

Sen. Graham Blasted for Blocking Armenian Genocide Resolution

By David Brennan

WASHINGTON (*Newsweek*) – Sen. Lindsey Graham has come under fire for blocking a Senate resolution acknowledging the Armenian Genocide, nixing the House recognition of the 20th century Ottoman Empire-era massacres that passed last month by a 405-11 vote.

Graham made the move soon after meeting with President Donald Trump and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who was in Washington Wednesday, November 13, as the two leaders sought to mend bilateral relations damaged by recent Turkish foreign policy.

Democratic Senator Bob Menendez requested consent to pass the resolution, *The Hill* reported, seeking “official recognition and remembrance” of the anti-Armenian campaign that killed more than 1 million people from 1915 to 1923.

The Ottoman government forcibly relocated hundreds of thousands of Armenians to the deserts of Syria and elsewhere during this period. Victims were either killed or died from starvation and exhaustion.

Menendez said U.S. foreign policy must “reflect an honest accounting of human rights abuses, crimes against humanity,



Sen. Lindsey Graham

ethnic cleansing and genocide. We cannot turn our backs on the Armenian victims of genocide.”

But Graham objected, suggesting senators should not “sugarcoat history or try to rewrite it.”

The Turkish government still denies the genocide, which occurred during the final years of the Ottoman Empire. Turkey disputes the number of Armenians killed, and argues that those who died did so while fighting Ottoman forces.

But before the Ottoman Empire was abolished and replaced with the new Turkish Republic, the government executed several top officials for their role in the massacres of Armenian communities.

Even in a busy day of news on the Hill, Graham’s block made waves on social media, drawing condemnation from progressive Americans and praise from Turkish nationalists.

Author and activist Amy Siskind called the development “so deeply troubling, and happening in the light of day!” She added, “What is wrong with this man!”

Novelist Chris Bohjalian branded Graham’s action “utterly spineless and despicable.” He asked, “How can you be against a resolution acknowledging

see GRAHAM page 20

Health Activist Lord Darzi Heads Aurora Prize Committee

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

YEREVAN – As the first Armenian serving in the British parliament, Lord Ara Darzi expressed his joy at the vote on the Armenian Genocide resolution in the US House of Representatives and in a November 6 letter (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/06/recognising-the-armenian-genocide>) called on the British parliament to do the same. A few weeks earlier, he was in Armenia to participate in the Aurora Forum events (see other coverage in the *Mirror-Spectator*). Darzi joined the Aurora Prize Selection Committee at the end of 2017 and was



Lord Ara Darzi

appointed as its chair at the Aurora Forum this year.

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2019 TCA Dr. Nubar Berberian Trust Fund Scholarships

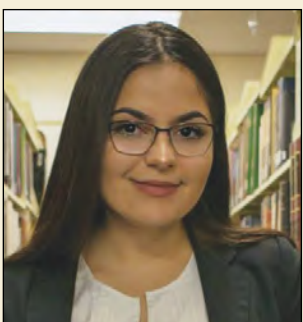


WATERTOWN – The administrators of Tekeyan Cultural Association’s “Dr. Nubar Berberian Trust Fund” have announced the names of Armenian students who have been awarded scholarships in 2019 for their academic studies. They are:

• Marianna Yearboro of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, University of Montana Political Science (focus on public law and American government) and philosophy

• Hagop Mouradian, of Lansing, Mich., Michigan State University, College of Law, focus on international law

• Joshua Jendian, of Fresno, California State University, Sacramento, B.A. degree in political science and minor in economics



From left, Marianna Yearboro, Joshua Jendian and Hagop Mouradian

articles and editorials and then use the annual interest from his estate to give scholarships to college students of Armenian descent who major in either International Law or Political Science. This year was the second award. To apply for 2020 awards, email TCADirector@Aol.com.



The late Dr. Nubar Berberian

Noted journalist and activist Dr. Nubar Berberian passed away on November 23, 2016. His estate was bequeathed to the Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc. The Board of Directors of the TCA decided to establish a trust in his name, publish a book of his

NEWS IN BRIEF

Armenia Approves Visa Facilitation with Denmark

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The National Assembly on November 19 unanimously approved a draft law on visa facilitation between Armenia and Denmark.

Deputy Foreign Minister Avet Adonts introduced the draft law in the parliament. Adonts said Denmark did not sign the 2012 agreement on visa facilitation between Armenia and the European Union.

The two sides agreed back then to ink a bilateral agreement on facilitation of short-term visas between Armenia and Denmark.

Olympic Champ Aleksanyan Named UNICEF Ambassador

YEREVAN – Olympic gold medalist wrestler Artur Aleksanyan was named a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador during a ceremony at the United Nations office in Yerevan on Monday, November 18.

Aleksanyan made headlines for capturing the gold during the Rio de Janeiro Olympics in the Greco-Roman wrestling match.

The appointment came on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which is marked on November 20 every year as the International Children’s Day. To mark the date, UNICEF organizes a national children’s summit to be attended by around 170 children throughout Armenian regions.

“According to the statistics, the percentage of overweight children under the age of five in Armenia is estimated 14, while nine percent are undernourished. It is sad to realize that children at that early to not get enough food. Every child needs to get proper food and be healthy to pursue their dreams and goals,” Aleksanyan has said at the designated ceremony, adding, it was a great honor for him to become a UNICEF National Ambassador in Armenia and he would use the opportunity to support UNICEF Armenia in protecting the vulnerable children in Armenia to ensure their right of living a healthy life.

United Nations Goodwill Ambassadors are distinguished individuals, selected from the fields of art, literature, science, entertainment or sports to help focus worldwide attention on the work of the United Nations.

Aleksanyan won a bronze medal in the 2012 London Olympics and is a two-time World Champion and a three-time European Champion.

Aleksanyan will join singer Alla Levonyan and soccer star Henrikh Mkhitaryan to represent Armenia as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador.

INSIDE

Honoring Clara Schumann

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Composer Tigran Mansurian Honored with High State Award

YEREVAN (Panarmenia.am) – Through a decree by President Armen Sarkissian of Armenia, renowned composer, People's Artist of Armenia Tigran Mansurian has been awarded the 1st Degree Order for Services to the Homeland.

Mansurian received the award for his significant contribution to the development of music and outstanding achievements.

The award ceremony took place at the Presidential Palace on Wednesday, November 13.

New Airlines Will Be Exempt from Air Duty

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The cabinet on November 14 amended the Law On State Duty, exempting airlines from the so-called Air Duty in the event of launching flights to new destinations from Armenia. The air duty is a fixed 10,000-dram tax on passengers which is included in airline tickets in Armenia.

Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures Suren Papikyan said that the exemption will be for airlines that will launch flights to destinations which haven't been operated from Armenia in the past 12 months.

"At this moment 11-12 billion drams in revenue is entering the budget in the form of air duty. But we have all grounds that in the event of providing this exemption we will have a positive effect, taking into account that this regulation will contribute to the development of new markets and encouragement of existing markets. According to the assessment, thanks to the multiplicative effect the state budget will be supplemented with additional revenues, which wouldn't be exceeded in the event of not initiating this regulation. This relates to all airlines," he said, adding that the new law will enable a competitive environment.

In turn, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said that a political decision has been made that the government will remove the air duty in the event of a new destination being opened which hasn't been operated in the past 12 months.

"As a result of this decision at this moment we have one airline which has decided to carry out flights to Yerevan and Gyumri. There were rumors that RyanAir was given privileges. Actually, the privilege relates to everyone, we are inviting all airlines to come and use these conditions. This will impact the price formation of tickets and generally economic activity development," Pashinyan said.

Pianist Eva Gevorgyan Granted Armenian Citizenship

YEREVAN (Panoram.am) – Eva Gevorgyan, the 15-year-old Russian-Armenian pianist, and a participant in numerous competitions and festivals, and the laureate of world famous competitions, obtained Armenian citizenship on November 19. The news was announced by the Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra (ANPO).

According to them, Gevorgyan has recently performed with the ANPO in the frames of "Young Artists Program."

"We look forward to seeing her on international staged in Armenia," the orchestra's press office said in a statement.

"I became a citizen of the Republic of Armenia and am very happy to have the chance to represent the two mother countries all over the world," she wrote on her Facebook page. Gevorgyan is studying music at the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory.

She has been playing the piano since age 3. She has been taking part in international music competitions and festivals since she was 15 years old.

According to the experts, she does not simply play; she strives to convey the music to the audience in its full depth and beauty.



Minister of Environment Erik Grigoryan presented this official gold medal of recognition to ATP Founder Carolyn Mugar in the days after the Forest Summit

Carolyn Mugar Recognized for Decades of Environmental and Charitable Initiatives

YEREVAN/BOSTON – Armenia Tree Project (ATP) founder and activist Carolyn Mugar was honored at last month's "Forest Summit: Global Action and Armenia" in recognition of her decades of devotion to Armenia and its forests. Mugar, an Armenian-American who lives in the Boston area, has long been an advocate for the betterment of Armenia, its people, and its environment.

Mugar founded ATP in the early 1990s when Armenia was facing a severe energy crisis and people resorted to widespread use of wood for cooking and heating fuel. The country lost many trees in urban and rural areas, so ATP began replanting. In the ensuing years, the organization has established four tree nurseries, four greenhouses, and two environmental education centers. The operations provide more than 80 full-time jobs in Armenia and dozens more for seasonal work. The organization has planted more than 1,300 sites throughout Armenia and Artsakh and has had the support of thousands of individuals, foundations, and organizations in Armenia and the diaspora.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan addressed attendees at the inaugural forestry conference, and in praising Mugar announced that part of a forest will forever bear her family's name.

"Your work, Ms. Mugar, is invaluable. Many of your charitable initiatives and programs have contributed to Armenia's development since



The Ministry of Environment presented to Carolyn Mugar its highest award, a gold medal.

[Armenia's] independence," said Prime Minister Pashinyan at the opening session of the Forest Summit. "I would like to inform you that on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Armenia Tree Project, the Government of the Republic of Armenia has made a decision to establish the Mugar Family Protected Lands on the territory of Margahovit Forest."

Margahovit is a village in Lori where ATP has made significant investments, including the Mirak Family Reforestation Nursery, the Michael and Virginia

Ohanian Center for Environmental Studies, the Bilezikian Family Experimental Greenhouse, and the Hrant Dink Memorial Forest. The area is known for its clean air and spectacular beauty, and it has been a base for many of ATP's programs over the past 15 years.

The inaugural Forest Summit brought global forestry professionals to American University of Armenia for panel discussions and collaborative sessions, and also into areas like Dilijan National Park and Margahovit Village for immersive field visits. Located in northern Armenia, ATP's sites in Margahovit employ of dozens of Armenians and the Mirak Nursery has a capacity to grow more than a million trees. Much of this progress is a direct result of Mugar's dedication and commitment.

The days after the conference yielded another high honor for Mugar, when Minister of Environment Erik Grigoryan presented her with an official gold medal in recognition of her quarter century of leadership of Armenia Tree Project.

"We are honored to present the official Gold Medal issued by the Ministry of Environment to Carolyn Mugar," stated Grigoryan during a meeting on October 25. "This is the highest medal issued in the environmental sector in Armenia, and we are bestowing it upon Ms. Mugar in recognition of her significant contribution and investment in environmental conservation. We congratulate you on 25 years of the Armenia Tree Project, and hold its accomplishments in high regard."

Mugar founded ATP in 1994 to address the rapid loss of trees in the country. In addition to last month's conference, the non-profit celebrated its 25th anniversary year with a series of fundraising events around the United States, commemorative tree plantings in Boston and Los Angeles, and this fall will plant its six millionth tree in Armenia.

ATP's goal is to assist the Armenian people in using trees to improve their standard of living and protect the global environment. In doing so, we are guided by the need to promote self-sufficiency, aid those with the fewest resources first, and conserve the indigenous ecosystem. ATP has created hundreds of jobs through tree-related programming and educated tens of thousands of students on environmental issues. Environmental education inspires younger generations to protect and preserve the environment.



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan spoke at the opening of the Forest Summit, where he announced the naming of the Mugar Family Protected Lands on the territory of Margahovit Forest



ARMENIA

Inaugural Forest Summit in Armenia Deed Great Success

YEREVAN — On October 23, the inaugural Forest Summit: Global Action and Armenia concluded three days of insights and shared learnings from some of the world's leading climatologists, forestry professionals, and political leaders in Yerevan. The Summit has been heralded by Armenia's political leadership and forestry professionals worldwide as a necessary assembly of thought-leaders at an important time. The unprecedented event was co-hosted by American University of Armenia's Acopian Center for the Environment and Armenia Tree Project (ATP).

Armenia has fought hard to protect its forests and has shown renewed political commitment to protecting, restoring, and expanding Armenia's forest cover. "Addressing environmental issues, and in particular forest conservation and restoration, are among the priorities of our government," said Nikol Pashinyan, prime minister of Armenia, in his remarks to the attendees. "Environmental issues are not isolated problems. They nearly always have a global impact and call for concerted efforts to address them, and in this respect, events that provide a platform for exchanging ideas, exploring international experience and identifying potential partnerships are crucial. I am pleased to see that this conference brings together world-class professionals from whom I am sure we have much to learn."

More than 350 attendees from 12 countries heard presentations by a host of speakers from five continents, headlined by Dr. Anthony S.



Forest Summit participants visit Dilijan National Park for an introductory tour.

Davis, interim dean and professor at the College of Forestry at Oregon State University. Davis spoke of how forest-friendly policies must be factored into policymaking worldwide, and how the planting of trees plays a crucial role in combatting climate change.

Davis lauded Armenia's pledge to double its

forest cover by 2050 as part of its commitment to the Bonn Challenge and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. "In 2050, half of the forest cover in Armenia will be based on decisions made starting now," said Davis, addressing the crowd on Tuesday. "There should be no greater calling to work together than that information. The future of what you see as a forest in Armenia will be driven by decisions you make starting today."

Echoing Davis, each speaker brought innovative thoughts and key learnings on the role of forests in national economies, and how planting the right trees in the right places can support communities and bolster ecosystems. Guests learned how forests benefit from innovations on water supply sustenance, international donors, tree biodiversity, and the optimal utilization of nurseries and commercial forests.

The conference underscored the urgency of the climate change crisis, and the role forests play in the fight against it. Forests help to sequester carbon dioxide, purify water, and expand habitat for entire ecosystems.

Led by the work of ATP, Armenia has seen a rebound in its canopy cover since the 1990s. This fall, the group planted its six millionth tree in Armenian soil.

Founded in 1994 by activist Carolyn Mugar, ATP has furthered the country's economic and social development by restoring trees across the



Dr. Anthony S. Davis speaks at Forest Summit.

country, creating hundreds of jobs through tree-related programming and educating tens of thousands of students on environmental issues. The co-hosting of this inaugural conference was done in commemoration of the ATP's 25th anniversary.

The conference also allowed for provided field visits to Dilijan National Forest and Margahovit Village.



From left, AUA Vice President of Operations Ashot Ghazaryan, AUA Provost Dr. Randall Rhodes, RA Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, and ATP Executive Director Jeanmarie Papelian gather at the Forest Summit.

Zoryan Institute and AUA Center for Oral History: Opening Ceremony

YEREVAN — On November 13, the official opening ceremony of the Zoryan Institute and AUA Center for Oral History took place at the AGBU Papazian Library of the American University of Armenia (AUA). The Zoryan Institute has equipped the Center with copies

of its earliest, largest and most significant Armenian Genocide Oral History Archive.

"Housing the copies of the Zoryan Institute's renowned Armenian Genocide Oral History Archive at the AGBU Papazian Library at AUA is a great honor for us. I am proud to say that AUA students will be involved in transcribing and translating the Armenian video interviews making the resources available to the English-speaking community," noted AUA President Dr. Karin Markides in her welcoming remarks.

Over the past decades, the digitized collection has served as a resource of utmost significance to scholars, researchers, students, and filmmakers. Through the Zoryan Institute and AUA Center for Oral History, scientists and students in Armenia will now have the unique opportunity to access about 800 video recordings of interviews with Genocide survivors. Besides researching the materials, AUA students have volunteered to transcribe the recordings in the collection which will then be translated into English increasing their usefulness.

"The impact of this project is far reaching, and this next step in partnership with AUA will allow the world's largest Armenian Genocide oral history collection, and the stories of over 800 genocide survivors, to be



Zoryan President Greg Sarkissian speaks at the opening.

known to a greater, broader, audience of scholars and researchers," noted President of the Zoryan Institute Greg Sarkissian.

During the opening ceremony the Zoryan Institute presented the animated movie trailer Aurora Sunrise. Prepared in partnership with the largest documentary film studio in

Yerevan, Bars Media, the film tells the story of Aurora Mardiganian's survival using her personal testimony from the Institute's Oral History Project of the 1980s. Through this animated film, Mardiganian's 104-year-old story will be accessible to future generations in perpetuity.



