside, NY; Boys' Ping-Pong, second place, Matt Tarzian, Fair Lawn, NJ, first place, Armen Berberian, Philadelphia, Penn.; three-point shootout, Andre Antreassian, Bayside, NY; Team Sports, Girls Basketball, second place, Regional Team Philadelphia, Penn., and Chelmsford, first place, Cambridge; Boys Basketball, second place, Watertown, first place, Fair Lawn, NJ; Volleyball, second place, Fair Lawn, NJ, and first place, Philadelphia.



Arts & Living

Armenian Genocide Documentary to Screen at Philadelphia Independent Film Festival

PHILADELPHIA — “Voyage to Amasia,” a new documentary film by Randy Bell and Eric V. Hachikian, will have its East Coast premiere at the Philadelphia Independent Film Festival, Saturday, June 23, at 6 p.m., at the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia Parrish Room, 2125 Chestnut St.

The film had its world premiere at the Pomegranate Film Festival in Toronto in December, where it won the prize for Best Documentary. It has also screened at the Minneapolis International Film Festival and in July it will screen at the Golden Apricot Film Festival in Yerevan, Armenia.

“Voyage to Amasia” documents composer Hachikian’s return to his ancestral home — Amasia, Turkey — nearly 100 years after Ottoman soldiers deported his grandmother, Helen Shushan, during the Armenian Genocide. The film is set to his piano trio of the same name, which provided the initial inspiration for the documentary. “Voyage to Amasia” traces a path through the past, honoring Hachikian’s relationship with his grandmother and uncovering what her family’s life in Turkey might have been like. It also explores how the events of nearly a century ago continue to strain the relationship between Armenians and Turks today. Inspired by one family’s story, the filmmakers embark on their own journey in the hopes of finding a greater understanding between two peoples still at odds.

The Philadelphia Independent Film Festival was founded to enable an environment for its participants to encourage, engage and network in a diverse film market. In its fifth year, the festival is committed to discovering and showcasing a unique cinematic experience unrestrained by conventional boundaries. The full festival schedule can be found on the festival blog, philadelphiaindependentfilmfestival.blogspot.com/

Bell is a Washington, DC-based independent filmmaker. His documentary films, which explore subjects as diverse as American popular music, mid-century European modernist architecture and the AIDS orphan crisis in Kenya, have won awards from the Cleveland International Film Festival, the New England



Randy Bell, left, and Eric V. Hachikian

Film and Video Festival and the Ivy Film Festival. He received his Bachelor of Arts from Harvard University in 2000, and his master’s in public policy from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government in 2010.

Hachikian is an Armenian-American composer whose music has been hailed by the *New York Times* as “lovely and original.” His compositions and orchestrations can be heard in a variety of major motion pictures, network television shows and national and international ad campaigns. They have been performed Off Broadway, at Carnegie Hall, at Boston’s Symphony Hall and The Getty in Los Angeles. A classically-trained composer, as well as self-taught DJ and perpetual student of world music, Hachikian’s musical style has no boundaries, and his multi-genre interests result in a unique and personal sound.



A self-portrait by Seeron Yeretizian

Yeretizian’s Art Focuses on Women’s Plight

By Kevork Keushkerian

BURBANK, Calif. — An exhibition of Seeroon Yeretizian’s paintings and the presentation of her newly-published art album took place on Wednesday, June 14, at the Zorayan Museum of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church and was organized by the Tekeyan Cultural Association’s Los Angeles Chapter.

The exhibit hall was filled to capacity. Arno Yeretizian, Seeroon Yeretizian’s son, made the opening remarks. He reflected on his mother’s strong work ethic, which included taking him to school and back, cooking for the family, managing her own Roslin Art Gallery, secluding herself in her studio at home and working until the wee hours of the morning. He then introduced the first speaker, Dr. Arpi Sarafian, professor of English at California State University in Los Angeles.

Sarafian portrayed Seeroon Yeretizian as the champion of women, as her art focuses on women and their historic oppression. She further noted that Seeroon Yeretizian’s art is a cry against social inequities concerning women. Ironically, Sarafian continued, the crucifixion in her paintings denotes the liberation of women. Yeretizian’s concern for the poor, homeless and socially maligned are the main themes in her paintings. The artist, concluded Sarafian, makes no attempt to conceal the truth.

The next speaker was a long-time colleague of Yeretizian, Harry Vahan Mesrobian, the proprietor of Gemini Designs, who shares space with her at Roslin Art Gallery. Mesrobian concentrated on Yeretizian’s miniature art and her letterings in the form of the birds. The ostrich, Mesrobian noted, dominates Yeretizian’s art, because it represents pride and beauty.

Harry described Yeretizian’s humble upbringing, like many other Armenians of her generation, in a dilapidated camp in Beirut, Lebanon. She remembers Japanese tourists taking pictures of children playing in the yard, which prompted her to go around the poorer sections in Los Angeles and take pictures of the homeless. Mesrobian said that the proceeds from the sale of her paintings and art album will go towards the publication of her second art album.

Arno Yeretizian next invited Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, the Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church, to speak. The Primate said that the significance of paintings lies in their ability to induce an emotional response. He said that an artist, while painting, comes closest to the Creator for inspiration and excellence.

