



Tens of thousands gathered in Stepanakert.

# Karabakh Armenians Appeal to Russia

STEPANAKERT (Azatutyun) — Tens of thousands of people rallied in Stepanakert on Sunday, October 30, as Nagorno-Karabakh’s political leaders again rejected Azerbaijani control over the Armenian-populated territory and appealed for continued Russian military presence there.

In a statement, the Karabakh parliament also said that Armenia’s govern-

ment must be careful about recognizing Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity through a bilateral peace treaty that has been discussed by Yerevan and Baku in recent weeks.

The statement was unanimously approved at an emergency session broadcast live to a massive crowd that gathered in Stepanakert’s main square. It was one of the biggest rallies ever held in Karabakh.

The legislature appealed to Russia to “continue its commitment to ensure the

security of the people of Artsakh (Karabakh)” and “put in place additional political and military mechanisms” for that purpose. It did not specify those mechanisms.

Russia deployed 2,000 peacekeeping troops in Karabakh after brokering the ceasefire that stopped the 2020 Armenian-Azerbaijani war.

Karabakh leaders said last week that Russian peace proposals made recently are far more beneficial for the Karabakh

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## Putin Hosts ‘Useful’ Talks Between Azeri And Armenian Leaders

SOCHI (Azatutyun) — The leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan pledged to “actively” work on a bilateral peace treaty but appeared to have failed to iron out their differences on its key provisions during fresh talks hosted by Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday, October 31.

Putin said that his trilateral meeting with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev was “very useful” because it created a “very good atmosphere for possible future agreements on some key issues.”

“Today we agreed on a joint statement,” he said after the meeting held in the Russian city of Sochi. “I must say frankly that not everything was agreed.”

“Some things had to be taken out of the text worked out beforehand at the level of experts,” he added without elaborating.

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# Shattered but Still: Residents of Armenian Borderline Communities Yet Again on the Brink

By Lida Asilyan  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

SOTK, Armenia — Just a stone’s throw from Sotk, a village 173 kilometers from Yerevan, slow-rising smoke reaches the residents from the mountains beyond their control. The bricks of a newly-constructed house sparkle with dust coming from a fresh hole in the wall. The 65-year-old Surik Martirosyan’s house was struck minutes after he stepped out. Martirosyan thought it was one of the daily shootings, but the entire sky was burning red with hundreds of missiles falling down.

He came home to have dinner after a long day on the farm on the late evening of September 13, 2022. “It was a war movie I was watching, and it turned out a real war was going on outside when my daughter called me,” he says.

The gray-haired farmer was at home with his daughter and

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The remnants of Slavik Galstyan’s house after Azerbaijani attack

# Chobanian And Avedisian

## A Story of Friendship and Paying it Forward

By Alin K. Gregorian  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON — By now, most people have heard the story of the incredible donation of \$100 million by Edward Avedisian to the Boston University School of Medicine, and its renaming as the Boston University Aram V. Chobanian & Edward Avedisian School of Medicine.

What is even more incredible is the humility of Avedisian and Dr. Aram Chobanian, childhood friends back in Rhode Island and descendants of the Armenian Genocide, both of whom reached stratospheric heights in their fields. What is more, neither hogs the limelight yet both make life better for the world in general.

Chobanian is no stranger to Boston University; the world renowned cardiologist was named dean of the School of Medicine in 1988, dean of the Boston University Medical Campus in 1996



Edward Avedisian, left, and Dr. Aram Chobanian donning white coats and hats with their names on it.

and appointed interim president of the university in 2003, and president in 2005.

Avedisian has been a musician of renown in the Boston classical music community, performing for three decades with the Boston Pops and 43 years with the Boston Ballet Orchestra as a clarinetist. He has also taught clarinet at the university level and then made it his mission to donate his fortune, which he made through incredible investment acumen.

“It’s a wonderful feeling in one way,” said Chobanian. “We were friends and [with] family history that goes back more than a century.”

As for the names that will now grace the name of medical school, Chobanian said, “It is nice to see our friendship cemented this way. And it is nice to see Armenians being recognized.”