The Oral History Archives entrance



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Mkhitarian to Return After Injury Break

ROME (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Armenian midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan will return after being out several weeks due to an injury, Romanews.eu reported on November 11.

Parma defeated the Giallorossi 2-0 on Sunday, November 10 but Roma manager Paulo Fonseca has made it clear in various interviews that Mkhitaryan is finally about to return to the field to help his companions with his class, the outlet says.

Fonseca said earlier that the playmaker is recovering.

Mkhitaryan joined Roma on a season-long loan deal from Arsenal on the final day of the transfer window.

OSCE Urges Calm in Georgia

TBILIS (Armenpress) — The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Secretary General Thomas Greminger on November 19 called on all sides in Georgia to “ensure peaceful protest and progress through dialogue” amid the demonstrations in Tbilisi.

“Following developments in #Georgia with concern. Look to all sides to ensure peaceful protest and progress through dialogue and respect for legal frameworks”, Greminger tweeted.

Thousands rallied on Sunday outside the Georgian parliament building in an anti-government protest. The opposition began a picket outside the building on November 18.

Later in the day police dispersed the rally.

According to local authorities 37 protesters have been detained. The ministry said the detainees ignored police orders and committed misdemeanors.

Four people, including two police officers, were hospitalized for injuries.

Dutch MP Asks Gov. to Open Embassy in Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The parties in the parliament of the Netherlands asked the leadership of the country to provide the Foreign Ministry 2 million Euros to open an embassy in Yerevan, the Member of Parliament representing the Christian Union faction, Joël Voordewind said, emphasizing that by this the Netherlands will demonstrate its support to the government of Armenia to continue its reforms, fight against corruption and protection of human rights with more confident steps.

Voordewind is also the co-chair of Armenia-Netherlands friendship group.

“We want to support the velvet revolution that took place in Armenia and the courageous steps initiated by the new Government,” he said.

Voordewind initiated a debate on the Turkish invasion to Syria. He noted that the attacks against Armenians in Syria remind the Armenian Genocide. “Being a NATO-member state, Turkey attacks sovereign state of Syria. Armenians are again persecuted, even killed, like a few days ago two Armenians fell victim of a terror attack in Qamishli. We witnessed the recognition of the Armenian Genocide in the U.S. Congress, our parliament has also condemned it and we continue to impose pressures on the Government for recognizing the Armenian Genocide,” he added.

Armenia Raising Minimum Wage by 24%

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The National Assembly on November 19 approved a bill to increase the minimum salary by about 24 percent— from 55,000 (approx. \$115) drams to 68,000 (\$143) drams.

The draft law was first approved by the government on June 27. Some 180,000 people employed in both the public and private sectors will benefit from the change.

Erdogan in Washington Calls Armenian Genocide Resolution ‘Shameful Step’

WASHINGTON (RFE/RL) — The resolution passed by the United States House of Representatives to recognize World War I-era killings of Armenians as genocide was a shameful step, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said while visiting Washington on November 13.

The Turkish leader, who met with US President Donald Trump, also expressed hope that the US Senate “will not repeat that mistake.” (See related story on Page 1.)

The resolution overwhelmingly adopted by the US House of Representatives on October 29 calls on the US government to “commemorate the Armenian Genocide through official recognition and remembrance” and to “reject” Turkish efforts to deny it. It says the government should also “encourage education and public understanding of the facts of the Armenian Genocide” and their “relevance to modern-day crimes against humanity.”

Armenia hailed the House’s decision to characterize the slaughter of some 1.5 million Armenians in Ottoman Turkey as genocide. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan called it a “bold step towards serving truth and historical justice.”

Erdogan, who had strongly condemned the resolution, said during a White House briefing that Ankara “will not get involved in a game whose authors want to undermine US-Turkish ties.” The Turkish leader claimed that “some historical events and allegations are being used to break down Turkish-American relations.”

“The documents adopted at the House of Representatives have served this very purpose and have deeply offended the Turkish people. It is not politicians but historians who are to decide what happened a hundred years ago... I hope the Senate will get America off this wrong path,” Erdogan declared.

US President Donald Trump, who had met with Erdogan to discuss US-Turkish ties and the situation in Syria, in particular, did not address the House resolution on the Armenian Genocide during the press conference. Hours

not move forward with the affirmation of the Armenian Genocide.

“My objection would not be to sugarcoat history or try to rewrite it. I just met with President Erdogan and President Trump about the problems we



US President Donald Trump greets Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (right) upon arrival outside the White House in Washington, DC on November 13, 2019.

later, however, it became clear that Republican Senator Lindsey Graham had blocked the passage of a similar document in the Senate.

New Jersey Senator Robert Menendez, who is the ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, took to the Senate floor to call for an immediate consideration by the Senate of the pending Armenian Genocide resolution. “I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. RES. 150 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be considered upon — considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate,” the pro-Armenian senator said.

Opposing the measure was South Carolina Senator Graham, who, in his remarks, cited his recent meeting with Erdogan as the reason to not pass the Senate resolution saying that in view of the current crisis in Syria, as well as discussions with Turkey on its purchase of Russian weapons, the Senate should

face in Syria by the military incursion by Turkey,” said Graham.

“I do hope that Turkey and Armenia can come together and deal with this problem. Given where we’re at in Syria and some hope that maybe we can resolve things, I object not because of the past, but because of the future,” added Graham.

Armenian organizations in the United States, however, took issue with the Republican senator over this argument.

“It’s clear — in the wake of near-unanimous, bipartisan US House passage H.Res.296 — that the Senate would also pass this resolution overwhelmingly. Senator Graham knows this and — understanding that this would further isolate the Trump Administration — is blocking his colleagues from an up-or-down vote on this measure,” said Armenian National Committee of America Executive Director Aram Hamparian.

“If Senator Graham has a problem with S.Res.150 he should vote against it, not prevent his Senate colleagues from voting their conscience on this human rights measure,” Hamparian added.

IMF Sees Faster Growth In Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — A senior official from the International Monetary Fund said on Tuesday that the Armenian economy is on course to beat IMF forecasts and grow by at least 6.5 percent this year.

Yulia Ustyugova, the fund’s resident representative in Yerevan, cautioned, however, that this growth is “narrowly-based” and largely driven by private consumption, rather than rising investments or exports.

Economic growth in Armenia slowed from 7.5 percent in 2017 to 5.2 percent in 2018. The current Armenian government, which took office following the “Velvet Revolution” of April-May 2018, forecast late last year a growth rate of 4.5 percent for 2019.

Official statistics for the first nine months of this year indicate more robust economic activity in the country. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and other senior officials have said that full-year GDP growth should accelerate to 7 percent.

“Our growth projections are very much in line with the authorities’ projections. For this year we project growth

to be at around 6.5-7 percent,” Ustyugova told RFE/RL’s Armenian service in an interview.

“We can say that growth has been higher than we expected,” she said. “We have been revising our growth forecasts upwards. This is mostly because consumption — and mostly private consumption — has been much stronger than anticipated. So it’s a good thing that economic activity has been growing.”

“The not-so-good thing is that it has been driven by consumption, rather than investment, because it is the investment that is the key building block for future growth. So the challenge remains how to generate sustainable, long-term growth that is driven by investment and exports, rather than consumption,” she added.

The government claims to have already radically improved Armenia’s

business environment by breaking up de facto economic monopolies and creating a level playing field for all businesses. Pashinyan has repeatedly stated that it is successfully carrying out an “economic revolution” promised by him. His critics counter that so far there has been no significant increase in foreign and domestic investments in the Armenian economy.

Ustyugova suggested that some investors have been in no rush to open new businesses or expand existing ones because of a “transition period” in the country.

“The authorities are still developing a set of priorities that will be guiding the economy in the future,” she said. “So in a sense, it’s a wait-and-see approach that is guiding some investors. Some investors also need to rethink their investment plans in the regional context given the upcoming reforms planned by the authorities.”

The authorities, the IMF official went on, are committed to far-reaching reforms needed for ensuring continued growth. They have already made “notable progress” in improving tax collection and combatting corruption, she said.

Pashinyan’s government pledged such reforms before securing in May this year a “precautionary” fresh loan from the IMF worth \$248 million. In Ustyugova’s words, a three-year reform program agreed by the two sides is “off to a good start.”



Armenia — IMF Resident Representative to Armenia Yulia Ustyugova is interviewed by RFE/RL, Yerevan.



INTERNATIONAL

President Sarkissian Visits Qatar

DOHA, QATAR — President Armen Sarkissian and his wife, Nouneh Sarkissian, arrived on a state visit to Qatar on November 17.

At the Hamad International Airport of Doha, the state flags of the Republic of Armenia and the State of Qatar were raised and the honor guard was lined up.

President of Armenia was welcomed by the Minister of Transport and Communication of Qatar Jassim Saif Ahmed Al Sulaiti and other officials.

Armen Sarkissian met with Qatari Prime Minister, Interior Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani.

The Qatari PM welcomed the Armenian President's official visit, attaching importance to the inter-state relations with Armenia.

Sarkissian thanked the government of Qatar for assisting the opening of the Armenian Embassy, stating that it will raise the bilateral ties to a new quality and expressed hope that Qatar will also open an embassy in Yerevan in the near future.

During their visit, Sarkissian met with the Chairperson of the Foundation of Qatar, Sheikha Moza bint Nasser al Missned, Sarkissian noted that the Sheikha has a vision for her country and for the human development in general. "The attitude of the Qataris toward the world culture and science is unique and precious. The Foundation of Qatar is not only a huge structure but also huge investments. Branches of the best universities of the world are established here, voluminous research is being carried out related not only to the Arabic, Arab culture and religion but in a number of other areas, ranging from nuclear physics to



The President and Nouneh Sarkissian at the Armenian Embassy

Foundation of Qatar is wide and the majority of those who study here, 60-70 percent, are foreigners. It means the cooperation with Armenia is very important because our vision is to make Armenia an international center of science, education, and culture. They are doing the same here, thus our cooperation is a logical thing to do," the President of Armenia said. In the framework of his official visit to the State of Qatar, President Armen Sarkissian visited the Embassy of Armenia in Doha. The Armenian embassy in the State of Qatar was opened this year through the active support of Emir and the government of Qatar.

Sarkissian was welcomed by the Ambassador of Armenia to Qatar Gegham Gharibjanian, spiritual leader of the Armenian Diocese of Qatar, Very Rev. Poghos Tinkjian, representatives of the Armenian community, and students of the Armenian Mesropian school.

Greeting the audience, Sarkissian assessed the day as a historic one for all. "Qatar is a friendly state, friendly nation. We all waited for the opening of this embassy for many years. During my numerous visits, when I met with many of you, the question was asked when Armenia would finally open an embassy in Qatar," the President recalled. "Today, it is a reality and believe that especially for you, the Armenian community of Qatar, the life will change considerably because you will be closer through a direct link to the Fatherland. Fatherland's pres-

ence will be not only in your hearts but in your daily life. I trust Armenia and Qatar have plenty to do in the politics, in the economy, in business relations and in cultural life. The Embassy

tance of Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. I convey my words of gratitude to the people of Qatar, its government, and Emir," the President underscored. "It is a special gesture of friendship and each of us should appreciate it and do everything so that this friendship, brotherly relations between the two nations strengthen and expand. Thus, welcome to the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia, welcome home."

Sarkissian was also hosted at the National Library of Qatar which is one of the Foundation of Qatar's structures.

He and his wife toured the library, got familiarized with the materials kept there, publications as well as the exhibits of the Heritage Museum including unique books, manuscripts, maps, other valuable samples of the Arab and Islamic culture.

The National Library of Qatar serves as a university and public library for research and is equipped with modern digital devices. According to the 2018 data, its depository contains close to 800,000 books; in addition, the library has 500,000 electronic books and periodicals.

At the conclusion of the visit, responding to the questions of the journalists, President Sarkissian said that the library is an exceptional institution, "We agreed with the director of the library that we would connect them with Matenadaran [the manuscript repository in Armenia]. When I



Armen Sarkissian with Qatari Prime Minister, Interior Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani

modern biology. Here great opportunities for learning exist."

The President noted that Armenia and Qatar would establish a working group. The agreement on this was reached during the meeting with Sheikha Moza. The group will study the possible areas of cooperation, including student exchange programs and joint scientific research in the areas of modern physics, history and culture. "The realm of the activities of the

should become the bridge which will connect you to the Fatherland but also make Armenia-Qatar relations closer. I mean that I expect each of you to be actively involved participants in the development of Armenia-Qatar relations."



President Sarkissian plants a tree on the grounds of the new Armenian Embassy in Doha.



President Armen Sarkissian exchanges gifts with the Very Rev. Poghos Tinkjian.



President Sarkissian partakes in the traditional bread and salt ceremony at the Armenian Embassy in Doha.

am back, I will arrange for many books to be sent here because, along with everything else, they translate some of the books into Arabic and not for commercial purposes but as a necessary tool for science and reading," the President noted. "Collaboration of this library with the National Library of Armenia and Matenadaran will be of great worth because huge amounts of money are being spent here to digitalize the books, make them accessible and, in general, to develop the library culture. I believe this is one of the best libraries I have ever seen."

The president congratulated all present on the opening of the Embassy and expressed special thanks to Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and the friendly people of Qatar for the assistance in establishing embassy. "Opening of the embassy would not be possible without good will and enormous, including financial assis-

am back, I will arrange for many books to be sent here because, along with everything else, they translate some of the books into Arabic and not for commercial purposes but as a necessary tool for science and reading," the President noted. "Collaboration of this library with the National Library of Armenia and Matenadaran will be of great worth because huge amounts of money are being spent here to digitalize the books, make them accessible and, in general, to develop the library culture. I believe this is one of the best libraries I have ever seen."



Community News

San Diego Bridge To the Future Gala Raises More than \$2.3 Million

SAN DIEGO – A historic night at the 7th Bridge to the Future Gala in San Diego saw the completion of funding for the first phase of construction of the new Armenian church campus, with more than \$2.3 million in major philanthropic gifts.

The Very Reverend Pakrad Berjekian, Parish Priest of St. John Garabed Armenian Church, announced that a \$2 million gift for the naming of the Godfather of the Sanctuary was given by Lois Israelian Butterfield of Palm Desert, formerly of San Diego, and her husband, Mr. David Butterfield. The new church sanctuary will be named Israelian in recognition of Lois' Armenian heritage, in which her grandfather of blessed memory was instrumental. The monumental donation will go towards the construction and naming of the new sanctuary.

Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church in Los Angeles, then shared his joyful remarks and invocation in response to the surprise news.

The history continued. A \$100,000 gift was announced from Paul and Rosemary Kalemkarian. Mr. and Mrs. Paul Kalemkarian, Jr. and the Judge Sharon Kalemkarian, and her husband Dr. Rey Galindo, were in attendance representing their parents, who had already



Young entertainers

generously donated \$100,000 toward the new church campus last year.

Gala Guest of Honor, Judge Sharon Kalemkarian of the San Diego Superior Court, spoke on the importance of the Armenian family she was raised in and talked about how the new church is being modeled after St. Hripsime Church near Echmiadzin, Armenia. She cited the example of St. Hripsime herself whose martyrdom precipitated the events that resulted in Armenia becoming the first Christian nation. She also encouraged the young women and girls in the audience to dream big and make a difference in the world.

Funds were also raised as a \$100,000 match of the Kalemkarian gift during the Fund a Need part of the program, led by Master of Ceremonies Pierre Charmasson, Honored Guest Miss Nebraska Alexis Najarian of the Miss USA Pageant, and the three gala co-chairs: Kathy Kassardjian, Dr. Anna Khachatryan Kulidjian and Emilia Arutunian, Esq. Several live auction items including travel and dining also raised significant funding for the church.

Academy Award-winning actor Richard Dreyfuss made a special appearance, attending with his wife Svetlana. He said that Armenians are not defined by the terrible thing that happened to them (the Genocide) but by the many wonderful qualities and accomplishments of the Armenian people.

During dinner, the talented Vegas-style entertainer Mark Verabian captivated the more than 250 guests with his Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin song stylings.

The lively Allen G and Orchestra kept the guests dancing all night with both Armenian and American favorites.

see GALA, page 7



A doctor conducts an eye exam

Armenian EyeCare Project Surpasses Milestone of 10,000 Patients Screened

YEREVAN and LOS ANGELES – On November 14, World Diabetes Day, the Armenian EyeCare Project (AECPP), a non-profit organization dedicated to eliminating preventable blindness in Armenia, announced that it has surpassed the milestone of screening 10,000 patients for diabetic retinopathy (DR) throughout Armenia utilizing the state-of-art EyeArt® AI Eye Screening System (Eyenuk, Inc., Los Angeles, USA). AECPP thanks the World Diabetes Foundation (WDF) and the Ministry of Health of Armenia for their support in achieving this milestone.