Aside from her art album, she had also published a book of poems that reflect her feelings about love, loyalty and friendship.

Seeroon Yeretizian is the widow of the late Harout Yeretizian, the proprietor of Abril Bookstore in Glendale.

A reception followed the exhibition.

Sayat Nova’s 300th Birthday Marked

By Kevork Keushkerian

ALTADENA, Calif. — The anniversary of Armenian troubadour Sayat Nova’s 300th birthday was celebrated at the Tekeyan Cultural Association’s Beshgeturian Center and was organized by the Tekeyan Cultural Association’s Pasadena-Glendale Chapter.

Kevork Keushkerian made the opening remarks and then introduced the presenter, Dr. Minas Kojayan. Kojayan is the recent recipient of the St. Mesrob-St. Sahag Medal, bestowed upon him with an encyclical by the Catholicos of all Armenians Karekin II and presented to him by Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, the Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church.

He received his PhD from the State University of Armenia. He taught Armenian language and literature at the Armenian General Benevolent Union’s (AGBU) Melkonian Educational Institute in Nicosia, Cyprus, for 13 years, and since 1993, has been teaching the same subjects at the AGBU’s Manoogian-Demirdjian School in Canoga Park.

Kojayan, a prolific writer, has contributed many articles to a broad range of newspapers in Armenia, the Middle East and the United States of America. He has collaborated in preparing a



Dr. Minas Kojayan

series of language and history books for students, and he is publishing a series of articles based on his historic visit to Western Armenia, which is the Eastern Provinces of modern day Turkey. As he explained in his talk, Sayat Nova was born in Tbilisi, Georgia. His given name was Aroutin, an altered form of Haroutune. His father, Garabed, was a rug weaver from Adana, Turkey, who moved to Aleppo, Syria, and eventually settled in Tbilisi.

Sayat Nova spoke fluent Georgian, Turkish, Arabic and Persian, as well as Armenian. He wrote 230 odes, of which only 36 are in Armenian. He served as the official palace entertainer from 1744 to 1752, when he was dismissed. Rumor has it that his downfall was his secret and forbidden love for the princess.

The main theme in Sayat Nova’s songs was pure love. He was an honest person, unafraid to tell the truth and stand by his convictions. When his wife died in 1768, he became reclusive and went to the Monastery of Haghpat in Armenia, where he was ordained into priesthood, acquiring the name of Father Stepanos.

In 1795, Sayat Nova went back to Tbilisi to help defend St. Kevork Armenian Church, which was under attack by Muslims. Unfortunately, he was murdered in the church and subsequently buried there. He was survived by his only son, Ohan.

A reception followed the presentation.



ARTS & LIVING

'Gamavors:' Legacy Resumes in Song and Dance

By Tom Vartabedian

TEANECK, N.J. — A new musical is taking the Armenian community by storm, judging by three rousing performances in as many states this spring.

The play is about (and named after) the Armenian Legion — the Gamavors — recalling the courage of Armenian-American volunteers who left the safety of their homes in America and returned to the killing fields.

Alarming news had reached them in America. The Genocide was being revived. The Turks were repeatedly attacking survivors and orphans, torching villages left standing.

Facing the triple threat of a renewed genocide, World War I and the Russian Revolution, Gamavor legionnaires volunteered to go back and fight for their beloved Armenia.

"These brand new Americans, many of them Genocide survivors themselves, returned to the

across the East Coast. That particular episode delineated the story of our early immigrants to America, told with pathos, light-heartedness and emotion.

"The impact has been huge," said Papazian-Sahagian. "Audiences have reacted with joyful tears and nostalgia while identifying with the show's characters. Best remembered are the dozen or more songs in every production."

Great Armenian leaders played critical roles in the Gamavor movement. Gen. Antranig initiated the plan, joined by Gen. John Shishmanian, an Armenian-American from Kentucky, who led the Gamavor campaigns in Historic Armenia.

A cast of 30 makes up the current team, joined by three semi-professional actors and an ensemble of four musicians. The show runs about 80 minutes with no intermission, enhanced by striking costumes and sets designed by the playwright herself.

Papazian-Sahagian prepared herself diligently for a concert career, educated at Juilliard Conservatory with degrees from New York University in education and music. She taught public school music in New York and New Jersey, before establishing herself as an Armenian educator.

Among her credits was the Jemeran College in Beirut; founding principal of the Hovnanian Day School, before serving 20 years as director of the Armenian National Education Committee (ANEC) for the Eastern Prelacy.

Her "retirement" years have been dedicated to the performing arts — producing, directing, arranging music and playing keyboard with her band at these shows.

"The Way We Were" folk-art ensemble was established in the 1980s with her close friend Sossy Kadian. When she retired, "Deegeen Hourig," as she is affectionately known, ventured on with her passion.

"At the time, we were alarmed that traditional Armenian music and dance had virtually disappeared from Armenian-American stages," she felt. "Ironically, those traditions have been transported here from Historic Armenia villages by Genocide survivors. As beloved folk song faded away, Yerevan-style, Russian-flavored music flooded the entertainment scene in this country."