That is a point both he and Avedisian stressed, the need for Armenians in the public eye to make more frequent and donations.

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ARMENIA  
Armenian, Iranian Leaders Emphasize Need to Boost Trade



MASSACHUSETTS  
Bartevian Inc. Is a Boston Landmark



CALIFORNIA  
Armenian EyeCare Project Marks 30th Anniversary







ARMENIA

## NEWS from ARMENIA

### Inflation at 10 Percent in Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — If the Board of the Central Bank did not raise the refinancing rate, the inflation in Armenia would have been at least around 15 percent, CBA Governor Martin Galstyan told reporters on November 1.

He said that inflation now is 9.9 percent and is expected to reach 10 percent by the end of the year.

“For the next year we expect that the prices of goods in international commodity markets will start declining to some extent,” he said, adding that in conditions of ongoing developments in Russia, the foreign currency inflow to Armenia has significantly increased.

He stated that even China, which traditionally was having a high economic growth, is now having a single-digit growth, around 3 percent this year.

### Armenian Opposition to Hold Rally on November 5

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — The Armenian opposition will hold a rally in Yerevan on November 5 in support of Artsakh’s sovereignty and Armenia’s territorial integrity, ARF Armenia Chair Ishkhan Saghatlyan, an MP from the opposition Hayastan bloc, said on Monday, October 31.

Speaking at a news conference, Saghatlyan, one of the leaders of the opposition Resistance Movement which held anti-government protests in Yerevan earlier this year, claimed the November 9, 2020 “act of capitulation” signed by Armenia “is not a verdict.”

“The ball is now in Armenia’s court. The November 5 protest is a rally of unity, not around any person, political force or the opposition, but around Artsakh’s sovereignty, the territorial integrity and security of Armenia,” he underscored.

### Foreign Minister Meets With Pope

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — On October 26, Pope Francis received Foreign Minister of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan on the margins of his official visit to the Vatican, the Armenian Foreign Ministry said.

Expressing gratitude for the opportunity to meet, Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan conveyed the warm greetings of the Armenian people and government to His Holiness. The Minister noted that his visit to the Vatican takes place in the year marking the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Armenia and the Holy See, and it is a good opportunity to discuss bilateral relations based on centuries-old historical ties and similar spiritual values.

Mirzoyan expressed his gratitude for messages and calls for peace delivered by the Pope during the 44-day war and the subsequent period.

Mirzoyan briefed the Pope on the situation unfolded in the region, highlighting the importance of addressing humanitarian issues, and in this regard conveyed the message of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to the Pope.

# Karabakh Armenians Appeal to Russia

PROTEST, from page 1

Armenians than an Armenian-Azerbaijani deal promoted by the West. They claimed that Moscow wants to indefinitely delay an agreement on Karabakh’s status while the Western powers favor the restoration of Azerbaijani control over Karabakh.

Russian President Vladimir Putin made the same claim afterwards. He spoke of a “Washington variant” of the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty that would commit Yerevan to recognizing Karabakh as an integral part of Azerbaijan.

The US State Department responded by accusing Putin of spreading “disinformation.” But it did not say whether Washington has indeed drafted any peace agreements.

“Our only intention is to help these countries achieve for themselves an end to the violence and a lasting and a comprehensive peace that the people of Armenia and Azerbaijan so desperately want,” the department spokesman, Ned Price, told a news briefing in Washington.

The United States and the European Union have organized a series of high-level Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations since the September 13-14 fighting on the border between the two South Caucasus states. The peace treaty sought by Baku was reportedly the main focus of those talks.

Armen Grigoryan, the secretary of Armenia’s Security Council, said on October 12 that Yerevan and Baku are planning to sign such a deal and delimit their border before the end of this year. Grigorian and a senior Azerbaijani official met Washington in late September for talks hosted by US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said on Saturday that Russia and the West have different “perceptions” of an Armenian-Azerbaijani settlement. He did not elaborate.