Founded in 1992, the Armenian EyeCare Project is a non-profit organization dedicated to eliminating preventable blindness in Armenia and making quality eye care accessible to every Armenian child and adult in the country.

During the last two years, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health of Armenia and with support from the WDF, AECPP utilized the EyeArt system to screen over 10,000 patients using AI technology. As a result, approximately 1,000 patients were identified as having DR. Approximately 350 of those who

had vision-threatening DR received sight-saving treatment soon after the diagnosis.

“DR is a silent, blinding disease. Most people with diabetes have no symptoms until their vision is irreversibly damaged. While annual ophthalmic screening is recommended for all people with diabetes, less than half get screened yearly, even in the developed world,” said Roger Ohanesian, MD, AECPP Founder and President, “This milestone of 10,000 patients screened, makes Armenia one of the leading countries in the world to have implemented cutting-edge AI technology to truly benefit patients in low resource settings.”



A patient in Armenia

The Armenian government is implementing a strategy to prevent diabetes and improve care for diabetes patients. In support of this, AECPP began rolling out the project Preventing Blindness from Diabetic Retinopathy in 2016. The project, which will bring DR screening and care to 87 clinics across the country, is supported by the World Diabetes Foundation.

“The use of EyeArt in Armenia offers an intriguing real-world test of this technology in a low-resource setting,” said Leif Fenger Jensen, Managing Director of World Diabetes Foundation. “We applaud the vision exemplified by Dr. Ohanesian and the AECPP organization in preserving vision for diabetes patients in Armenia, and we hope that medical breakthroughs such as AI medical diagnostics can help more diabetes patients around the world.”

The EyeArt System is developed by Eyenuk, Inc (Los Angeles, USA). It provides fully automated DR screening, including imaging, grading, and reporting in a single visit, without the need for eye dilation. Shortly after photographing the retina and while the patient is still in clinic, a report is issued, which is used to determine whether the patient needs to be evaluated by a specialist right away for potential treatment or seen again in 12 months.

Turkish Translation Of House Genocide Resolution Added To ANI Website

WASHINGTON – Since its launch two years ago, the Armenian National Institute (ANI) Turkish language website has been continuously expanded with major additions made throughout the course of 2019, now augmented by the Armenian Genocide resolution adopted in the United States House of Representatives on October 29.

More than 60 international resolutions and laws from around the world can presently be read in the Turkish language providing wide proof of the extent of global awareness of the Armenian Genocide, as well as the decisions of all of the countries represented which recognize the genocide – at least 29 at this juncture.

In the face of the continuing denial of the Armenian Genocide by Turkish state authorities, once again demonstrated by President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan during his latest visit to Washington, where, from a White House podium, he referred to the 1915 Armenian Genocide as “an incident that took place 104 years ago,” the ANI Turkish website strives to educate the Turkish-reading public about the facts, history, and recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

The ANI Turkish website has been expanded with new sections featuring records reflecting the position of Heads of States, Parliaments, and Presidential Statements. These are official remarks issued by individuals separate from the legislative history of recognition documented in the section titled Resolutions, Laws, and Declarations emanating from parliamentary bodies.

Public Petitions, International Organizations, and Statements on Record relating to the Armenian Genocide now constitute new sections of the ANI Turkish website, reflecting the range of official documents that ANI collects and posts.

Additional entries from the *Encyclopedia of Genocide* are now accessible in Turkish, as well as historic news reports from the time of the Armenian Genocide documenting the extent of coverage in American print media.

The ANI Turkish website also includes historic photographs, maps tracing out the Armenian Genocide, a Frequently Asked Questions page, and other informative sections.

Turkish audiences have been continually consulting the site since its launch. This sustained public interest indicates that the site is providing a service otherwise unavailable in Turkey or elsewhere. The ANI Turkish website closely parallels the main ANI site which contains a wealth of information and documentation, as well as several popular digital exhibits.

The latest dismissive comment of the Turkish president follows a pattern of similar offensive remarks reflective of the constraints imposed on civil society in Turkey. For the past three years, Turkish authorities have stepped up the repression of free speech in the country and further escalated genocide denial in the face of growing international acknowledgement. Prosecutions under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code have also increased as more journalists, authors, and human rights activists calling for open discussion of Armenian issues are incarcerated.

The direction of Turkish policy remains in full contradiction of its calls for dialogue making it all the more evident that the resources that ANI and similar organizations have created remain central to educating the Turkish-speaking public.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Silver Anniversary Of Ordination of Fr. Vasken Kouzouian Celebrated

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — On Saturday, November 9, the Holy Trinity family celebrated the ministry of Fr. Vasken Kouzouian by honoring his 25th Anniversary of Ordination to the Holy Order of Priesthood. Our parish members and friends filled MIT's Samberg Center, as the glittering Boston skyline dazzled in the background. The evening began with a cocktail reception where guests were able to mingle and enjoy the views.

Master of Ceremonies for the evening, Lisa Stephanian Burton, welcomed guests to the celebration, then invited Fr. Mampre Kouzouian to offer the Invocation. Joy Bethune, who grew up at Holy Trinity and is now raising her own family in the parish, offered a heartfelt toast reflecting on Rev. Vasken Kouzouian's impact on the entire community. Chairman of the Parish Council, Gregory A. Kolligian, Jr. offered remarks in appreciation of the honoree's impact, followed by Deacon Gregory Krikorian, who read letters of congratulations from Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Diocesan Primate, and Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Diocesan Legate and Ecumenical Officer. Guests were then invited to enjoy dinner.

During dinner, guests heard from Celebration



Fr. Vasken Kouzouian, flanked by his wife, Arpi, and daughter Alina

Committee members Gregory Ekchian and Christine Hovsepien, former ACYOA members influenced by Kouzouian's ministry. An anniversary cake was presented by ACYOA Seniors and committee members Oscar Derderian III and Anna Margaryan. During dessert and coffee, committee member Sandra Hovsepien introduced and presented a beautiful video tribute which included messages and well wishes from a diverse group of parishioners and friends.

The evening's highlight was the "fireside chat" moderated by Alison Ekizian, executive director of Holy Trinity and Fr. Vasken's daughter, Alina. Guests were able to hear Kouzouian offer sponta-

neous and candid answers to personal questions about faith, family, challenging moments and triumphs. Kouzouian ended the evening's celebration with the presentation of gifts to his ordination godfather, Gerald Boghosian, and his sponsoring priest, Fr. Mampre. He then warmly thanked the community for their love and support. The evening ended with Fr. Vasken Kouzouian offering the Benediction, honoring all clergy in the priesthood, all while looking at the crowd in joyful disbelief, "I can't believe you're all here for me..."

The warmth and love in the room were a perfect tribute to a man whose selfless ministry and service touches all of our lives.

Former US Attorney To Speak at St. James' Men's Club Meeting

WATERTOWN — On Monday, December 2, there will be a St. James Armenian Church Men's Club dinner meeting at the St. James Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center in Watertown. Guest speaker will be Christopher F. Bator, US attorney from Cambridge. Bator's topic will be "Violent Crime in the Greater Boston Area." A question-and-answer session will follow.

A retired US attorney from Cambridge, Bator now serves on the faculty of the Trial Advocacy Workshop at Harvard Law School. He also currently serves as a Board Member and Treasurer of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority and Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Alma del Mar Charter School in New Bedford.

Bator prosecuted violent drug and organized crime cases as an assistant US attorney in Boston for more than 27 years. He obtained his bachelor's degree from Harvard College in 1976, and his JD from Boston University Law School in 1985. He was an associate at Hale and Dorr (now Wilmer Hale) in Boston from 1986-1990.

Other elements of Bator's career in law include: 1974-75, Assistant to Deputy Mayor, Boston; 1977- 1980, Assistant to the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Hospitals/Director of Boston City Hospital, Boston; 1980-1982 Assistant to Mayor Kevin H. White, Boston; 1986-1990, Associate, Hale and Dorr (now Wilmer Hale) Boston and 1990-2017, Assistant U.S. Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office, Boston.

This St. James Men's Club dinner meeting will begin with a social hour and mezza at 6:15 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m. Dinner is \$17/person. Ladies are invited.

The Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center - Keljik Hall is located at 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown.

San Diego Bridge to the Future Gala Raises More Than \$2.3 Million

GALA, from page 6

Special remarks also came from San Diego District Attorney, Summer Stephan, who is Armenian and attended with her husband The Hon. Judge Dana Sabraw of the United States Federal District Court for the Southern District.

Dr. Armen Baibourtian, Consul General of Armenia in Los Angeles, attended with his wife

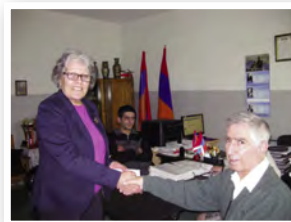


Dr. Armen Baibourtian

Yvette and shared his esteemed remarks and support for the new campus.

The land grading has already begun at the new church property, as shown in a video.

Some of the church's talented youth — Alexa and Kayla Belmer, Ani and Mari Kradjian, Arno and Vaughn Janoyan, and Sona and Lia Danielyan — performed the Armenian and American national anthems, and the classic Yerevan Ereboundi, led by Sona Baghdasaryan.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Carnegie President Vartan Gregorian Visits AMAA's Avedisian School

YEREVAN and NEW YORK – “Do your best when fulfilling anything; live having self-respect and remember that failure is not defeat yet; moreover, it is a lesson for not stumbling on your path ahead” said Dr. Vartan Gregorian in his address to the

Benefactors Edward and Pamela Avedisian.

After giving a brief overview of his respectable scientific and public path in the past, Gregorian answered the audience's diverse questions, such as his views on school, education, philanthropy, and volunteering. Some of the questions were about his Armenian childhood and family and his ties with the Homeland.

“You owe it to yourself to make Armenia become the strongest country in education, banking, new technologies, medical and other priority areas. So, whatever you do in life, do your best. Live in self-respect; accept any failure not as a defeat but as a lesson on your path. Learn and enjoy the opportunities you have. And, remember that the future of the Armenian people is in your hands,” added Gregorian.

As a result of this year's Aurora Awards organizers' selections, three of the volunteers chosen to assist the Ceremony represented Avedisian School – two twelfth graders Gohar Varderesyan and Aleksander Mnatsakanyan, and alumna Milena Galstyan, who performed their volunteer work with excellence.



Avedisian School Students greet Vartan Gregorian with the traditional bread and salt.

Avedisian School students and Teachers. Gregorian, Aurora Global Humanitarian Award co-founder and Selection Committee member, and president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, visited the AMAA Khoren and Avedisian School in Yerevan on October 23 accompanied by School



From left, President of Carnegie Corporation Vartan Gregorian, Avedisian School Benefactors Edward and Pamela Avedisian, and Avedisian School Principal Melanya Geghamyan

OBITUARY

Bertha Khavlijian Moriarty Dedicated Supporter of St. Vartan Cathedral

NEW YORK – The Armenian Church, and especially the St. Vartan Cathedral community, lost a dear friend the passing of Bertha Khavlijian Moriarty, at the age of 93.

Bertha was an accomplished educator, who bore the stamp of a teacher in everything she did – especially her work in the church. She was deeply inspired by her mother, the late Alice Khavlijian, a Genocide survivor and native of Sepastia, who embodied the gentle grace of an Armenian Christian with implicit faith in the providence of God.

This powerful example drove Bertha in her own intense, lifelong dedication to the Armenian Church. She was closely associated with the St. Vartan Cathedral complex, serving

Her parents were Aram and Alice Khavlijian. She has one brother Henry and a sister Lillian married to Ara Takourian with three children, Harry, Linda and Gary. Three nephews Mark, Christopher and Robert.

She studied in England and France awarded a Master's in education. She then taught French and Latin in the New York City Board of Education Port Washington High School. In 1985 she received an award from Sousa School and Home Association in recognition of Superior Service rendered.

In June 14, 1986 she joined the Eastern Star Stevenson, a Freemason organization with the stated goals of charity, fraternity, education, and science. In 1994 she became in charge of Correspondence and later District Deputy Grand matron and dedicated member of the Laurel Chapter #44 in Manhattan. She then became friends with Arlene Roberts who traveled together usually on cruises and special events. She and her cousin Agnes waited passionately for the Armenian cruises to be with the retired clergy their wives and parish members that had moved to other states. She was always one of the first to book that trip.

She volunteered with the late Rev. Arten Ashjian, the Canon Sacristan of the Cathedral. She continued her service for 20 years with Der Mardiros with love and devotion as the Guild Treasurer those years working with Ashjian was one of her happiest in life.

She was a member of the Women's Guild that coordinated many events held at the cathedral: Antique sale, Armenian Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day, Primate's Christmas Party for Children. Many private luncheons and dinners for the Armenian and non-Armenian Dignitaries.

In those years, the Guild did so much for then Archbishop Torkom Manoogian because of their love and respect for him.

The main altar painting funds were raised by Bertha and members of the Guild. Many years ago, with the assistance of the late Alice Kavookjian, the funds were raised by the Guild for the main doors of the Cathedral.

Bertha provided funding for many projects but not known by many, including the chimes of Saint Vartan Cathedral, the chimes at St. Gregory the Illuminator in Yerevan, the priest Headquarters in Jerusalem, served as God Mother to Bishop Nareg and much else.

In January 2006, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian honored her for her long-term commitment to the Armenian Church. The Primate presented her with the St. Nersess Shnorhali, Gontag and encyclical on half of Catholicos Karekin II.



on its committees, leading the Cathedral Guild for many years, and generously contributing to its daily life.

“This cathedral would be a different place, physically and spiritually, were it not for Bertha's presence,” said Diocesan Primate Bishop Daniel Findikyan, in a eulogy at her funeral on October 2. “Bertha was one of the guiding spirits of St. Vartan Cathedral from its very inception; a woman of profound faith and unending dedication. Every moment of her long life was devoted, in some way, to her Armenian Christian heritage, her family, and to the God and Savior she loved.” Condolence messages from Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and Bishop Nareg Berberian were also read on the occasion.

Throughout a long and active life, Bertha Moriarty served her Lord with rare love and devotion.

She was born in New York on April 12, 1926.



Avedisian School students attentively listen to Mr. Gregorian's remarks

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COMMUNITY NEWS

AMAA Hosts Conference on Rescue of Armenians in the Middle East 1915-1923

YEREVAN/PARAMUS — On November 8-9, the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (AGMI), sponsored by the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), and with support of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, organized a two-day International Conference titled “The Rescue of Armenians in the Middle East 1915-1923.”

The conference officially opened at the AGMI Conference Hall. Father Asoghik Karapetyan, a Representative of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin and Director of Museums and Archives, conveyed greetings from Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians. “We should always raise the question that humanity and self-sacrifice have been a guiding principle for Armenians in our lives today and at all times as an important assurance of national existence. Although our people have been brutally massacred in their Homeland, they were able with their unique ability of resurrection to continue to create and to build, and the role of the devotees is great in that process.”

In his remarks, AGMI Director Harutyun Marutyan mentioned that the idea of this conference was born out of a bilateral collaboration between the AGMI and the AMAA. “The purpose of this conference is to present the fate of those displaced due to the Armenian Genocide, and to highlight the activities of Armenian and international organizations and individuals who played a great role of rescuing Armenian refugees, particularly children and women.

“Why in 2019?” asked Marutyan. “Because exactly 100 years ago the ‘One Armenian, One Gold’ movement started, when thousands of Armenian orphans were in captivity and on the brink of Islamization. Armenian intellectuals realized that the future of the Armenian nation is greatly dependent on these orphans and they need to do everything possible to save these children who will become the citizens of tomorrow’s Armenia.”

AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian welcomed conference participants with a video message where he said: “It is the irony of history that we are experiencing today. While we are here at the opening of this conference, for the last seven years we have been witnessing new atrocities in Syria by the same brutal power whose victims today are the progeny of those rescued in the post Genocide era. The perpetrator and the crime have not rested. It is necessary to be watchful and to expect evil. Therefore, as a nation we must be ready for the task of salvage.”

Samvel Karabekyan, advisor to the Ministry of Education and Science, and Raymond Harutyun Kevorkyan, chairman of the AGMI Foundation Board of Trustees, also welcomed participants to the conference.

On the first day of the conference, the exhibition titled “From National Unity to Revival,” exclusively featured Armenian contributions to the salvation of Genocide survivors. AGMI Academic Secretary Dr. Narine Margaryan considered this Exhibition unique and the success of various operations organized for the rescue of Armenian orphans was conditioned by their national and ideological unity. “In this work

there were apostles, men who clearly understood the seriousness of the moment and were steadfast in their work. Some came in the form of donations, others gathered Armenians from the wilderness, and others took care of them in orphanages,” she said inviting the audience to be acquainted with the materials about these people and organizations.