With her folk arts ensemble, a cast of dedicated volunteers set foot to revive the neglected traditions while providing a heritage for all Armenian-American generations. The mission has boomeranged in every direction and given neophyte performers a stage on which to stand and be noticed.

"I'm on my soap box here," she said with a



Ensemble for "The Way We Were" in its latest production of "The Hye Legion," which tells the Gamavor story in song and dance.



Hourig Papazian-Sahagian is honored for her work as a playwright, director and musician.

homeland to face certain death at the hands of the Turkish-German armies in the Arara-Palestine War of 1918," said Hourig Papazian-Sahagian, troupe leader and playwright.

"The pages of Gamavor history are filled with international intrigue and false promises," she added. "The incredible sacrifice of these selfless men has lingered in archives and museums for nine decades. Their story cries out for voices raised in honor of their heroic lives and deeds. They did not question, nor did they falter."

According to Papazian-Sahagian, this segment of Armenian-American history was overlooked by many and unknown by most.

"This story must take its place in the pages of human history as a brilliant display of extraordinary courage," she pointed out.

So the 86-year-old playwright went to work on a new script, fresh off the heels of "Hello Ellis Island," which was staged with vast success

laugh. "I recognize that song is a very powerful communicator and that music is a living entity which constantly evolves. However, I also know that given a political environment, an entire culture can be obliterated and replaced with the 'new style.' Thus, the soul of a people and its cultural history is often relegated to the dust bin of academic archives."

What prompted the writing of the play "Gamavor" was an insatiable quest to tell her nation's history. While researching "Ellis Island," Papazian-Sahagian also delved into the Gamavor movement, a closely-related theme.

She had no Gamavors in her family but two members of her cast had a father and father-in-law in the ranks. As a young child, she remembers an imposing gentleman seated in his wheelchair on the sidewalk in front of St. Illuminator's Church in New York City.

"My father quieted my fear of him by explaining that he ate a bullet ... he is a Gamavor," Papazian-Sahagian recalled. "The selfless courage of the Gamavors — their profound humanity and devotion to lost lands and people — inspired me to write the play. Unfortunately, many are unaware of the movement and its heroes."

There was help along the way from writers like Peter Balakian and his assistant and friend, Doris Varjabedian-Cross, a friend to Papazian-Sahagian. Once the cast was assembled, two years of rehearsals followed prior to the show's premiere on April 29 at Sts. Vartanantz Church in New Jersey.

The play's main character, commander Shishmanian, together with colleagues

Antranig, Chankalian and Sebouh, are factual, along with the battle scenes. Papazian-Sahagian embellished the story with drama and romance while adding a dozen patriotic and fedayee songs.

"Judging from the emotional reaction of Gamavor relatives in attendance at our three shows, it's safe to say that if Gamavor veterans were alive today, they would take pride in the knowledge that they have finally emerged from the faded pages of forgotten history," said Papazian-Sahagian.

Bringing such a tale to life was indeed a challenge, much like the battle scenes and teaching a song repertoire to amateur voices. Through it all, the playwright remained resilient and steadfast.

"The cast bonded together as a family unit, keeping the energy level at a high pitch. There's no generation gap with the members, regardless of their ages and personalities.

As the Armenian Genocide centennial approaches in three years, Papazian-Sahagian sees entertainment festivals bringing the arts together. She sees lectures and exhibits as the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) gushes forth with its Gamavor Traveling Exhibit.

She sees no immediate end to the possibilities her show may encounter through the year 2015.

"It will be in demand, just as we will be winding down with it," she predicts. "This all might occur after my time. Until that moment, I plan to continue enjoying the vitality this show is bringing to all of us."

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ARTS & LIVING

Sima Trio Play Impressive Classical Interpretations

By Harry L. Koundakjian

NEW YORK — On Saturday, June 2, at Alwan for the Arts, an Arab and Middle Eastern arts center located in the Financial District, three young Armenian musicians — violinist Sami Merdian, Argentina; Armenian-American cellist Ani Kalayjian and Armenia-born pianist Sofya Melikyan — took the stage as members of the Sima Trio, an ensemble praised by critics for its “powerful” and “heartfelt” interpretations of classical and ethnic repertoire (www.simatrio.com).

Connected by their Armenian heritage, these musicians explore the diverse repertoire of classical music, with an additional focus on Armenian composers.

During this performance they treated the enthusiastic audience to energetic and virtuosic performances of the musical gems by Gayaneh Tcheboudarian, Komitas Vardabet and Arno Babadjanian, whose intense and iconic work is one of the most exciting pieces in the trio’s repertoire. Guest artists, soprano Christine Moore, and clarinetist Vasko Dukovski, joined the ensemble for six of Komitas’ most celebrated folk song arrangements and did not disappoint in their lyrical and emotional renditions of these works. The virtuosic performance by the trio of Babadjanian’s complicated piece was treat-



Members of the Sima Trio perform.

ed to a standing ovation, for which the musicians rewarded the audience with Edouard Abramian’s lively and fun *Scherzo* as an encore.

A musical journey through the rich palette of the Western classical music of Armenia was represented in this performance by the Sima musicians who recently were awarded a top

prize at the JC Arriaga Chamber Music Competition in Stamford, Conn. Highlights of the past season include tours in the US, Japan, Australia and Canada.