Other themes throughout the exhibition included the activities of Armenian organizations — the Armenian General Benevolent Union, Armenian National Union, Armenian

1933, Shirajian and his wife assisted women and girls who had survived the massacres. As time and circumstances dictated, they gave the orphaned children new names, opened a school for them to learn languages, receive religious education and be re-Armenianized. They also took great responsibility to help the girls get married. They carefully chose suitable mates for them to form happy families and have good Armenian children.

The theme of AGMI Academic Secretary Dr. Narine Margaryan’s presentation was “The

participants visited the Armenian Genocide Monument of Dzidzernagapert and laid flowers near the eternal flames.

The second day of the conference was held at the Karekin I Educational Center of Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin. Twenty-three scholars from Armenia, France, Germany, Lebanon and the United States addressed details of the rescue missions for those who survived the Genocide.

Researcher at Yerevan State University, Genocide scholar Dr. Hilmar Kaiser’s report,



Conference participants lay flowers at the Armenian Genocide Monument of Tsitsernakabert.

Orphans Care of Egypt, Armenian Organization of Mesopotamia, Armenian Red Cross, the works of Armenian Evangelicals and Catholics, as well as orphanages from the governments of the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian SSR. The Exhibition also included unique archival materials, such as documents, photos and exhibits mainly from the collections of the AGMI, and collections from the National Archives of Armenia, Yerevan History Museum and AGMI staff member Mihran Minasyan. Orphanage memories, which included photos, migration routes, orphanage items and handwork items from the orphans, which until now were never seen, proved very interesting to those in attendance.

Director of the Armenian Studies Program in Modern and Classical Languages and Literature at the University of California, Northridge Dr. Vahram Shemmassian, delivered a report about the pro-Armenian activities of Rev. Aharon Shirajian who forcibly rescued kidnapped Armenian women and children in Syria during the Armenian Genocide. Shirajian had been the superintendent of the Karen Ephesus Shelter of Britain’s Friends of Armenian Organization and he continued the work of that organization beginning in 1922. Until

Armenian orphanage in Aleppo from 1915 to 1924.”

Margaryan presented the history of the Armenian orphanage, launched in July 1915, and the role of the institution in rescuing orphans. She detailed the activities of the orphanage in the areas of education, health, finance, artisanship, caregiving, as well as the issues the orphanage faced and how they were resolved. Margaryan also touched upon the regional political events of this period which had a direct impact on the orphanage.

“The Armenian orphanage in Aleppo started its activities on July 31, 1915 under the leadership of Rev. Aharon Shirajian who was born in Marash. He received his education at Central Turkey College in Aintab and attended the Marash Theological Seminary. In 1912 he went to Edinburgh to continue his theological studies. He witnessed the brutal politics of the Hamidian, Young Turk and Kemalist periods. He came to Aleppo after he was deported from Marash, where he founded the orphanage. This was the period when the Ottoman Empire consistently pursued the policy of exterminating the Armenians. Dr. Assadour Altounian and his daughter, Nora Altounian, played an important role in the establishment of the orphanage. They used their personal connections and tried to solve the health and wellbeing issues of the orphans.”

Director of the Center for Armenian Diaspora Studies of Haigazian University of Beirut Dr. Antrang Dakessian’s theme was “Navigation Between Dreams, Competing Postures, and New Life: *Hayasdani Gochnag* 1919-1923.”

In January 1919, the 20-year-old *Gochnag* was renamed *Hayasdani Gochnag*. This renaming was related to the mission of the proclamation of the Republic of Armenia, the belief in the emergence of a new Armenia, and the mission of the newspaper to summon Armenian pilgrims to Armenia. The articles, reports and call for Armenian national sentiments published in *Hayasdani Gochnag* gave their results. As a way of public advice, the *Gochnag*’s mission was to inspire Armenians with new vigor, new faith and dreams. In his report, Dr. Dakessian summarized editorials from the 1919 *Gochnags* (over 150 editorials) and their main opinions.

Following the first session of the conference,

“Religious Activities of the Protestants in the Ottoman Fourth Army from 1915 to 1917,” touched upon Evangelical figures such as Koundakjian, Mhudian, Haidostian and Revs. Eskidjian and Shirajian, who undertook the task of rescuing those displaced by the Armenian Genocide in Hama and Aleppo. During these rescue missions, Evangelicals also suffered casualties.

Kaiser particularly remembered Araksya Jebejian and Beatrice Royer and was the only reporter who also touched upon Turkish individuals who opposed the massacres and helped the displaced. In particular, he presented the charitable actions and assistance provided to Armenians by the Ottoman Fourth Army. He told a noteworthy story of an Ottoman person who oversaw one of Aintab’s shelters. At the beginning of World War I, he expressed a desire to become a Christian and after the end of the War, he left the Army and Turkey with an Armenian woman and eventually lived in Syria in an Evangelical community.

Other participants of the conference also presented the fates of the displaced, as a result of the Armenian Genocide, highlighting activities of additional Armenian and international organizations and individuals involved in the rescue mission of Armenian refugees, children and women.

At the conclusion of the conference, Marutyan summarized the work done and highly appreciated the fact that “if until now we have always emphasized the role of the foreigners in the rescue mission of the Armenians, this two-day conference emphasized the role of Armenians in the rescue mission. Moreover, these Armenians were both individuals and large and small organizations, which in today’s terminology have taken on the role of the Ministry of Refugees and have accomplished great organizational work.”

The conference also revealed many issues that still need to be researched. “The second century of Armenian Genocide Study is commencing, and old questions require new answers. There are also new questions that require timely answers,” said Marutyan. He also mentioned that three international conferences and two exhibitions are planned for next year.

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Ara and Pamela Gechijian of Massachusetts donated \$100 to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Exploring the Meaning of ‘Communion’ at ACYOA’s 2019 National Fall Retreat

By Arsen Yelegen

KANSASVILLE, Wis. — The Eastern Diocese held its second annual ACYOA Seniors National Fall Retreat from November 8 to 10, bringing together 57 young adults from 21 parishes across the country and Canada. Organized by the ACYOA Central Council, the gathering took place at the St. Iakovos Retreat Center here.

The theme of this year’s retreat was “In Communion: Exploring the Need for Human Connection.” Participants explored what it means to be “in communion” with one another and how we can all build up the body of Christ through our fellowship with the people around us.

The Primate of the Eastern Diocese, Bishop Daniel Findikyan, took part in the retreat along with several other clergy from the Diocese including Fr. Tavit Boyajian (Sts. Joachim and Anne Church, Palos Heights, IL); Fr. Sahak and Yn. Lana Kashian (St. George Church, Waukegan, IL and Holy Resurrection Church, S. Milwaukee, WI); Fr. Hovnan Khoja-Eynatyan (St. James Church, Palos Heights, IL); Fr. Tadeos Barseghyan (Pastor of St. Sahag Church, St. Paul, MN); Fr. Avedis and Yn. Karen Kalayjian (St. Mesrob Church, Racine, WI); and Fr. Andreas and Yn. Nune Garabedian (St. Gregory Church, Chicago).

Findikyan led the first session of the weekend, and he laid the foundation for the retreat and all subsequent sessions with a discussion about the Armenian Orthodox understanding of the phrase “In Communion.” Bishop Daniel pushed participants to think of communion in a new way and challenged the participants to share the calling we have in “Building Up the Body of Christ” in our daily lives.

In a presentation about strengthening spiri-



Participants from across the Eastern Diocese hugging goodbye after a wonderful weekend retreat, Back row (L to R): Lexi Herosian, Sona Dagley, Nick Tashjian, Alina Grigorian, Melissa Mardoian, Kareen Kaltakdjian; Front row (L to R): Sophia Kapreilian, Alaina Kamalian, Jordan Reid

tual relationships, Fr. Andreas Garabedian discussed how everyday lives can make us feel as if we are “running on empty.” Garabedian provided participants with tools to help strengthen their relationships with God in an increasingly hectic world.

Jennifer Morris (Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries) gave a presentation on the importance of human connection and the difference between healthy and unhealthy rela-

tionships, telling participants of ways to forge fulfilling relationships. Participants split up into small groups based on areas of their current lives to discuss their everyday relationships.

Participants also had a chance to hear from a panel of their peers about romantic relationships. Panelists ranged from married to single to dating, and they provided a comfortable and safe place to discuss their own relationships and how faith played a role in strengthening them. Participants were then split into groups to further discuss their own relationships and the value of centering our relationships on Christ.

Ani Arzumanyan (Sts. Joachim and Anne Church, Palos Heights) and Lucine Boloyan (St. James Church, Watertown) spoke about their summer experiences on the ACYOA Armenia Service Project (ASP) and the Young Adult Pilgrimage to Jerusalem, respectively.

Kathryn Ashbahian (Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries) led a presentation on the importance of self-care. She discussed the benefits of creating healthy relationships with ourselves in order to enhance our relationships with others. She also offered tools for self-care. Participants then split into groups to discuss the role that the Church plays in personal growth and development.

Prayer and Worship

Throughout the retreat, attendees joined in morning and evening prayer services, led by the Primate. Sermons were given by Fr. Avedis Kalayjian (pastor of St. Mesrob Church, Racine) and Subdeacon Adam Bullock (St. Nersess seminary).

The Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning was celebrated by Fr. Tadeos Barseghyan (pastor of St. Sahag Church, St. Paul). He offered a sermon about the pursuit of divine happiness that left participants feeling rejuvenated.

The retreat included a service project that was explained by longtime Diocesan pastor (now retired) Fr. Yeprem Kelegian. It involved writing postcards to a local parishioner who is currently incarcerated. Participants were encouraged to return back to their parishes and ask their pastors if there were additional oppor-

tunities to help the elderly, shut-ins, or those that need outreach.

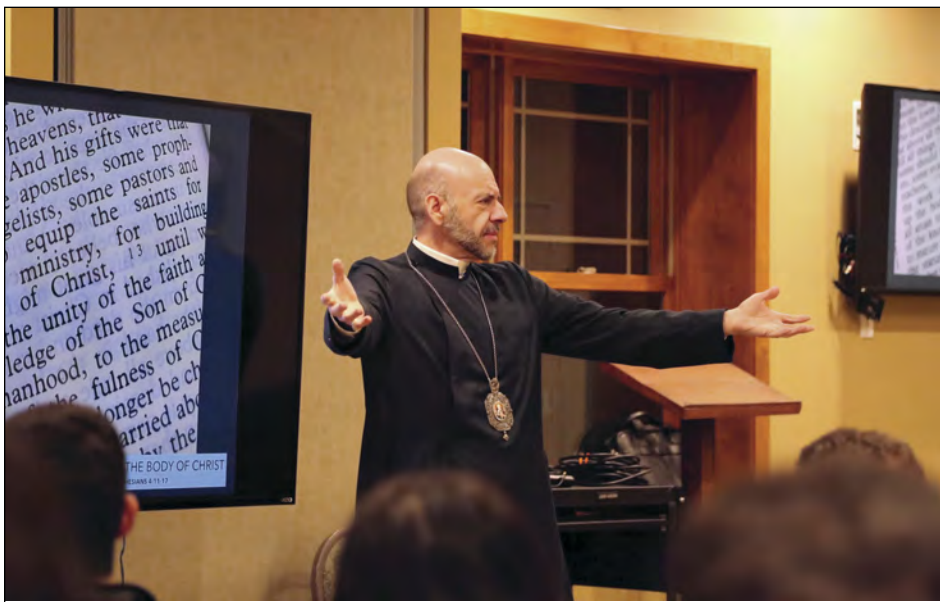
During their free time on Saturday, participants took advantage of the beautiful weekend weather and visited the on-site farm, which was home to horses, goats, alpacas and peacocks. Clergy were also available for “Clergy Chats” with the participants, if they wanted to ask questions and have deeper conversations.

Before departing for home, participants in the ACYOA Seniors National Fall Retreat reflected on their experience.

“To describe the weekend as fun would be an understatement,” said Jordan Reid (St. Mesrob Church, Racine). “It was such a learning experience about our faith, fellow Christian relationship experiences, self-care, and how to handle stress. Being able to see our best friends and making new friends makes these types of events the best times of the year. I am beyond grateful that it was offered at no cost to the participants, making it easy for people far away to make it.”

“My heart is so full this weekend,” said Kareen Kaltakjian (St. Garabed Church, Baton Rouge). “I didn’t know what I was getting myself into, signing up for an ACYOA Fall Retreat, after being away from the community for so long... but wow! I am so glad I did. Actually talking face-to-face with others about everything was incredible, including the need for human connection, relationships, faith, God, self-care, and most importantly the Armenian Church.”

“The retreat had exceptional impact on me



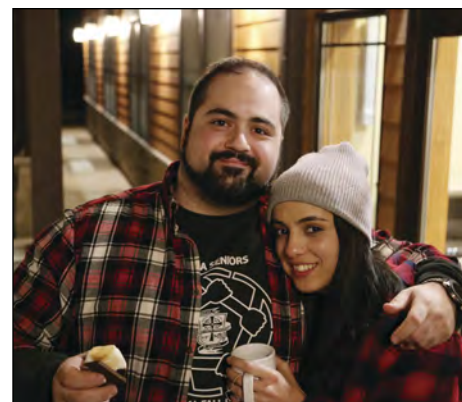
Primate Bishop Daniel Findikyan



Fr Yeprem Kelegian, retired clergyman of the Eastern Diocese, presenting service project and talking about FAR and ayo! service and outreach opportunities



Ani Arzumanyan and Peacock during a visit to the barn during free time, Sts. Joachim and Anne, Palos Heights, Illinois



Fr. Andreas and Yn. Nune Garabedian enjoying an evening campfire with the participants, St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church, Chicago, Illinois

in the sense that I learned new approaches and viewpoints for religion in general,” said Artyom Kosyan (St. James Church, Evanston). “It opened my mind for questioning everything, including religion, being an essential part of our lives. Since then, I have watched several panel discussions among wise religious figures and atheist scientists so that I have a better understanding of the necessity of religion.”

“This was my second year attending the ACYOA National Fall Retreat and my expectations have been exceeded again,” said Alice Nahapetyan (St. Sarkis Church, Carrollton, TX).



COMMUNITY NEWS

Sen. Sanders Meets With Los Angeles Armenian-American Representatives

LOS ANGELES — Representatives from the Armenian Council of America (ACA) along with the Armenian Assembly of America, Southern California Armenian Democrats (SCAD), and the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) met with Senator Bernie Sanders on November 16 to discuss key issues of importance to the Armenian American community ahead of the 2020 presidential primary.

ACA Board Member Harry Unell gave a brief introduction of the organization and explained the scope of work and mission of ACA. “We have worked on legislation from Genocide recognition to the formal recognition of Artsakh, including advocating for democracy in Turkey and Azerbaijan, as their democracy directly impacts Armenia,” said Unell.

“ACA also has a legal aid program which aims to assist citizens and non-citizens who are economically challenged or below the poverty line, including providing resources for undocumented Armenians currently residing in the U.S.”

Christine Aghakhanian, ACA Board Member, thanked Sanders for his support of U.S. economic aid to Armenia. She reiterated the enormous strides the Armenian government is making towards economic equality and transparency of government in light of the recent Velvet Revolution and urged Sanders along with his colleagues in the Senate to continue their support.

“We hope, if elected, you will be the first U.S. President to visit Armenia,” Aghakhanian added.

During the meeting Sanders was gifted an Armenian Genocide Centennial forget-me-not flower pin which he wore during the rally attended by thousands at Woodrow Wilson High School immediately following the meeting.

“Overall we had a very productive meeting with Senator



Sen. Bernie Sanders meets with representatives of the Armenian-American community.

Sanders who is genuinely interested in hearing about the needs and concerns of our community,” said ACA Chairman Sevak Khatchadorian. “We look forward to continued dialogue with his office” he added.

“We had a productive conversation with Senator Sanders, discussing a range of issues of concern to the Armenian American community in the Western United States,” remarked ANCA-WR Vice Chairman Raffi Kassabian, Esq. “We thanked the Senator for his historic and principled support for genocide recognition as a co-sponsor of S.Res.150 and urged him to advocate for honest genocide recognition and justice in the Senate in light of recent efforts in the Senate to enforce Turkey’s gag-rule,” he continued. “In light of past presidential candidates’ empty promises, the community has restructured its form

of advocacy and expects all candidates to deliver discrete actions that manifest themselves prior to Election Day instead of after taking office.”

As a member of the U.S. House of Representatives (1991-2007) and U.S. Senate (2008-Present), Bernie Sanders has supported Armenian Genocide legislation, efforts to secure Turkey’s return of confiscated Armenian and other Christian churches, voted to restrict financial assistance and military sales to Turkey, signed Senator Bob Menendez’s letter opposing cuts to U.S. aid for Artsakh de-mining, and supported Section 907 restrictions on U.S. assistance to Azerbaijan due to its ongoing blockade and aggression against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

The California Democratic Party presidential primary will be held on March 3, 2020.

SAS Awards Research and Travel Grants to Graduate Students

FRESNO — The Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) has chosen its awardees for the SAS “Graduate Research and Conference Grants Program for MA and PhD Students” for Fall 2020.

Established in 2019, the aim of the Grant Program is to provide resources for graduate students to conduct research and present papers at conferences. Grants of up to \$500.00 are awarded semi-annually to eligible graduate students. The inaugural group of applicants was chosen by a selection committee composed of members of the SAS Executive Council.

Irem Gülersönmez is a PhD student in the Department of History of Art at Birkbeck College, University of London. She is working on the historical imagery of violence of the late 19th- and early 20th-century Ottoman Armenians, who became victims of numerous massacres prior to the Genocide. She applied for a travel grant in order to present a paper entitled “Witnessing the Catastrophe: A Case Study of the German Consulate in Erzurum in 1915” at the Middle East Studies Association Annual (MESA) Conference held November 14-17, 2019, at the Sheraton New Orleans, Louisiana.

“The SAS grant allows me to attend the prestigious MESA conference where I will have the opportunity to share my research with a wide range of scholars of Armenian and Ottoman studies, as well as specialists in the field of visual studies,” said Gülersönmez.

Sose Grigoryan is a PhD student at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Armenia. The topic of her study is “A Religious Culture of Armenian Catholics,” which presents holidays, rituals, weddings, and funerals in the South Caucasus, particularly in the Shirak, Lori regions, as well as Catholic Armenians living in Javakhk, Georgia. She applied for a travel grant in order to conduct research in all the Armenian Catholic villages of Georgia.

“An SAS fellowship will enable me to pursue my goals and continue my academic

research and visit all of the Catholic communities. I will have an opportunity to have meetings and conversations with the population of these places and gather valuable information about their old and new ways of life, rites, celebrations, and other activities. I will attend their weddings, burial and funeral rites, and will conduct interviews with their elder population,” said Grigoryan.

Varak Ketssemanian is a PhD candidate in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University. Ketssemanian works on late Ottoman history with a particular focus on the internal administration of the Armenian community. His dissertation focuses on the development of constitutional practices and bodies among Armenians in the provinces, and their impact on inter- and intra-communal relations. He applied for a travel grant in order to present a paper entitled “The Armenian Constitutional Order in the Late Ottoman Empire: A Framework for Analysis” at a workshop in Istanbul on “Constitutionalism in the Ottoman and Qajar Empires in Istanbul.” The workshop will take place at the Institut Français d’Études Anatoliennes on January, 16-17, 2020.

“With the generous support of the Society for Armenian Studies, I will be participating at a workshop called ‘Histories of Constitutionalism in the Ottoman and Qajar Empires, ca. 1850-1911,’ organized at the Institut Français d’Études Anatoliennes in Istanbul in January 2020. As a PhD candidate working on Ottoman-Armenian constitutionalism, this will be a great opportunity to put my dissertation project and archives in discussion with the broader intellectual and social currents of the period. Thus, the SAS fellowship is essential as it provides me with an access to an academic community where I would be able to present my work to a larger scholarly audience and get the necessary critical feedback,” stated Ketssemanian.

Garine Palandjian is a PhD Candidate in the educational policy and evaluation Doctoral program at Arizona State University, in Tempe. She is working on a dissertation

titled “Rethinking Borders and Identities in Armenian Education.” She applied for a travel grant in order to conduct research in Istanbul on how borders – and memories of bordering practices and experiences–redefine education and identities.

“It is a great honor for me to be a recipient of the Society of Armenian Research and Travel Grant 2019. The SAS scholarship allows me the opportunity to realize my personal and academic goals in conducting my dissertation fieldwork for my dissertation. I look forward to conducting fieldwork for my dissertation, ‘Rethinking Borders and Identities in Armenian Education’ in Istanbul, Turkey in February 2020,” said Palandjian.

Megan Dixon is an MA student of history of art and architecture at Tufts University. She applied for a travel grant in order to present a paper entitled “‘You Shall Surround Me with Songs of Deliverance’: Liturgy and the Promise of Salvation at Aght’amar” at the “Visualizing Sound & Silence in Art & Architecture” 45th Annual Cleveland Symposium, Case Western Reserve University and the Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland.

Leah Marangos is a PhD student in Byzantine art and architecture at the University of California, Los Angeles. She has applied for a travel grant in order to conduct research at the Church of St. John at the monastery of Gandzasar in the autonomous region of Nagorno Karabagh, Armenia.

“The funding provided by the SAS Grant will allow me to travel and present my paper on Aght’amar at the 45th Annual Cleveland Symposium. Not only will this opportunity allow me to develop my skills and experience as a young art historian, it also makes possible the privilege of highlighting a beloved Armenian monument at this reputable conference. The increasing financial pressures of higher education, particularly within the humanities, is a growing obstacle for graduate students. It is because of the generosity of groups such as the Society for Armenian Studies that students such as myself may con-

tinue to research and contribute to the academic fields we are passionate about,” said Marangos.

“We were pleasantly surprised with the number of the applicants this year,” noted SAS President Bedross Der Matossian. “The pool represented highly qualified candidates who are conducting novel research on different aspects in the field of Armenian Studies. This is testimony that more and more young-generation scholars are delving into uncharted territories within the field of Armenian Studies. The aim of SAS is to increase the dollar amount of the grants in order to be able to fund more graduate students. I urge the community to support the SAS graduate grants by donating to the Society or establishing named grants.”

The next application cycle will have a deadline of April 1, 2020.

The SAS Graduate and Research Grant was made possible through the support of the Armenian Studies Program, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; the Armenian Research Center, University of Michigan, Dearborn; the Meghrouni Family Presidential Chair in Armenian Studies, University of California, Irvine; the Hovannisian Chair of Modern Armenian History, University of California, Los Angeles; the Arthur H. Dadian and Ara Oztemel Chair of Armenian Art & Architecture, Tufts University; the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR); the Armenian Communities Department, Gulbenkian Foundation; the Armenian Studies Program, California State University, Fresno; the Robert Aram, Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marian Mugar Chair in Armenian Genocide Studies, Clark University; the Armenian Studies Program, University of California, Berkeley; and the Institute of Armenian Studies, University of Southern California.

For membership information or more information on the Society for Armenian Studies, visit the SAS website, at societyforarmenianstudies.com.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Lord Ara Darzi Named Aurora Prize Selection Head

DARZI, from page 1

Health Policy Leader

Aside from being in the House of Lords, he is an important figure in the field of global health policy, helping design healthcare systems throughout the world. Dr. Darzi serves as Director of the Institute of Global Health Innovation at Imperial College London, hold the Paul Hamlyn Chair of Surgery at Imperial College London, Institute of Cancer Research and Executive Chair of the World Innovation Summit for Health in Qatar, and is a Consultant Surgeon at Imperial College Hospital National Health Service (NHS) Trust and the Royal Marsden NHS Trust. He was a health minister for Great Britain from 2007 to 2009. He has been a member of the Privy Council of the United Kingdom since June 2009 and was awarded the Order of Merit in January 2016.

He has published more than 1,000 peer-reviewed research papers to date and continues to work actively as a surgeon, specializing in minimally-invasive and robot-assisted surgeries.

On October 17, Dr. Darzi gave a keynote speech on “Converging Technological Innovations into Medicine,” as part of the second annual Global Innovation Forum (GIF) called “Transforming Intelligence,” organized by the Foundation for Armenian Science and Technology (FAST) at the Dvin Music Hall in Yerevan. FAST (<https://fast.foundation>) wants to spur technological innovation and scientific advancement in Armenia and beyond, while GIF’s stated goal is to act “as a platform to bridge academia, industry, governments, policymakers, international organizations and financial institutions, assembling the brightest minds and executives from diverse worlds to shape the future of scientific and technological transformation.” Armenia benefits as the host of this interaction.

After his formal talk, Darzi explained why he is on the board of FAST: “I sit on many [boards] in life but I decided to sit on FAST because I believe in what FAST is trying to do. I believe in the founders of FAST. I think they have real-



Lord Ara Darzi speaking at the Aurora Prize ceremony in Yerevan’s Freedom Square (Aram Arkun photo)

FAST foundation, at technology like AI [Artificial Intelligence], and what its role is in terms of healthcare delivery, because you can again leapfrog some of the big challenges being faced, like having a trained workforce here.”

Darzi was optimistic, saying, “I have seen a lot of good leadership, a lot of good will. The resources are limited, we know that, always limited, but the use of disruptive technology to leapfrog is the way forward. Finally, all of these things come down to leadership and commit-

ment. What I have seen, certainly from the health minister, who is a public health doc[tor], and also his cabinet, is that there is a real focus in this new government on improving the health of the nation.”

When asked whether he thought a public or private type of health care system would work best in Armenia, he replied that he does not see a difference between one or the other. Instead, he said, “What I think is critical to have in a health care system which is going to become mature is universal health care coverage. I think the moral duty we have is to provide coverage to everyone.” Within that coverage, he said, one could have a mixture of private and public and the voluntary or non-profit sector, and such diversity would be healthy.

For him, the ability to access health care irrespective of ability to pay is the most important moral principal of a health care system. He said, “Armenia is moving towards universal health coverage. I have certainly seen the Armenian minister’s passion is this. He is working with the WHO [World Health Organization].”

Darzi believes that universal health care coverage could and should be achieved everywhere. He emphasized that “I think health care and education are universal human rights.” The United States too, he said, is moving in this direction, and said that as the richest and most

Armenian Commitments, Humanitarian Work

Darzi was born in Baghdad but went to medical school in Ireland. He is descended from survivors of the Armenian Genocide. When asked whether he has time to remain involved in the Armenian community in England, he responded, “Well, I’m Armenian. The answer is yes. I have many Armenian friends, as I have non-Armenian friends. I don’t see it that way. I am very proud to be Armenian.” He added that he is very proud to be British and also to work with many people around the world.

While he works in Qatar, he said that he does not get involved in Middle Eastern politics. When he works on international issues, he said, “The UK government is well aware of what I do internationally or globally. They are always informed of what I do. They have been exceptionally supportive. I am very proud of what I do and I am very proud to be doing it in some cases on their behalf and in most cases on my behalf.”

His prominence in the international medical field at times has led to other types of humanitarian work. This is what happened in Myanmar, where he serves as a member of the board of trustees of the Rangoon General Hospital Reinvigoration Charitable Trust. In 2017, he was appointed a member of the International Advisory Board that was established to oversee the implementation of the recommendations on the future of Myanmar’s Rakhine State made by former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan.

In May 2019, his efforts at negotiation, together with those of Amal Clooney, on behalf of two imprisoned Reuters reporters, helped lead to their pardon and release from prison. The journalists had been investigating the massacre of 10 Rohingya men prior to their arrest. Darzi also called for the return of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees to their homes in Myanmar.

Concerning ongoing violence and genocide in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world, he

said, in a general sense that “My own views about this: it is always tragic to take value out of life, and the only way to address wars, conflicts and difficulties is by reconciliation, sitting around the table and addressing your problems, and that requires leadership. It saddens me when that does not happen.”

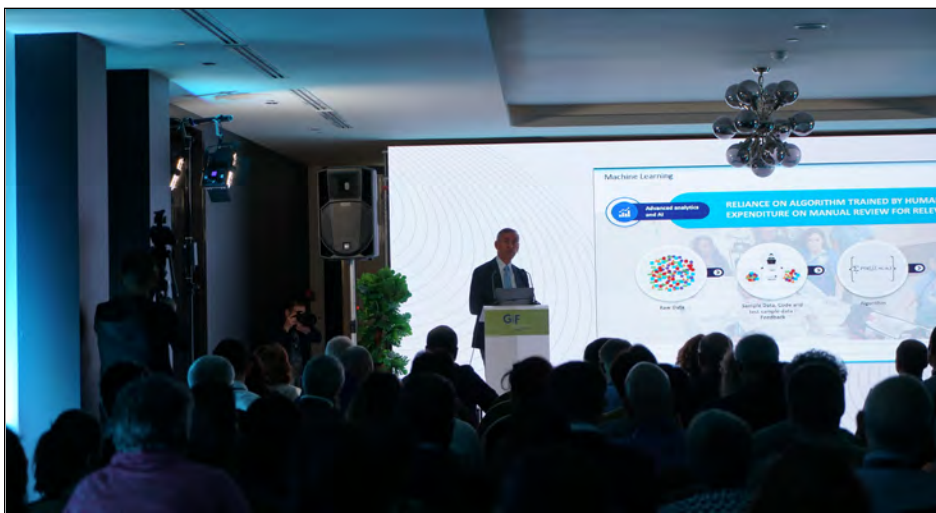
Darzi is continuing his efforts at recognition of the Armenian Genocide in Great Britain. He wrote on November 17 that as Britain was in the midst of a general election and parliament is in recess, the issue will be reexamined after the general election to determine the best path possible. He said, “The memories of the victims are in the memory of every Armenian, and every non-Armenian that I know of, around the world.” Darzi also felt that while it is important to remember, Armenians must also move on and think about the future.

He is beginning a new role as head of the Aurora Prize Selection Committee, and noted that it is too early to say what changes, if any, he might bring to it. However, he said, as “Aurora has had a remarkable impact so far,” he planned at the least to keep the momentum going.

He spoke about the difficulty of the selection process as he has experienced it so far, stating, “It is virtually impossible to differentiate between people who have made huge sacrifices in their life to help mankind. That is my starting point. Ultimately there has to be one winner because that is what we said. But in my books, when I leave any meeting, any CV or any application that I have read, from my perspective, that person is a hero. Between heroes it is very difficult to identify the big hero, but I follow consensus with many of the other trustees, but it is always a difficult decision.”

Darzi can be outspoken in his opinions, and resigned in July 2019 from the Labour Party, along with two other members of the British parliament to protest anti-Semitism in the party. He said, “I had to think very hard about this and I did it with heavy heart, but there is no way I could tolerate anything, when it comes to anti-Semitism.” He added, “It is not just anti-Semitism, but includes others, like Islamophobia, which is another big issue. I decided that I do not want to be a part of that. I waited about a year to see if any changes would happen.” He remains an independent in the House of Lords, and continues to make his contributions. He said, “I tend to vote with my conscience and what I feel is right or wrong.”

When asked what may lie ahead for him, whether in politics or health care, he answered, “The only thing I have discovered is that there is no endpoint in terms of creating value or in terms of creating health value. We are living in very exciting times in terms of technology and innovation. My full energy goes into that and in helping my patients. That is really what matters. That is what I wake up in the morning for.”



Lord Ara Darzi speaking at the Global Innovation Forum in Yerevan (Aram Arkun photo)

ly gone out of their way to make a huge commitment, not just financial commitment but intellectual commitment, in building this country [Armenia] in areas of science and innovation. It is a great privilege to be part of that...very, very busy sets of people, people like Noubar [Afeyan] and people like Ruben [Vardanyan], who could have millions of other things to do, are putting all their efforts and resources into getting FAST and its programs off the ground.”

He spoke more specifically about developing Armenia’s health system, which faces all the challenges that lower- and middle-income countries face, declaring: “I think what Armenia is doing, what I have seen of it, is that they are looking for leapfrogging through some disruptive technologies that are becoming available, which may get them to the endpoint quicker and cheaper. That is really what I think will be potentially the most accelerated way in developing a health system here.”

He gave an example which he used in his formal GIF speech of looking at behavioral sciences to increase the uptake of cancer screening, which has been dismal in Armenia. He said, “My understanding is that certainly in one cancer program they have increased the uptake by about 30-fold. That is huge. They are looking, as you will know, through the partnership of the

Arts & Living

Armenian Pianist Celebrates the Schumanns

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

FRANKFURT — “My name is Clara, Clara Wieck.” She stands in center stage, her hands clasped, dressed in an elegant blouse and long skirt, her dark hair pulled back to accentuate the fine features of her oval face. She greets the audience with a bright, wide smile and rushes to the grand piano, takes her place, raises her hands gracefully and plays a piece by Robert Schumann, her beloved Robert, whom she will marry. She is the 18-year-old Clara Wieck playing Schumann. She is Lusine Khachatryan playing Clara Wieck playing Robert Schumann.

This year Germany celebrates the 200th birthday of Clara Schumann, wife of the great musician, and herself not only a brilliant pianist but an accomplished composer. Lusine Khachatryan is an Armenian pianist, who has created a unique art form, the “piano-theatre,” which consist of a dramatic development on stage, combined with piano music. Her first work (2012) was inspired by Friedrich



Lusine Khachatryan

Schiller’s drama “Maria Stuart,” and was followed a year later by “Chopin: The piano is my second self.” That same year she composed the Schumann piece, and in 2015, “Nostalgia,” which deals with the Armenian soul and culture.