Woman Writes about Taking a Chance on Life, Sailing Away with Her Dog

BOSTON — Massachusetts native Christine M. Bukruian has published a book that was released on Amazon.com last week and made it to number 25 in the “Hot New Releases” list on Amazon for outdoor, nature and travel books. Her book reads like fiction with the number of obstacles she encounters.

Gypsy Spirit: What My Boat Taught Me About Love and Life is her real-life adventure/survival story of sailing on her own in a 36-foot sloop, with her dog, Kia, and how they ultimately survived a harrowing collision at sea with a container ship.

Compelled by the passing of her mother, Mary, in 2003, Bukruian purchased, renovated and moved aboard an old sailboat. Unfortunately, she knew nothing about boats or sailing, but as the expression goes “when the student is ready the teacher appears.”

Bukruian meets “Ed,” a skilled South African sailor en route to the Bahamas. He invites Bukruian to sail her boat, “Gypsy Spirit,” in tandem with his boat, and begins the “trial by fire” sailing lesson that will propel their relationship and this two-year voyage filled with challenges, harrowing experiences and days of beauty on deserted islands.

Sahag Bukruian of Watertown, her father, painted a picture as a gift to his daughter representing Christine, Kia and “Gypsy Spirit” by the sea, an image that was selected for the book cover.

The book is written from the perspective of both Christine Bukruian and her dog and embodies her raw emotions as she sets sail for the Bahamas from St. Augustine, Fla., and encounters mechanical problems, dangerous weather conditions and is hit by a 264-foot container ship in the middle of a stormy night north of the Turks and Caicos, causing extreme damage to “Gypsy Spirit.”

Though most people thought the boat would not sail again, for Burkruian there was never a moment of doubt whether or not to restore “Gypsy Spirit;” she felt that the boat saved her life. She had the boat brought back to the US and spent almost a year rebuilding the vessel, her life and her dreams.

She feels that through adversity she was given the opportunity to overcome fear and see how she reacted in a moment of crisis. “This experience gave me life-changing and self-affirming moments,” the author said. “It gave me the opportunity to see who I am.”

Her thoughts and feelings, on each page, create scenes which will affect all of the senses — sight, smell, touch — the rough waters of the ocean, the calm



Christine M. Bukruian with her dog, Kia, right, before embarking on her journey

and serene scenes by the islands, the bustling docks from the perilous journey to the tranquil moments of dolphins swimming in the boat’s wake. The reader will live vicariously through her journey and identify with her complicated

relationships and determination to sail alone with her dog, a 50-pound lab/golden mix she adopted at about age 2.

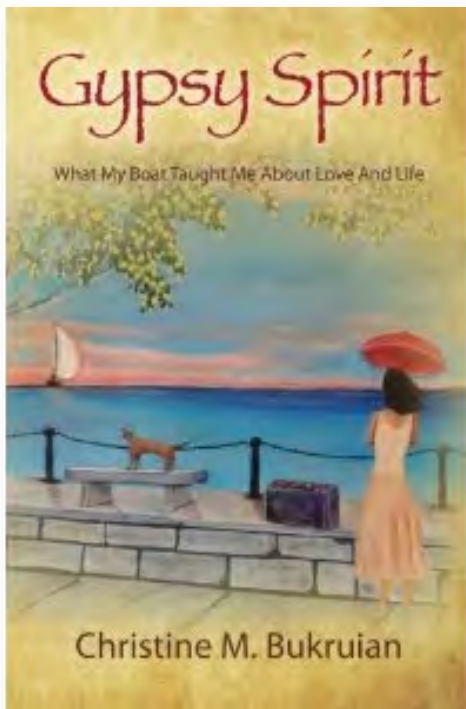
Bukruian writes: “For as long as I can remember, I had dreamed of living on a boat and falling asleep to the gentle swoosh and sway of the ocean,” she writes. “I dreamed of becoming a sea gypsy and taking my home with me as I traveled from port to port.”

She adds, “Sometimes you just have to close your eyes, hold your breath and jump — that’s what I did and I wouldn’t change a thing.”

Bukruian will be a featured speaker at the Newport International Boat Show September 13-16 in Rhode Island, speaking on boating with dogs and how to ensure their safety. “Her website, www.christinebukruian.com, lists her appearances, where photos of “Gypsy Spirit” and Kia are also posted. She is looking for other boaters and animal lovers to post their stories about what they have learned from their boats and pets.

Bukruian is a graduate of Mount Saint Joseph Academy in Brighton and the University of Massachusetts Boston. She is pursuing a Master’s of Fine Arts in creative writing and is working on her second book.

The Gypsy Spirit retails for \$12.95 on Amazon.com and is also available as an e-book at www.amazon.com.



Christine M. Bukruian with her dog, Kia, on the Exuma, off the Bahamas



ARTS & LIVING

New Play by Lisa Kirazian Premiering In San Diego

SAN DIEGO — Lisa Kirazian's new play, "On Air," will be presented at Scripps Ranch Theatre in late June as part of their new festival, "Out On A Limb: New Plays From America's Finest City," involving three new plays about San Diego.

Directed by Antonio T.J. Johnson, the play features an outstanding cast, including lead actor Jeffrey Jones, who is also Armenian.