In her recent appearances on the German stage in Frankfurt and Potsdam, she thrilled audiences with her presentation of Clara Wieck, (who had taught at the Frankfurt conservatory). She depicts the young girl who is determined to follow her own dreams, despite her father’s opposition; she dramatizes the conflict with her father (who was both teacher and mentor), and her love for the young composer Robert, in a series of monologues, delivered with dramatic power and playful humor; she prances about, using creative stage business with a plethora of props — a suitcase with clothing; a packet of letters which she clutches to her chest, and swaying, murmurs, “a letter from my husband, my beloved Robert;” scores of music, among them a volume of études by Czerny — and returns again and again (amid acrobatics) to the piano, on which she performs selections from works that Schumann composed prior to their marriage.

see PIANIST, page 14



Writer/illustrator Anna Isabekyan

A New Western-Armenian Book Series for Children

NEW YORK — Roslin Press, a New York-based publishing house known for its Western Armenian publication of *The Chronicles of Narnia* recently announced its latest publication — *Piso*, an illustrated book series for children ages 2 and up. The first volume, *Pison Kesh Yeraz Ge Deshneh* (Piso Has a Bad Dream) deals with a very common occurrence in any household with young children. Little Piso sees a very scary dream and turns to his parents for safety.

The author/illustrator Anna Isabekyan has done something very unique in her debut work. She has created a highly interactive Armenian language children’s book. Rather than explicitly laying out the dream that Piso found so terrifying, she does not go into the details of this scary nightmare. She leaves that as a potential discussion between parent and child. The book thus can serve as a starting point for a child to feel comfortable describing his or her feelings with the parents.

The Western-Armenian version, edited by Nanor Mikayelian, uses vocabulary that is crisp, clear, and easily understood. This volume is perfect as a read-aloud to children 2 and up. Even better, the words and expressions have been selected such that it is even easily read by a 6-year old.

Piso is not only a fantastic addition to Western Armenian children’s literature, but with its beautiful illustrations, endearing prose, and interactive subject matter.

During a recent interview, Isabekyan explained why she wrote the book. “I have two little children at home. When my son was born, I would constantly read him stories. As he grew up, I noticed that he was very interested in the colorful pages that I would turn as I read the stories. The years quickly passed, and I noticed that the books grew up with him too — more challenging vocabulary, new characters, more complex stories. He is now 8-years-old and simply in love with books.

“I believe that it’s never too early to foster a love of reading in our children. Not only reading I suppose — but love of all art forms — of music, of drawing, of anything that requires mindful concentration to bring your vision to life.”

She added that she wanted the main animal in her book to be a cat so that Armenian kids could relate.

“It couldn’t be an elephant or a hippo for instance. Furthermore, I wanted to choose an animal that would be soft and caring. At first, I had considering the Gampr (the Armenian shepherd’s dog) or the brown bears of the Armenian highlands, but I settled upon the Van cat, since its cute endearing smile will surely win over the hearts of the little ones.”

For more information, visit <http://www.roslin.press/>



An illustration from the new book

Western Choir Assembly Holds Sacred Music Convention

VAN NUYS, Calif. — The Association of Armenian Church Choirs of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America (AACCCWD) held a three-day convention, November 8-10. The convention was a culminating success on behalf of outgoing Chairman Sevag Derderian whose long-lasting record has been to implement, maintain, and enhance education as a core tenant of the AACCCWD.

On Friday, November 8, the AACCCWD Central Council honored Father Shnork Demirjian for his years of dedication to the Armenian Apostolic Church and the AACCCWD during the convention’s opening-night banquet. The event featured remarks by Diocesan Primate Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, as well as outgoing Chairman Sevag Derderian, and 2019 honoree Fr. Shnork Demirjian. The evening’s attendance was a testament to the wide-spread support of Sevag Derderian and his culmination of over 15,000 traveled miles in his mission to share and promote the education and love for sacred music across the Western Diocese.

On Saturday, November 9, parishioners and church choir members from Southern and Central California, Arizona, and Washington participated in the 13th biennial assembly, lectures, workshops, and masterclasses within the sanctuary of Saint Peter Armenian Apostolic Church. Guest lecturers included: Sevag Derderian (Director, Armenian Sacred Music



Archbishop Derderian presents Dn. Allan Yeghia Jendian with a photograph in recognition of Deacon Allan’s many years (70) of dedicated service to the Armenian Church

Project; Chair MS/HS CalState LA Andriassian Guitar Festival, Competition, & Symposium), Dr. Ronald Sinanian (Resident Organist, St. Peter; Past-Dean, American Guild of Organists), Dr. Christopher Gravis (Professor, California State University Los Angeles).

The assembly meeting chaired by Deacon Allan Jendian incorporated delegates from across the Western Diocese and informed the assembly that Mr. Raffi Mikaelian will be the next Chairman of the AACCCWD. Mikaelian will be forming a central council under the guidance of Abp. Derderian within the coming weeks. The 14th biennial assembly and convention will take place in Fresno, California at St. Paul Armenian Apostolic Church. Sevag Derderian was unanimously elected Assembly Chair for the 14th biennial assembly alongside Deacon Allan Jendian and Deacon Dr. Sarkis Mesrobian (Co-Vice Chair), and Victoria Amran (Secretary).

Derderian’s lecture focused on the fundamentals of Armenian sacred music within the hearts and lives of the youth of the Armenian Apostolic Church. His masterclass later surrounded a workshop that divvied up participants and challenged them to expand their self and shared interpretations of junior choirs within our parishes. The goal of the masterclass was to think and treat “junior choirs” as a

see CHOIR, page 15



Erevan Choral Society Presents Holiday Concert

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – A Boston tradition for more than 50 years, the includes gifted and versatile singers from the Greater Boston communities is complemented by a professional 23-member orchestra.

The Erevan Choral Society will present its Christmas concert on December 15 at 3 p.m. at the Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Cambridge. This year’s program is also dedicated to the 150th anniversaries of Komitas and Hovhannes Tumanyan. Soloists are soprano Knarik Nerkararyan and tenor Giovanni Formizano.

The chorus was founded by Father Oshagan Minassian and performed its first concert on June 4, 1967. Since 2009, composer Konstantin Petrossian has served as its music director and conductor. Every year, the chorus has offered several varied, engaging and delightful musical repertoires that deeply connect audience and performers. The chorus has performed throughout New England, New York, New Jersey, and California to capacity crowds.

The Erevan Chorale and Orchestra has collaborated with Armenian composers for many years, and has premiered many of their pieces. The Chorale and Orchestra has always performed with renowned artists from Armenia and the Diaspora. The ensemble is the only one of its kind outside of Armenia and has made a great name for itself throughout the world.

The Erevan Chorale and Orchestra was recently awarded the Gold Medal from Yerevan City Hall by the order of Yerevan Mayor Hayk Marutyan in recognition of outstanding work. The medal arrived from Armenia via City Council Member and renowned vocalist Arthur Ispiryan, who also gave the ensemble the Mayor’s Order and relayed his best wishes.

The honorary Gold Medal will be ceremoniously presented to the Erevan Chorale and Orchestra during the concert.

Armenian Pianist Celebrates The Schumanns

PIANIST, from page 13

She opened with *Variations on the name Abegg Op. 1* (1829-1830) and followed with selections out of *Carneval Op. 9*. Always interspersed with short passages telling her story, she played 5 of the 8 *Phantasiestücke* (Fantasy pieces) Op. 12 (1836-1837). Following a brief intermission, she performed the entire *Carneval* (1833 and *Winter* 1834-1835), a virtuoso composition which she presented with technical



Lusine Khachatryan as Clara Wieck

mastery and mature expression. It was a wonderful tribute to Clara Wieck, who indeed performed Schumann’s works in piano tours throughout Europe and was known as one of the most accomplished pianists of her time. Musicians like Paganini, Chopin and Brahms expressed their admiration for her remarkable achievements. The Schumanns encouraged the younger Brahms, some of whose compositions were inspired by Clara. Now on the occasion of her birthday, her own extraordinary compositions have gained even wider attention.

Khachatryan comes from a musical family, and, like Clara, began playing the piano at home, under the guidance of her mother Irina Hovhannisyan and father Vladimir Khachatryan, who are both concert pianists and teachers. Her brother, Sergey Khachatryan is a world class vio-

Recipe Corner

Guest Recipe

by Christine Vartanian Datian



Samvel Hovhannisyan’s *Khash* Recipe

Armenian *Khash* (or *pacha*) is a traditional winter dish, and one of the tastiest Armenian national dishes. This distinctive soup has an interesting tradition of preparation, and also a unique way of eating

“A recipe for the Armenian soup called *khash*, at its most basic, goes something like this: Simmer cows’ hooves overnight. Serve.”

“Gelatinous beef trotters – flavored tableside with sinus-clearing add-ins like lemon, salt, vinegar and raw garlic – may sound like the last thing you’d reach for when nursing a hangover, but Armenians swear by *khash*’s panacean powers, particularly in the winter, when it’s customarily eaten. Across the small Caucasus nation, friends gather for morning-after *khash* feasts complete with ritualistic toasts and – as Anthony Bourdain discovered while shooting a “Parts Unknown” episode set to air in March 2018 – punishing hair-of-the-dog vodka shots.”

“Even the soup’s preparation is a production. The hooves must be plucked meticulously of any stray hairs and soaked in water for a day to remove impurities and funky odors. Then comes the cooking, an eight-hour simmer requiring hourly check-ins, lest the pot dry out. *Khash*-fueled breakfasts start around 9 a.m., which means cooks often literally lose sleep over the dish. ‘It’s a sacrifice,’ said Hovhannisyan. ‘That’s why the toast to the cook is so important.’”

“For the broth to remain white and nearly transparent, the mark of a well-made *khash*, Armenian cooks don’t add salt to the pot during cooking: It’s up to the end user how much salt and other traditional flavorings to mix into the finished soup. Armenians are known to add up to eight cloves’ worth of garlic to each portion. Two types of lavash, or flatbread, always grace the table: dry, for crumbling into the broth, and fresh, for draping over the bowl to seal in the heat. Purists, like Hovhannisyan, insist that fresh lavash – torn and folded for easy scooping – is the only acceptable utensil for eating *khash*, and that vodka, never wine or beer, is its only worthy sidekick.”

“Though *khash* is an ancient dish, mentioned in medieval Armenian texts as early as the 12th century, the ceremonial fanfare surrounding it appears to be a relatively recent phenomenon. ‘We haven’t found evidence that today’s *khash* rituals – the vodka drinking, the three toasts, the specific serving elements–were widespread or well-established before the Soviets arrived,’ said Ruzanna Tsaturyan, a researcher for Armenia’s National Academy of Sciences at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, adding that the few historical references that do exist characterize *khash* as wedding food.”

“That *khash* culture stems from ancient wedding traditions is one of many theories – and folktales. According to Hovhannisyan, some locals recount that a king popularized the dish after tasting it on a junket through the countryside, while others contend that the poor created *khash* out of necessity as the better cuts of meat were reserved for the rich.”

The name *khash* originates from the Armenian verb *khashél*, which means to boil. Besides, the Armenian root *khashn*, well testified in early medieval records means a herd of sheep or goats. The dish, initially called *khashoy*, is mentioned by a number of medieval Armenian authors, e.g. Grigor Magistros (11th century), Mkhitar Heratsi (12th century), and Yesayi Nchetsi (13th century).

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cows’ feet (trotters), washed, patted dry, picked over for stray hairs and split in two
- 30 cloves garlic, pounded in a mortar and pestle or minced and placed in a small bowl
- Salt, to taste
- Warmed flatbread, such as soft lavash or pita bread, for serving
- Optional garnishes: Chopped parsley, chopped cilantro, sliced lemons, sliced radishes, sliced pickles, chopped fresh chiles

PREPARATION

- On the morning of the day prior to your *khash* feast, place the trotters in a large bowl and cover with water. Refrigerate at least 10 and up to 48 hours, changing water every two hours or so for the first 10 hours.
- Place trotters in a heavy-bottomed pot and cover with 2 inches of water. Bring to boil over high heat. Regulate heat to maintain a simmer, and cook, uncovered, for 40 minutes.
- Drain water, return trotters to the pot, and cover with 2 inches of fresh water. Bring to boil over high heat, reduce to simmer, and cook, uncovered, for 6 to 8 hours, topping up water every hour or two, until trotters are soft and tender.
- Pour 2 cups of hot broth into the mortar or small bowl with the garlic and stir to combine.
- Serve the remaining broth and meat immediately, passing salt, garlic mixture (Armenians recommend 4-6 cloves’ worth per person), and optional garnishes.

Khash can be made ahead through step three and refrigerated for up to four days. To reheat, simmer for 20 minutes. Serves 6-8.

Reprinted in part from Smithsonian.com, *A Brief History of Khash, Armenia’s Love-It-or-Hate-It Hangover Cure* (Recipe), Cow foot soup: It’s what’s for breakfast, February 27, 2018, by Benjamin Kemper.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FT6qecrEiU>, “Anthony Bourdain - Khash in Armenia”

linist, with whom she regularly performs; they have released several CD’s, among them, the complete sonatas for piano and violin by Johannes Brahms (2013) and *My Armenia*, featuring works by Armenian composers (2015). If Lusine was the author, director, actress and pianist in her musical-theatrical creation, her

brother Sergey provided the lighting, while her parents were on hand to enjoy the performance. The family lives and works in Germany.

She studied at the Karlsruhe Music Academy from 2001 to 2008, and graduated with a double degree in piano and chamber music. As a soloist, she has won many prizes and has performed in

leading concert halls throughout the world, including at several famous music festivals in Europe and the US. She also appears with renowned chamber and symphony orchestras.

The *New York Times* pronounced her as “a superb pianist, with a big sound and a fiery technique...”





ARTS & LIVING

Laughs with AGBU Satamian Theatre Group

By Kevork Keushkerian

CANOGA PARK, Calif. — The 40th anniversary celebration of the founding of AGBU Satamian Theatre Group (formerly Ardavazt) on Saturday, November 9, at the Nazarian Hall of the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian High School was a smashing success. The stage and the hall were decorated by Manoog Satamian. The event was under the patronage of Vartan Nazerian.

The 500-strong audience was mesmerized by the well-organized, high-caliber program. It was put together by the AGBU Satamian Theatre Committee.

Notable among the attendees were Sinan Sinanian and Yervant Demirdjian of the AGBU Central Board, Benefactors Vartan Nazerian, Nazareth Kevonian and Harout Bronozian.

Dr. Krikor Simonian, chairman of the committee, gave a brief history of the theatre group, cited its mission, which is to keep the Armenian language and culture alive, and mentioned that



Krikor Satamian

so far, the group had produced 55 plays, 3 operettas, 3 concerts and 5 stand-up comedies.

A musical program was rendered by singers Salpi Mayilian, Roupen Telounts, and his music school students. Three actors and a stage decorator were honored for life time achievement, and six actors and actresses were honored for long careers in acting.

The two benefactors also received certificates of appreciation. Sinan Sinanian handed the certificate to Vartan Nazerian, and Yervant Demirdjian handed the certificate to Nazareth Kevonian.

The highlight of the evening was the entertainment provided by Krikor Satamian. Half an hour of heart-felt laughter was the order of the evening. An impromptu appearance by Dikran Ekizian, Krikor's classmate, added to the jovial atmosphere with a comical dialogue.

Ekizian presented Satamian with a cast iron statue of the actor's laughing face, a symbol of dramatic arts, that he had made himself for the occasion.

At the end, the audience was more than pleased for an evening of fun, food and comradery.

Western Choir Assembly Holds Sacred Music Convention

CHOIR, from page 13

living organization that can be adapted and implemented uniquely depending on the surrounding resources available to each parish. At the conclusion of his class, Derderian announced the launch of his new endeavor the "Armenian Sacred Music Project" (www.armeniansacredmusic.com), where he will continue to engrave, score, record, and provide educational materials pertaining to the hymns, introits, and variables of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Sinianian presented a lecture on "The Role of the Organ in the Armenian Divine Liturgy." He

provided a concise yet detailed summary overview of the organ as an instrument and how since the adaption of the liturgy set for SATB, it has played an integral role between the fundamental foundation of not only the choir but the deacons and the parish priest. He demonstrated several methods of creating continuity and the finite balance of phrasing, expression, and instrumentation with several selections from Yegmalian's Divine Liturgy.

Dr. Christopher Gravis provided an inspirational journey into the vocal depths of choral singers as he brought together glorious harmony from masterclass participants. His attention



Archbishop Derderian presents Sevag Derderian with a replica of Holy Ekmadzin in recognition of his outstanding service as Choir Central Council Chair

to expression, phrasing, and dynamics allowed for a breath of revitalized energy on behalf of vocalists and their subsequent attention and care for detail in choral music. He commanded the class with sight-singing, pitch, intonation, and choral singing as he introduced technique and passion into his selected repertoire.

On Sunday, November 10, Archpriest Shnork Demirjian celebrated the Divine Liturgy with Sevag Derderian conducting

more than 30 choir members and multiple hymns by Komitas in honor of his 150th anniversary. During Repose of the Soul, the AACWD prayed for those instrumental musicians within the life and legacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church as well as deceased members of the AACWD.

The 14th Biennial Assembly & Convention will be held in November 2021 at Saint Paul Armenian Apostolic Church in Fresno.



Cake Cutting by Honoree Fr. Shnork Demirjian, surrounded by, l to r, Maral Posdaljian, Lucy Tashjian, Primate Archbishop Derderian, Honoree Fr. Shnork, and Yeretgin Lydia Demirjian



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COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

The Fallout from the Trump-Erdogan Summit

By Edmond Y. Azadian

International relations have their own logic. No matter how chummy heads of states may appear with each other publicly, their policies will continue along their course, based on national interests.

The meeting on November 13 between Presidents Donald Trump and Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the White House was long planned. But there was strong bipartisan opposition from Congress, which had sought to rescind Mr. Erdogan's invitation.

Erdogan himself publicly cast doubt over making the trip, after the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed House Resolution 286, recognizing the Armenian Genocide, on October 29. But there were compelling reasons to bring the two sides together, because the erstwhile allies and fellow NATO members had been drifting apart dramatically and straining the relationship to the breaking point. What happened on the Syrian-Turkish border after the withdrawal of US forces only exacerbated the situation, whereby allies and enemies were hard to distinguish.

Despite his advisors' opposition, President Trump was threatening to pull out US forces from Syria, where the various forces faced tremendous challenges and confusion. Each party

high positions in the government for family members.

On the other hand, it is believed that Mr. Trump's eagerness to expand trade with Turkey is somewhat motivated by his personal investments in that country.

While Mr. Trump won the release of Turkish-American scientist Serkan Golge, Mr. Erdogan failed to get the US to extradite his nemesis, Fethullah Gülen, who is accused by the Turkish government of being behind the coup attempt in 2016 in Turkey. Neither was there a breakthrough in the negotiations to break the sanctions levied against the Turkish-state-controlled bank, which was indicted in the US for helping Iran evade sanctions.

Mr. Trump's efforts to boost the Turkish economy contradict his earlier threats to destroy it. There is consistence in the legendary unpredictability and inconsistency of our mercurial president. Once he threatened North Korea with "fire and fury" only to come back and state that he "likes that gentleman," meaning the country's dictator, Kim Jong-un.

He also planned to bomb Iran, but he shied away minutes before he had to take action.

"Destruction of Turkey's economy" may also follow the path of those previous threats.

Erdogan's major confrontation was with the US lawmakers, particularly with members of the House of Representatives, who on October 29 adopted HR 269, a non-binding resolution recognizing officially the Armenian Genocide.

"Some historical developments and accusations are being used in order to dynamite our reciprocal bilateral relations," said Erdogan, during the press conference, adding, "Especially in the House of Representatives, some of the resolutions that were passed on October 29 served this very purpose, which deeply hurt the Turkish nation."

And then, he concluded with his tried and tired mantra, "The decision-makers in an incident that took place 100 years ago should not be politicians, but historians."

Mr. Erdogan does not realize that his denialist cliché has become a subject of mockery since the majority of genocide scholars have already passed their verdict.

Whenever Erdogan delivers a speech in Turkey, his captive audience begins applauding whether or not his comments make sense. Therefore, he is under the illusion that that he will receive the same reaction overseas. Indeed, after his meeting with the US president, Erdogan delivered a

speech in the Turkish Religious Center called Diyanet and allowed himself to make ludicrous statements about Armenian history. He told his audience that the Armenians were nomads in Turkey when they were deported. Unfortunately, no one has challenged him by answering that over the past century, the Turks have destroyed 2,000 churches and monasteries and 700 schools and colleges in historic Armenia. And they have not yet been able to destroy them all. Also, the Holy Cross Akhtamar Church on the island in Lake Van was built by King Gagik Arzruni in the 10th century, when Armenia had a kingdom, while the Seljuk Turkish nomads had just approached the Armenian highlands. Not exactly the history of nomads.

This is how Jen Kirby, writing for vox.com describes the joint press conference. "During a joint press conference Wednesday afternoon, Trump stood alongside Erdogan – whom Trump said he's a 'big fan of' – and let the Turkish leader repeat his talking points, unchallenged. The US president proved himself to be woefully unprepared, or indifferent, to what's actually going on in Turkey."

The biggest joke of that press conference may be considered Mr. Trump's statements, that "we got along with the Kurds" and that the Kurds living under the tyrant's rule are "quite happy."

Armenians won in the House of Representatives and lost in the Senate when Sen. Lindsay Graham blocked Senate Resolution 150, without debating the issue of genocide, just mentioning the age-old argument that "it is not the time."

It is believed that Graham has received hefty donations from Erdogan's cousin, Mutlu Halil, who is a Turkish lobbyist.

It is not possible to guess how much Turkish money has played a role in Mr. Graham's action, because sometimes he can be a harsh critic of Turkey.

Some pundits in Armenia believe that the US used the Genocide issue to intimidate Turkey for its own gains. But that is the name of the political game. Unless a small country's interest coincides with those of a major one, the latter will not act out of charity.

A case in point is the creation of the artificial country of Kosovo; Serbia was considered the vanguard of the Slavic see FALLOUT, see page 18



involved would inherit a piece of the action; in the first place, Ankara would receive its proposed security zone carved out of Syrian territory, while having a free hand to slaughter the Kurdish forces which had been fighting ISIS alongside the US. Russia could achieve its long-proposed goal of seeing the US forces out of the Syrian battleground and the Syrian regime could consolidate its position in the region, contrary to Ankara's avowed goal of regime change in that country.

President Trump's singlemindedness prevailed; Turkey entered Syria and began slaughtering the Kurds who were abandoned by Mr. Trump overnight because they were "no angels."

In between Mr. Trump had cold feet and relented, leaving a residual force to guard the Syrian oil wells. "I like oil," the US president said, and it is assumed that the oil drilled in Syria will be sold through Turkey, yielding a monthly revenue of \$30 million to benefit the displaced Kurds.

This was the background as President Erdogan landed in Washington to meet with his counterpart at the White House and discuss political topics of global consequence. One of those topics was the purchase of S-400 defense missiles from Russia, which NATO considers to be incompatible with the alliance's weapon systems. Ankara's persistence triggered Turkey's expulsion from the F-35 fighter jet program in July. That expulsion will not only deny Turkey the use of that expensive weapon, but it would also exclude Turkey from the lucrative manufacturing of the combat aircraft.

President Trump indicated that he was open to expanding the US-Turkey trade relations, increasing the current \$20 billion annual volume to \$100 billion, matching Turkey's target.

Mr. Trump's vision cannot be achieved without congressional approval and Mr. Erdogan's credibility is at its all-time low at the US Congress, which has already introduced several bills that could sanction Turkish officials, the nation's economy and banking sector.

If passed, the sanctions would also prohibit US arms transfers to Turkey, which have the potential to be used in Syria against the Kurds.

Some of the sanctions are directed at Erdogan's family members; Trump and Erdogan have in common nepotism, reserving

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COMMENTARY

Everything You Were Told about the Syrian War Was Wrong – Until Now

By Robert Fisk

That wars end very differently to our own expectations – or our plans – was established long ago. That “we” won the Second World War did not mean the Americans would win the Vietnam war, or that France would vanquish its enemies in Algeria. Yet the moment we decide who the good guys are, and who the evil monsters whom we must destroy, we relapse again into our old mistakes.

Because we hate, loathe and demonize Saddam or Gaddafi or Assad, we are sure – we are absolutely convinced – that they will be dethroned and that the blue skies of freedom will shine down upon their broken lands. This is childish, immature, infantile (although, given the trash we are prepared to consume over Brexit, it's not, I suppose, very surprising).

Well, Saddam's demise brought upon Iraq the most unimaginable suffering. So too Gaddafi's assassination beside the most famous sewer in Libya. As for Bashar al-Assad, far from being overthrown, he has emerged as the biggest winner of the Syrian war. Still we insist that he must go. Still we intend to try Syrian war criminals – and rightly so – but the Syrian regime has emerged above the blood-tide of war intact, alive, and with the most reliable superpower ally any Middle East state could have: the Kremlin.

I despise the word “curate.” Everyone seems to be curating scenarios, curating political conversations or curating business portfolios. We seem to be addicted to these awful curio words. But for once I'm going to use it in real form: those who curated the story – the narrative – of the Syrian war, got it all wrong from the start.

Bashar would go. The Free Syrian Army, supposedly made up of tens of thousands of Syrian army deserters and the unarmed demonstrators of Darayya, Damascus and Homs, would force the Assad family from power. And, of course, western-style democracy would break out, and secularism – which was in fact supposed to be the foundation of the Baath party – would become the basis of a new and liberal Arab state. We shall leave aside for now one of the real reasons for the west's support of the rebellion: to destroy Iran's only Arab ally.

We didn't predict the arrival of al-Qaeda, now purified with the name of Nusrah. We did not imagine that the ISIS nightmare would emerge like a genie from the eastern deserts. Nor did we understand – nor were we told – how these Islamist cults could consume the people's revolution in which we believed.

Still today, I am only beginning to learn how Syria's “moderate” rebellion turned into the apocalyptic killing machine of the Islamic State. Some Islamist groups (not all, by any means, and it was not a simple transition) were there from the start. They were in Homs as early as 2012.

This does not mean that Syrian rebels were not brave, democratically minded figures. But they were mightily exaggerated in the west. While David Cameron was fantasizing about the 70,000 Free Syrian Army (FSA) “moderates” fighting the Assad regime – there were never more than perhaps 7,000, at the most – the Syrian army was already talking to them, sometimes directly by mobile phone, to persuade them to return to their original government army units or to abandon a town without fighting or to swap the bodies of government soldiers for food. Syrian officers would say that they always preferred to fight the FSA because they ran away; Nusrah and Isis did not.

Yet now, today, as we report the results of the Turkish invasion of northern Syria, we are using a weird expression for Turkey's Arab militia allies. They are called the “Syrian National Army” – as opposed to the Assad government's original and still very extant Syrian Arab Army. Vincent Durac, a professor in Middle East politics in Dublin, even wrote last week that these Arab militia allies were “a creation of Turkey.”

This is nonsense. They are the wreckage of the original and now utterly discredited Free Syrian Army – David Cameron's mythical legions whose mysterious composition, I recall, was once explained to British MPs by the gloriously named General Messenger. Very few reporters (with the honorable exception of those reporting for Channel 4 News) have explained this all-important fact of the war, even though some footage clearly showed the Turkish-paid militiamen brandishing the old Free Syrian Army green, white and black flag.

It was this same ex-FSA rabble who entered the Kurdish enclave of Afrin last year and helped

their Nusrah colleagues loot Kurdish homes and businesses. The Turks called this violent act of occupation “Operation Olive Branch.” Even more preposterous, its latest invasion is named “Operation Peace Spring.”

There was a time when this would have provoked ribaldry and contempt. No longer. Today, the media have largely treated this ridiculous nomenclature with something approaching respect.

We have been playing the same tricks with the so-called “American-backed” Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). As I've said before, almost all the SDF are Kurds, and they have never been elected, chosen, or joined the SDF democratically. Indeed there was nothing at all democratic about the militia, and its “force” existed only so long as it was supported by US air power. Yet the Syrian Democratic Forces kept their title unscathed and largely unquestioned by the media.

But when the Turks invaded Syria, to drive them from the Syrian-Turkish border, they were suddenly transformed by us into “Kurdish forces” – which they largely were – who had been betrayed by the Americans – which they very definitely were.

An irony, which is either forgotten or simply unknown, is that when fighting began in Aleppo in 2012, the Kurds helped the FSA grab several areas of the city. The two were fighting each other seven years later when the Turks invaded the “free” Kurdish borderland of Rojava. Even less advertised was the fact that the Turkish-FSA advance into Syria allowed thousands of Arab Syrian villagers to return to homes taken over by the Kurds when they set up their doomed statelet after the war began.

But the narrative of this war is now being further skewed by our suspension of any critical understanding of Saudi Arabia's new role in the Syrian debacle.

Deny and deny and deny is the Saudi policy, when asked what assistance it gave to the anti-Assad Islamist rebels in Syria. Even when I found Bosnian weapons documents in a Nusrah base in Aleppo, signed off by an arms manufacturer near Sarajevo called Ifet Krnjic – and even when I tracked down Krnjic himself, who explained how the weapons had been sent to Saudi Arabia (he even described the Saudi officials whom he spoke to in his factory) – the Saudis denied the facts.

Yet today, almost incredibly, it seems the Saudis themselves are now contemplating an entirely new approach to Syria. Already their United Arab Emirates allies in the Yemeni war (another Saudi catastrophe) have reopened their embassy in Damascus: a highly significant decision by the Gulf state, although largely ignored in the west. Now, it seems, the Saudis are thinking of strengthening their cooperation with Russia by financing, along with the Emiratis and perhaps also Kuwait, the reconstruction of Syria.

Thus the Saudis would become more important to the Syrian regime than sanctions-cracked Iran, and would perhaps forestall Qatar's own increasingly warm – if very discreet – relations with Bashar al-Assad. The Qataris, despite their Al-Jazeera worldwide empire, want to expand their power over real, physical land; and Syria is an obvious target for their generosity and wealth. But if the Saudis decided to take on this onerous role, the kingdom would at one and the same time muscle both Iran and Qatar aside. Or so it believes. The Syrians – whose principle policy in such times is to wait, and wait, and wait – will, of course, decide how to play with their neighbours' ambitions.

But Saudi interest in Syria is not merely conjecture. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman remarked to Time magazine in August last year that “Bashar is going to stay. But I believe that Bashar's interest is not to let the Iranians do whatever they want to do.” The Syrians and the Bahrainis are talking regularly about the post-war Levant. The Emirates might even negotiate between the Saudis and the Syrians. The Gulf states are now saying that it was a mistake to suspend Syria's membership of the Arab League.

In other words, Syria – with Russian encouragement – is steadily resuming the role it maintained before the 2011 revolt.

This wasn't what we in the west imagined then, when our ambassadors in Damascus were encouraging the Syrian street demonstrators to keep up their struggle against the regime; indeed, when they specifically told the protestors not even to talk or negotiate with the Assad government.

But those were in the days before two crazed elements emerged to smash all our assumptions, sowing fear and distrust across the Middle East: Donald Trump and Isis.

(This commentary originally appeared in the November 7 edition of *The Independent*.)

LETTERS

The Despot Came to Town – Where Were You?

To the Editor:

The Armenian community missed an historic opportunity on Wednesday, 11/13/19 at the White House as President Trump met with President Erdogan. In that, we missed a high moral and spiritual call. The recent launching of Turkey into Syria and the ongoing ethnic cleansing of Syrian Armenians, Kurds, and Arabs should grip our soul as Erdogan does not hide his agenda to revive the Ottoman Empire. The merciless killing of Rev. Hovsep Petoian and his elderly father on 11/11/19 punctuate this ongoing bloodlust. These priests, with a deacon also shot, were on their way to Deir Zor to oversee repairs to the Armenian memorial, erected years ago to commemorate the slaughter of Armenians there. Where is the outrage and grief? When do we come alongside and “mourn with those who mourn”?

I called the Armenian Churches here in New York City, asking if any buses were leaving for Washington DC as I knew a group was gathering through the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA). There was no bus, no plan but no problem – Greyhound could take me for \$18. I rushed from Union Station in DC to the White House, in a hurry to gather with my people as well as the Kurds, the Greeks, and Christian humanitarian groups. The Kurds showed up, some from great distance, with much passion and fervor but where, where were

the Armenians?

There was plenty of press, the world could have seen Armenians standing against Turkey's ongoing legacy of crimes against humanity. Of all people we should know the anguish of suffering amid world apathy. Why were you not there, Armenian priests, pastors and deacons? Doesn't the Bible call us to “Rescue those being led away to death” and “Speak for those who cannot speak for themselves”?

While a political church is a corrupt church, could we not gather together as the Body of Christ, that a godly witness might bring shame to those with blood on their hands? With all due respect, Der Hayrs, members of the clergy, what were you doing on Wednesday while your slain brethren were lowered into the ground and Erdogan sat in the White House?

A true Christian is burdened with, even seeks those things that break the heart of Christ. He did not die so we could have bazaars and Bingo. Those things will not resuscitate a dead church, only the fire of the Holy Spirit can bring it to life. We have one short life to build up and minister to the Body of Christ in this world.

As a people we failed to cry out against a despot, failed to “mourn with those who mourn”. May God burden and compel our hearts to rise up and hear His call today.

Lisa Stepanian
New York, NY

The Fallout from the Trump-Erdogan Summit

FALLOUT, from page 17

(Russian) presence in the heart of Europe and was amputated to give birth to a new state, still protected by the NATO forces.