"On Air" is about a young Armenian professor teaching at a San Diego College during the Vietnam War, dealing with troubled students in his class who have been drafted and are coming to him for advice. The play is based on the life and career of the playwright's father, George Kirazian, who taught literature in San Diego for 40 years. Jones plays the role of the professor.

The new festival is designed to create and stage for new plays that spring from the stories of San Diego and its people.

The festival, produced by Robert May, intends to inspire development and production of new works, by playwrights and actors in Southern California and beyond. Scripps Ranch Theatre's celebrates the diversity that thrives in various neighborhoods of San Diego and wants to contribute to the cultural and economic growth of the community.

"On Air" will be performed Friday, June 29, and Saturday, June 30, (both at 8 p.m.) and Sunday, July 1, at 2 p.m., at Legler Benbough Theatre, at Alliant International University. Tickets are \$15. For reservations, visit scrippsranchtheatre.org.



Lisa Kirazian

CALENDAR

NEW JERSEY

JUNE 24 — Annual Picnic St. Gregory Armenian Church. Rain or shine, 12-6 p.m. Music by John Berberian, 1131 North St., White Plains, Hutchinson River Pkwy. Tel.: (914) 428-2595.

JUNE 24 — St. Stepanos Armenian Church Annual Picnic. Rain or shine. 12:30-7 p.m. Live Armenian music and dancing. 1184 Ocean Ave., Elberon.

AUGUST 10-12 — Return to Asbury, Armenian Kef Weekend at the Beach. For tickets and information, visit returntoasbury.eventbrite.com. The event is sponsored by the ASA.

OCTOBER 5 — Save the date. His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate, Diocese of Armenian Church, invites everyone to attend a tribute banquet in honor of Hrant Gulian. Details to follow.

OCTOBER 21 — The Armenian American Support and Educational Center, the Hye Doon, celebrates its 35th anniversary. Bergen County Academies, 200 Hackensack Ave., Hackensack, with the participation of Akh'Tamar Dance Ensemble of the Hye Doon, Arev Armenian Folk Ensemble of Hamazkayin of Boston and other talented guest performers.

OCTOBER 28 — Save the date. The Armenian American Support and Educational Center, Hye Doon, celebrates its 35th anniversary. Felician College, Lodi. With the participation of Akh'tamar Dance Ensemble and other talented guest performances. Details to follow.



On June 24, St. Stepanos Armenian Church will hold their Annual Picnic, rain or shine, from 12:30-7 p.m., featuring live Armenian music and dancing, at 1184 Ocean Ave., Elberon, NJ.

NEW YORK

SEPTEMBER 29 — Save the date. Armenia Fund 20th Anniversary Gala, 7 p.m. at Gotham Hall in New York City.

Classical Armenian Music at Holy Cross Church in NYC

NEW YORK — Holy Cross Church hosted a concert of classical Armenian music after church services on Sunday, June 10. Admission was free and more than 100 people from the church and the Washington Heights community attended.

The Zvartnots String Quartet, a group of professional musicians living in Washington Heights, produced a wonderful program for their inaugural concert.

The quartet members are: Cecce Pantikian, violin, Nikita Morozov, violin, Aleksandr Nazaryan, viola, and David Bakamjian, cello.

The program included *Fortress Dance* by Altunyan, *String Quartet in D* by Mirzoyan and pieces from *Komitas' Theme of Armenian Folk Songs* by Aslamazyan. The concert was staged in the sanctuary to take advantage of its extraordinary acoustics.

The event was coordinated by Lola Koundakjian, herself a poet, as part of the Uptown Arts Stroll, a community-wide arts festival organized each June by the Washington Heights Uptown Arts Council to showcase local artists' talent.

— Jon Simonian



The Zvartnots String Quartet, from left, Nikita Morozov, David Bakamjian, Cecce Pantikian and Aleksandr Nazaryan

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Armenian Officials Visit ALMA

WATERTOWN — On Tuesday, May 22, Armenian Foreign Affairs Minister Eduard Nalbandian, Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobyan and Armenian Ambassador to the US Tatoul Markarian were in Boston to attend the dedication ceremony of the Armenian Heritage Park. They visited the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) in the afternoon where they met with Haig Der Manuelian, chairman of the board and toured the museum and the library.

Nalbandian was pleasantly surprised at the size of the museum and was especially impressed by ALMA's Urartian collection, saying he had a personal collection of Urartian pieces but nothing compared to the ones on display.

Markarian said the Karsh exhibit and the new Bedoukian Galleries were done professionally.



From left, ALMA Trustee Barbara Merguerian, ALMA Curator Gary Lind-Sinianian, Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobyan, Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian, ALMA Acting Director Berj Chekijian, Ambassador to the US Tatoul Markarian, ALMA Chairman Haig Der Manuelian and ALMA Trustee Bruce Bagdasarian



COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN Mirror- Spectator

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COMMENTARY

A Witch-Hunt or Presidential Campaign?

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Last May, a global sex scandal broke out when the head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Dominique Straus-Kahn was arrested on charges of raping a hotel maid in New York. The charges were dropped later but Straus-Kahn, who had been considered the front-runner in the French presidential election, saw his career collapse. It is hard to prove collusion by his opponent, former French President Nicolas Sarkozy, but he was definitely the beneficiary of the scandal for a while when Straus-Kahn's reputation was damaged. That was until another – the Socialist candidate Francois Hollande – caught up with Sarkozy and won the race.

A similar political scandal is brewing in Armenia, however, not within a sexual context, but rather regarding financial accountability. It has all the hallmarks of political motivation. Some even call it a witch-hunt, given the timing and the process the government has chosen.

The target once again is a prominent statesman, namely the former Foreign Minister of Armenia Vartan Oskanian, who has been accused of money laundering. After 10 years of service, when Oskanian retired from the position of the foreign minister, he continued to remain visible through his non-governmental organization, Civiltas Foundation. But last May's parliamentary election propelled him into the limelight when Oskanian emerged as a leading figure when the Prosperous Armenia Party parted from the ruling coalition.

Finally, the other shoe was dropped and the party decided to continue its independent course. Of course, the political pundits see the shrewd political tactician, former President Robert Kocharian, behind all these maneuverings to set the stage for his comeback or to promote a surrogate.

As long as the party was symbolized by the opulent lifestyle of its founder Gagik Zaroukian it was not considered a serious political asset, but Oskanian's emergence as the second man in command changed the political complexion of the party. Therefore, it became apparent that if not Kocharian then Oskanian would be facing Serge Sargsian as a contender during next year's presidential election. That perception was enough to mark him as a target in the presidential race. Hence, the accusation of money laundering to tarnish his reputation by the election time. Some people believe the inspiration for the accusation comes from the Ukraine, where one-time presidential contender and Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko (nee Grigyan) was convicted to a seven-year prison term for abusing her office in brokering a gas deal with Russia in 2009.

Oskanian seems to be in the same kind of hot water and the state security office has been interrogating him and his assistant Salpi Ghazarian has also been invited for questioning. At issue are grants provided to Civiltas by some foreign governments and wealthy donors. Civiltas Foundation has issued a press release revealing the sources of its funding. Thus \$1.5 million was received from the Norwegian government and \$150,000 from Eduardo Eurnekian.

The press release is concluded with the following paragraph: "Civiltas expresses thanks to all current donors as well as those

with whom we have partnered in the past. They are the government of Germany, the government of Norway, the government of Poland, the government of Switzerland, the government of the Netherlands, the government of the UK (DFID), government of the US (USAID), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Eurasia Partnership Foundation and the German Marshall Fund of the US/Black Sea Trust. Special thanks go to Mr. Jon Huntsman."

One may question why would so many governments and other agencies provide these funds, certainly not for charity but to buy influence, but not the type of influence that brought the Revolution of Roses in Georgia or the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, through a global policy of containing Russia. Those would require a more massive infusion of funds, and Armenia is not yet ripe for that kind of upheaval.

There are a few factors that lead political analysts to believe that the investigation is politically motivated. First there was no investigation whatsoever before Oskanian was elected to the parliament. The timing of the investigation could not be coincidental. In the Armenian parliamentary elections, sometimes the prominent leaders heading the list drop their mandate to let the second person in line to serve in the parliament.

There were some speculations that Oskanian would do the same, but on May 25 it became apparent that he would stay and he meant business; that triggered the investigation.

Also, tax evasion cases are not uncommon. Many oligarchs are caught in those cases and after a slap on the wrist they pay a fine on a portion of back taxes and they are relieved (especially when they are on the right side of the political spectrum). And such matters are handled normally by tax authorities. But in this case, the prosecutor's office and state security agency are involved to criminalize the case.

Oskanian himself has made a strong statement about the case: "In order to launder the money that money has to be dirty to begin with. In this case, the sources of money are known and the recipient is known, too. The contributions to me and to Civiltas have been transferred in a transparent manner, through the bank and through the wishes of the donors. The lawyers have not identified any violations of tax laws in these transactions. According to the contracts the funds transferred to the recipient are considered donations, and the recipient is entitled to use them to achieve the purposes conscribed in the by-laws of the organization. Only people with political motivation can reduce these donations, made by good people for good causes, to political money change."

The opening salvo against Oskanian came from a hired gun in California in a caustic article, which was distributed online. This investigation seems to be a follow up process. Observers have been wondering where can this campaign lead. If Oskanian's political profile is enhanced in Armenia, the campaign may intensify, otherwise it may fizzle out. Thus far, this investigation has boosted his popularity. Unless more incriminating facts emerge, the campaign can only improve Oskanian's popularity.

The present administration has an effective political machine to mow any opposition. Ter-Petrosian's powerful opposition and popular movement eventually was pulverized and reduced to a meager and tame opposition group in the parliament.

By all counts, the presidential campaign is in full gear and the political witch-hunt with it.

Kerry, Shaheen and Menendez Raise Key Policy Issues at Foreign Relations Committee Confirmation Hearing

HEARING, from page 1

In its letter to all committee members alerting them of the cease-fire violations by Azerbaijan, the Armenian Assembly stated that: "These deplorable actions must be roundly condemned. The US must consider all options available, including fully enforcing Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, as well as ceasing all US military assistance to Azerbaijan. Failure to do so will only embolden Azerbaijan, and undermine what already is a fragile peace process."