Erdogan's visit to the US may or may not have yielded major results, but it has alarmed Russia enough that President Putin at this time is flying to Turkey to assess the damage. He had successfully driven a wedge between Turkey and NATO; now it is time to find out if the wedge has led to any changes.

Also, the resolution at the US Congress and recent US projects to help Armenia have both had positive impacts on Armenia and Armenians.

Indeed, a month ago, the Russian Foreign Ministry was criticizing Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's statement about Artsakh. Also, Russia had been indifferent and insensitive with regards to the Turkish blockade of Armenia. Apparently, as a counterbalance to US moves, Russia seems to have reconsidered its policy; the Russian Foreign Ministry in Moscow has been negotiating with the Armenian ambassador to mediate a rapprochement between Armenia and Turkey.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov visited Armenia last week and made statements that reflect a change in Russian policy. He proposed to mediate between Ankara and Yerevan to improve relations but most interestingly, he found Pashinyan's policy in solving the Artsakh issue to be the most logical approach.

Coupled with the above developments, Russia's Minister of Defense Gen. Sergey Shoygu visited Armenia and announced that Russia has decided to double the size of the force at its military base in Armenia.

Russia and Turkey are partners in Syria. They also share many interests countering the West in the Middle East. But they have been perennial adversaries and competitors in the Caucasus. Therefore, Russia has to be very cautious with Turkey's interference in the region. Turkey has already introduced an occupation force in Nakhichevan, contravening the Kars Treaty of 1923.

All these developments cannot be discounted as coincidental. They seem to be inter-related and their interaction will impact Armenia's future.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Erdogan Meets Trump in the White House: The Result is a Tragicomedy

It is difficult to know where to start commenting on the ridiculous press conference between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and US Pres. Donald Trump at the White House on November 13, 2019. Unfortunately, we do not know what was discussed when the two presidents met earlier behind closed doors.

Before Erdogan came to Washington, several Democratic and Republican members of Congress had signed a joint letter advising Pres. Trump not to invite the Turkish President to the White House which Trump ignored. This was not surprising given the fact that he had repeatedly called Erdogan “a friend” and “a tough guy who deserves respect.” Furthermore, Trump, as a presidential candidate in 2015, confessed that he had a financial interest in Turkey: “I have a little conflict of interest because I have a major, major building in Istanbul. It’s called Trump Towers – two towers, instead of one. ... And I’ve gotten to know Turkey very well. They’re amazing people. They’re incredible people. They have a strong leader.” During the joint press conference, Pres. Trump described Turkey as “a great NATO ally,” “a strategic partner of the United States,” and “I am a big fan of the President [Erdogan].”

Trump refused to impose legally required sanctions on Turkey for the purchase of Russian S-400 missiles. NBC News reported last week that former National Security Adviser John Bolton stated during a speech in Miami “that he believes there is a personal or business relationship dictating Trump’s position on Turkey because none of his advisers are aligned with him on the issue.” The House of Representatives had adopted two resolutions a week earlier reaffirming the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the overwhelming bipartisan vote of 405 to 11, and placing sanctions on Turkey and some of its leaders, including Erdogan, by a vote of 403 to 16, after Pres. Trump withdrew US forces from Northern Syria, abandoning the Kurdish partners and allowing the Turkish military and its jihadist allies to murder hundreds of Kurdish civilians and deport around 200,000 Kurds and others from the area South of the Turkish border.

At the White House press conference, there were several astonishing moments. First of all, Erdogan expressed his anger at the Armenian Genocide Resolution adopted by the House of Representatives on October 29, 2019. Erdogan repeated the usual Turkish propaganda line that there should be a historical commission to study the facts of the Armenian Genocide, while Pres. Trump silently looked on. Neither Erdogan nor Trump is probably aware that this issue has been studied by scores of historians, including the International Association of Genocide Scholars, which issued a joint statement confirming the veracity of the Armenian Genocide.

During the joint press conference, Pres. Trump encouraged Erdogan to call on a Turkish journalist for a question. Trump told Erdogan: “Would you like to pick somebody? A friendly person from Turkey, friendly. Only friendly reporters. We like to see, there aren’t too many of them around.” There are no journalists left in Turkey who are not friendly to Erdogan. This year alone, 68 journalists were arrested in Turkey which has jailed more reporters than any other country in the world.

Trump then proceeded to whitewash Erdogan’s crimes against Kurds by stating: “And, by the way, I think the president [Erdogan], he may have some factions within Kurds, but I think the president has a great relationship with the Kurds. Many Kurds live currently in Turkey, and they’re taken care of.” This is an absolute lie! Over 30,000 Kurdish citizens of Turkey have been killed by the Turkish military in the last few decades. Furthermore, 15 elected Kurdish mayors were dismissed by the Turkish government and arrested on trumped up charges.

During the White House press conference Erdogan made another scandalous statement saying that he returned a letter that Pres. Trump had sent him on Oct. 9, 2019, by leaving it on the President’s desk during their meeting. In that letter, Pres. Trump had told Erdogan, “Don’t be a tough guy! Don’t be a fool!”

Erdogan made one more idiotic comment on November 13, 2019, during his visit to the Washington Center of Turkey’s Directorate of Religious Affairs. Erdogan claimed that Armenians were “nomads” during the Armenian Genocide. Armenians “used to travel in different places as nomads. The forced deportation took place while they were living the same way as nomads in Turkey,” Erdogan falsely alleged, ignoring that Armenians were natives in their lands where they had lived for thousands of years before the Turkic tribes came from East Asia and conquered their homeland.

An incredible conversation took place a week before Erdogan arrived in the United States. Turkish newspaper Sabah reported that during a phone call between the Turkish and US presidents on November 5, 2019, Erdogan said Pres. Trump asked him “whether it would be more suitable to use the word ‘war’ instead of calling it ‘genocide?’” Surprisingly,

Erdogan said he rejected Trump’s suggestion on the grounds that “a war is between two states and that Armenians had in fact been subject to forced migration.”

Erdogan told Trump that “there are efforts to intimidate us with the so-called Armenian bill and sanctions threat.” Pres. Trump then asked Erdogan how previous US presidents handled the Armenian Genocide issue, to which Erdogan replied: “Until now, I have worked with Bush and his son, and in the same way with Obama. Now I am working with you. At that time, they would refer this [genocide resolution] to the [House] committee and the committee would send it back. This time they bypassed the committee and sent it to the Congress.” Erdogan said Trump replied: “I will study it and talk to friends.”

Of course, Erdogan gave false information to Pres. Trump. The Armenian Genocide resolution had been approved by the full House of Representatives twice before in 1975 and 1984, and had passed through the House Foreign Affairs Committee several times.

It is ironic that Pres. Trump is asking Erdogan for advice on what to call the Armenian Genocide and how previous US presidents handled the genocide issue. All those ‘proud’ Armenian-American supporters of Trump should initiate immediate steps to educate the US president on the facts of the Armenian Genocide so he is not fed lies by the likes of denialist Erdogan!

Immediately after his meeting with Erdogan and the joint press conference on Nov. 13, Pres. Trump invited a small group of Republican Senators to the White House to meet with Erdogan at Trump’s presence. This was an obvious ploy on the President’s part to dump the responsibility on the Senate for any action the Senators may take against Turkey.

Following this meeting, when the Senators returned to the Senate floor, Senator Robert Menendez (Dem.-N.J.) proposed to suspend the rules and bring the pending Armenian Genocide resolution directly to the full Senate bypassing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Lindsey Graham (Rep.-South Carolina) objected to Senator Menendez’s request for consent. Under Senate rules, all it takes is one Senator to object, to prevent the Resolution to bypass the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Graham, in his Senate remarks, explained: “I just met with President Erdogan and President Trump about the problems we face in Syria by the military incursion by Turkey. I do hope that Turkey and Armenia can come together and deal with this problem.” Senator Graham added that he was objecting “not because of the past but because of the future.” Those remarks made his objection even worse.

Senator Graham’s rejection has confused some people into believing that the Armenian Genocide resolution is dead in the Senate. It is not. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee now has to consider the resolution and then, after approval, forward it to the full Senate.

Rebutting Erdogan

By David L. Phillips

FORMER CHAIRMAN,
TURKISH-ARMENIAN RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

US President Donald J. Trump and Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met in the White House on November 13, 2019. During their joint press conference, Trump was uncharacteristically silent as Erdogan went on a diatribe concerning Armenian Genocide, condemning the near unanimous Resolution in the US House of Representatives reaffirming the US record on the Genocide. Erdogan also dredged up the debunked proposal for a joint historical commission on Armenian issues.

Erdogan is an established denier of the Armenian Genocide, where 1.5 million Armenian Christians were slaughtered by his predecessors. His ties to ISIS and other enemies of the US should have disqualified him from the White House visit to begin with.

In the press conference, paradoxically, Erdogan both denied the Genocide and invited a “dialogue and debate” about Armenian issues. Dialogue sounds like a positive and worthwhile step. In this instance, however, it is another component of Turkey’s denial campaign. The purpose of dialogue cannot be to explore the truth of the Armenian Genocide. That fact is beyond question.

I chaired the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC) from 2001 to 2004. TARC included former foreign ministers and prominent Turks and Armenians from around the

world. It worked with the International Center for Transitional Justice to produce a legal opinion in 2003, which concluded that the events in the early Twentieth Century met the definition of Genocide: (i) More than one person died; (ii) Those who died represented a distinct ethnic, cultural or religious group; (iii) There was a pattern to events resulting in their deaths; (iv)

INSTEAD OF GIVING ERDOGAN A PLATFORM FOR DISINFORMATION, TRUMP SHOULD HAVE SPOKEN FORTHRIGHTLY ABOUT THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE.

The perpetrators knew that Armenians would die and therefore possessed the requisite genocidal intent. The genocide finding was confirmed by the Elie Wiesel Foundation and scores of Nobel laureates.

In 2009, Armenia and Turkey agreed to Protocols which would have normalized relations and established a joint committee to work on all historical and legal issues, aimed at normalizing relations between Armenia and Turkey. Erdogan scuttled those agreements, casting doubt on his sincerity.

The Armenian Genocide was confirmed by sources of unquestioned integrity and credibility, including official dispatches from Ambassador Henry M. Morgenthau and cables from consular offices. Morgenthau reported, “When the Turkish authorities gave the order for these deportations, they were giving a death warrant to the whole race”. Raphael Lemkin, author of the Convention on the Prevention and

Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, described genocide as “what happened to the Armenians.”

Erdogan wants a “constructive dialogue with the United States Congress.” However, Congress has already reacted to Turkey’s denial campaign by overwhelmingly approving House Resolution 296, which affirms the US record of the Genocide. HR 296 passed by a vote of 405 in favor and 11 against.

Dialogue does not mean denial, and there is no reason for another history commission when the results have been confirmed and reconfirmed many times over. Even President Trump has given a dictionary definition of the genocide and used the Armenian term for Genocide in his annual Remembrance Day statements on April 24.

Erdogan said that Turks were “hurt” by the passage of HR 296, while censoring and prosecuting Turks who take steps to come to terms with Turkey’s past. He has found that racism makes good politics. In 2007, the leading Turkish Armenian journalist working for reconciliation in Turkey was assassinated, in an unresolved murder with clear government and mafia connections.

There was nothing new in Erdogan’s recent remarks. Once again, he offered to open up the Ottoman archives and endorsed an academic debate between experts and historians. Proposing to open the archives is a ruse aimed at sewing doubt as to whether 1.5 million Armenians were actually killed. The main perpetrator’s own journal, as well as other documents, have been published, confirming the Turkish campaign to exterminate Armenians and other Christians in the Ottoman Empire.

Instead of giving Erdogan a platform for disinformation, Trump should have spoken forthrightly about the Armenian Genocide. The more Turks hear the mention of the Genocide, the closer they will come to accepting the Truth.

David L. Phillips is Director of the Program on Peace-building and Rights at Columbia University’s Institute for the Study of Human Rights. He was Chairman of TARC from 2001 to 2004. His book, *Unsilencing the Past: Track Two Diplomacy and Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation*, (2005) is an account of TARC’s work. Phillips is also author of *Diplomatic History: The Turkey Armenian Protocols* (2012).



Sen. Graham Blasted for Blocking Armenian Genocide Resolution

GRAHAM, from page 1

Genocide? Because you have no moral compass and put Turkey before the United States.”

Political satirist Jeremy Newberger quipped, “When is a genocide not a genocide? When @LindseyGrahamSC meets with Turkey.”

Armenian Assembly of America Executive Director Bryan Ardouny said in a statement that no foreign nation “should dictate what the greatest deliberative body in the world can or cannot consider, and especially when it comes to genocide.”

“Let’s not put our heads in the sand, but rather take a page from the House of Representatives and the overwhelming and historic bipartisan vote standing up against genocide denial,” Ardouny added.

Graham is among Trump’s staunchest allies in the GOP establishment and one of the most prominent foreign policy voices in Congress. The combination has given him some influence over Trump’s foreign policy decisions, though at times Graham has also attacked the president’s more unpredictable and short-sighted moves.

He was vehemently opposed to Trump’s decision to withdraw American troops from northeastern Syria last month, which allowed Erdogan to launch his long-planned invasion of the area—known as Rojava—controlled by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces.

Having met with Trump and Erdogan on Wednesday, Graham said the conversation was “frank, candid, and I hope, over time, will prove to be productive.”

He added that he appreciated being involved in the discussion, which touched on Turkey’s controversial purchase of a Russian anti-aircraft system and Ankara’s latest Syrian incursion.

Prime Minister Visits Kotayk Region

YEREVAN – Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on November 17 paid a working visit to Kotayk province to get acquainted with the implementation of subsidy programs in small communities. They are financed jointly by government communities.

The prime minister’s visit began in the Yeghvard community, where the first stop was Zovuni. There is a subsidy program for the construction of the drinking water pipeline. Nikol Pashinyan was briefed on the process of repair works. Officials said a 1.5km bypass was being built, which would have an uninterrupted water supply to the Zovuni settlement. Later, he followed the process of the reconstruction of the bridge from Ashtarak to Yeghvard. The program is implemented within the state budget.

Pashinyan then visited kindergarten No. 2 in Yeghvard, which is also being renovated as part of a subsidy program. During the visit, the head of government got acquainted with the works, noted that the kindergarten is fully renovated, will be expanded after completion of the construction and will be designed for 12 groups of children, about 300 children. The Prime Minister also met with residents in the kindergarten yard, talked to them, answered questions about jobs, agriculture, education, science development, presented government programs in microbusiness, agriculture, provinces and rural communities, and a number of other government programs.

Pashinyan then went to kindergarten-art school in Zoravan village of Yeghvard community. As a result of the subsidy program, the number of groups in Zoravan kindergarten will increase by one more, and now 44 children from Zoravan will attend Zoravan Art School instead of attending Yeghvard Art School.

In both the Yeghvard kindergarten and Zoravan Kindergarten-School, officials said it was planned to complete the exterior renovation by the end of the year.

Satisfied with the plans, the head of government referred to the question of what changes



Prime Minister Pashinyan meets with young students

in people’s lives. “When they say, when will a person change his life? Parent of a child going to Yeghvard art school from Zoravan, who had to spend three times a week transporting a child, bringing a child to Yeghvard to bring, now his child will go to art school in Zoravan. This is the change of life.”

Pashinyan also emphasized the importance of investing in children’s educational development. “It is important to discuss with community leaders and businessmen that the funds are invested in child development and educational quality improvement programs. We need to understand that the formula for a good life in the 21st century is to have a normal education. The essence of the subsidy program is that it is invested from the community budget and the government invests from the state budget. We can also do parallel subsidy programs with the business community of villages, communities who want to help out and implement such projects in different communities. The slogan “Armenia is my home, the people are my family” is why we go out of our local mindset. Equally every corner is our homeland,” he said.

Next was the Nor Erznka community of Kotayk where he got acquainted with the process of subsidizing gasification and asphaltting projects.

The mayor also said, that the road is the only road leading to Tsaghkevank and is also of tourist importance. During his visit to Nor Erznka, noting the scrap metal and the construction of old cars, the Prime Minister referred to the issue of metal scrap removal in general, discussed ways of solving the problem with community residents and highlighted the joint efforts of the government, local authorities and citizens.

Arriving in Nor Hachn, the prime minister first visited the apartment building where a tragic incident the previous day had claimed the lives of a 77-year-old grandmother and her four grandchildren by carbon monoxide poisoning. Pashinyan visited St. John’s Church in Nor Hachn and lit candles. He drew the attention of the citizens to the importance of in-house gas service, urging them to invite appropriate specialists, inspect the in-house signaling systems, make sure they are equipped and only operate.

In Nor Hachn, he visited the community sports school site, which is currently undergoing major renovations.

Water supply, electricity and gas supply networks, ventilation system, interior and exterior design, area improvement and other works will be implemented.

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