In addition, Menendez also raised concerns

as to why the Azeri destruction of the centuries-old Armenian cemetery in Julfa was not included in the State Department's report on International Religious Freedom and strongly urged Ambassador-designate Morningstar to make visiting the cemetery a priority. Morningstar stated that any "desecration such as that is unacceptable" and pledged to do everything possible to visit the site and indicated that pressing for greater religious freedom in Azerbaijan, including protecting the rights of the Armenian church, will be a "major part of the agenda."

In concluding his line of questioning, Menendez asked the nominee if he contested the facts of 1915, to which Morningstar responded: "No I do not."

"On behalf of the Assembly's 2012 Summer Internship class, we commend Senator Menendez for raising these critically important issues," said Franklin and Marshall College senior Masis Parseghian, who attended today's hearing and hails from New Jersey. Masis is part of the Assembly's Terjenian-Thomas Internship Program and is a government affairs intern at the Armenian Assembly's office in Washington, DC.

The next step in the confirmation process will be the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's business meeting to vote on Ambassador-designate Morningstar's candidacy. Morningstar currently serves as the US secretary of state's special envoy for Eurasian energy and previously served as US ambassador to the European Union, as well as special advisor to the president and secretary of state on assistance for the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union.

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COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Israel Has One Good Reason for Recognizing the Armenian Genocide

Israel's Parliament – the Knesset – held “an historic session” on June 12, during which “seven different political parties overwhelmingly endorsed recognition of the Armenian Genocide,” according to Dr. Israel Charny, executive director of the Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide in Jerusalem. He cautiously predicted that the Knesset would complete its legislative procedures leading to recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

While acknowledging the Armenian Genocide would be salutary, Israel should have done so long ago. In fact, the Jewish State should have been the first country to recognize the Genocide, in view of the legacy of the Holocaust – Shoah. Who should empathize more with the victims of Genocide than those who have suffered a similar fate themselves? As Knesset member Nino Abesadze pointed out during the hearing: “It is precisely because we have been a victim people that we do not dare fail to identify with another victim people.” Another influential Knesset member, Zeev Elkin, chair of the Likud Caucus stated: “We are one

of the last nations in the world that has still not recognized the Armenian Genocide. It is our moral responsibility that we have still not met.”

During the June 12 hearing, Knesset Chairman Reuven Rivlin spoke “firmly and inspiringly” with “profound feeling of both a Jewish and an Israeli imperative to extend a long overdue recognition,” Dr. Charny reported. Chairman Rivlin announced that there was no need for a new vote to recognize the Armenian Genocide since the Knesset had already voted unanimously for its recognition last year. Dr. Charny explained that unlike the US Congress, Knesset resolutions first go to the plenary session before being considered by one of its committees. The next step for the Armenian Genocide resolution is the Education Committee, after which it would be sent back to the Knesset for a final vote. Only then it could be said that the Knesset has officially recognized the Armenian Genocide.

One of the unexpected developments at the June 12 hearing was a statement by Minister of Environmental Affairs Gilad Erdan who announced that he was speaking officially on behalf of the government. He stated unambiguously that Israel had decided to recognize the Armenian Genocide. Furthermore, Minister Erdan claimed that “the State of Israel has never denied it, on the contrary, we deplore the [Armenian] genocide.” This was a surprising statement, since it is well known that, under Turkish pressure, Israel has persistently opposed recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Nevertheless, in defiance of Israeli state denialism, on April 24, 2000, Minister of Justice Yossi Beilin and Minister of Education Yossi Sarid acknowledged the Armenian Genocide, prompting the government to repudiate their statements. Beilin had also recognized the Genocide in 1994, while serving as deputy foreign minister.

The fact that serious discussions on the Armenian Genocide are now taking place at a time of deteriorating relations between Turkey and Israel raises troubling questions about the motives of the Israeli government. It would be morally repugnant to see the mass murder of a nation being exploited for crass political calculations. Yet, one has to realize that international relations are rarely based on moral principles. Were it not for economic and political considerations, the whole world would have long ago recognized the Armenian Genocide.

While critics may be displeased that Israel is considering recognition of the Armenian Genocide at a time of discord with Turkey, the greater wrong, in my view, was not doing the right thing for all these years. Even now, despite efforts to rectify the past and uphold the truth, some Israeli officials are concerned that raising the Armenian Genocide issue would further exacerbate relations with Turkey. Knesset member Arie Eldad dismissed such objections by pointing out the illogical stance of the naysayers: “A few years ago, people said we couldn't talk about it because of our good relations with Turkey. Now people say we can't talk about it because of our bad relations with Turkey.” Eldad added that when people are reluctant to address moral and ethical issues there is always a claim that the timing of such a discussion is wrong.

There is, however, one red line that no Armenian should cross. Israeli officials have sought to obtain political concessions from Armenia and Armenians in return for Genocide recognition. Such demands should be rejected outright since Armenians do not owe anything to Israel for recognizing the Genocide – a universally acknowledged historical fact. Israel should recognize the Armenian Genocide simply because it is the right thing to do, reflecting the sentiments of all righteous Jews worldwide.

Threat of War Grows in Caucasus

By Clara Weiss

In the Caucasus, where US geopolitical interests collide with those of Russia and Iran, the danger of war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabagh is growing.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who visited Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia on June 4-6, poured more oil on the fire.

The territorial dispute over Nagorno-Karabagh, to which both Armenia and Azerbaijan lay claim, goes back more than a hundred years and broke out again with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Military conflicts have continued since the late 1980s and the independence of both countries. Some 25,000 people were killed in the 1991-1994 war and over a million displaced.

The region, today mostly inhabited by Armenians, belongs to Azerbaijan under international law and therefore counts as being “occupied” by Armenia; both countries are still officially at war. Since 2010 there have been increasing clashes on the border.

Hillary Clinton's visit to the region was accompanied by a new escalation of the conflict. Since the beginning of June, 20 Armenians and eight Azerbaijanis, including civilians, have been killed. Many media outlets now speak of a “war situation.”

The United States and the European powers are using the conflict to push back Russian influence in the region, which belonged to the Soviet Union until its dissolution in 1991. But they are not united amongst themselves. While France has supported Armenia, which also has Russian backing, the US works closely with Azerbaijan, Turkey and Georgia and also tries to draw Armenia to its side.

The US has expanded its influence in the region since the 1990s, much to the detriment of Russia and Iran. In particular, the Georgian “Rose Revolution” of 2003, in which they helped the current president Mikhail Saakashvili to power, was a milestone in this regard. Both Georgia and Azerbaijan are close US allies and are armed by Washington militarily. Both countries belong to the so-called “Southern Corridor,” through which existing and planned pipelines bypass Russia delivering oil and gas from the Caspian region to

Europe.

The US has tried so far to avoid a renewed military conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, since a war between the two countries might endanger American and European interests and could lead to a major confrontation with Russia and Iran.

During Clinton's visit to the Caucasus, the *New York Times* warned: “America and Europe can no longer keep the Nagorno-Karabagh talks on the back burner. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev faces domestic pressures to act, but Europe and America should caution him about the adverse consequences, notably a broader regional war. Energy investment in Azerbaijan and a major new gas pipeline to Europe, Nabucco, could become casualties.”

Nabucco is an EU pipeline project to deliver gas from Central Asia to Central Europe bypassing Russia. For several months it has been threatened with collapse.

During her visit, Hillary Clinton said that the conflict must be resolved peacefully. The next peace talks are due to take place on June 18 in Paris.

In recent years, the US has focused on building better relations with Armenia, to bring it closer to Turkey, a NATO member state. During her visit, Clinton stressed the importance of developing bilateral relations between the two countries.

Washington is trying to isolate Russia and Iran in the Caucasus and to win Armenia for Trans-Caspian pipeline projects. Armenia is the last country with which Russia – and to

some extent Iran – can assert influence in the region.

The tense relations between Moscow and Washington, as well as US and Israeli war preparations against Iran, threaten a regional war in the Caucasus that could rapidly escalate into a conflict between the great powers.

Russia, which maintains its only military base in the Caucasus in Armenia, has signed a treaty to provide military assistance to Yerevan in case of war. The *New York Times* reported on June 11 that Russian military aircraft have held numerous exercises over Armenia. Russian colonel Igor Gorbunov told the Russian news agency Interfax that Russian pilots were preparing for combat operations.

Iran, too, is expected to stand on Armenia's side. Russian commentator Andrei Smirnov wrote recently: “Iran will also not allow the loss of Nagorno-Karabagh by Armenia. In the case of such a scenario, it would send troops into the region, because it is also a matter of life and death for Iran. The only open question now, is what will start sooner – war against Iran or in Nagorno-Karabagh.”

The US would likely stand by Azerbaijan. The country is not only an important energy supplier and transit corridor for Central Asian and Caspian gas, but also of great military and strategic importance. Israel and the US have systematically armed its navy and army in preparation for war against Iran.

Baku has already supported the US-led wars in Iraq, Kosovo and Afghanistan. About one third of the NATO troops deployed in Afghanistan pass through the Caspian republic.

During her talks with Azeri President Ilham Aliyev, Hillary Clinton announced a further expansion of military and economic relations between the two countries and praised the participation of Azerbaijan in this year's NATO summit. This year, for the first time, Baku participated in a summit of the alliance, while Russian President Vladimir Putin refused to attend amid growing tensions with the US and NATO.

Clinton's visit to Georgia further fuelled tensions with Russia. Since the Rose Revolution of 2003 and the Caucasus war of 2008 – which Georgia waged against Russia, with US support, over the regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia – relations between Tbilisi and Moscow have been poor.

At the beginning of the year, Georgia issued so-called “neutral” passports to the residents of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, to replace Russian passports. According to Russian media reports, the passports were issued by the Georgian Interior Ministry and so are hardly “neutral.” During her visit, Clinton said that Washington would recognize these passports.

The spokesman for the Russian Foreign Ministry Alexander Lukashevich then declared: “Unfortunately, the statements by Mrs. Clinton in Georgia show that Washington has not learnt from the events in the Caucasus in August 2008.”

(This column originally appeared in the World Socialist Website [wsws.org] on June 15.)

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