“Armenia agreed to the Russian perception in principle in January 2021,” he said, adding that he is ready to sign a relevant document at his trilateral meeting with Putin and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev slated for Monday.

## Artsakh National Assembly Issues Statement: Artsakh Has Never Been or Will Be Part of Azerbaijan

The National Assembly of the Republic of Artsakh issued a statement after the extraordinary session:

“The developments of the recent months, the statements and positions of various power centers and international organizations related to the prospects for the settlement of the Azerbaijani-Karabagh conflict and the future of Artsakh have caused serious concern in Artsakh and the entire Armenian community.

The National Assembly of the Republic of Artsakh, expressing the collective will of the people of Artsakh, considers it necessary to fix and document the following for the world in this crucial period.

Any attempt to forcibly annex Artsakh to Azerbaijan would be a gross violation of international law and an official license to commit another genocide against the Armenian people, therefore any document with such a content is unacceptable for the Republic of Artsakh.

Reaffirming that the Armenia-Artsakh-Diaspora trinity is among the key foundations of all our successes and achievements, as well as of the state-building process, the National Assembly of the Republic of Artsakh states as follows:

No authority in the Republic of Armenia has the right to refuse of the mission to ensure the security of the people of Artsakh or to accept any document questioning the existence of the sovereign Republic of Artsakh. We urge the authorities of the Republic of Armenia to defend the common interests of the two Armenian Republics at international platforms, based on the existing fundamental documents, in particular, the Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Armenia and the historic decision of the Supreme Council of July 8, 1992.

We call on Armenians worldwide to continue to support Artsakh, protect the rights and interests of Artsakh in various countries and international instances, and by all means contribute to the process of recognition of the Republic of Artsakh.

The Republic of Artsakh is a supporter of stable peace and, consequently, the steps aimed at signing a peace agreement, but the authorities of the Republic of Armenia should approach the issue of recognition of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan with reservations, considering the fact that the Azerbaijani-Karabagh conflict is not resolved yet.

Any document or proposal questioning the sovereignty of the Republic of Artsakh, our right to self-determination and the fact of its realization is unacceptable for us, since it does not reflect the historical and legal realities. The international community must respect the demand of the Armenians of Artsakh, since it complies with the fundamental principles and norms of international law.

Taking into account Russia’s historical role in ensuring peace and stability in our region and, in particular, President Vladimir Putin’s direct and active participation in halting the 44-day war imposed on us in 2020 by aggressor-Azerbaijan, we appeal to the Russian Federation and ask to continue its commitment to ensure the security of the people of Artsakh. For strengthening it, we propose to introduce additional political and military mechanisms, taking into account the real existential dangers threatening the Armenians of Artsakh.

Our struggle is continuous, and our position is unchanged; it expresses the collective will of Armenians worldwide and fully derives from the principles outlined in the April 14, 2022 statement of the National Assembly of the Republic of Artsakh,” the statement reads.



President of Armenia Vahagn Khachaturyan with Garo Paylan

## President Meets With Paylan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — President of Armenia Vahagn Khachaturyan received ethnic Armenian lawmaker of the Turkish parliament Garo Paylan on November 1, the Presidential Office said.

Khachaturyan welcomed Paylan’s visit to Armenia.

During the meeting the Armenia-Turkey normalization process, the possibilities and prospects of opening the borders between the two countries were discussed.

Issues relating to the Karabakh conflict settlement, the establishment of stable and lasting peace in the region, as well as the pan-Armenian agenda were also touched upon at the meeting.

Paylan thanked the Armenian president for the welcome and stated that he is ready to contribute to solving all these issues as much as he can.





## ARMENIA

# Silicon Valley in Shadow of Ararat Mountain

By Raffi Elliott

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — Over the past decade, Armenia has been cultivating global renown as a sort of European hub for technology and innovation. Yet the story of how Armenia transformed itself from “Soviet Silicon Valley” to the “Silicon Mountain” that we know today really mirrors that of its better-known Californian counterpart.

This story, as most Armenian stories do, begins with tragedy, and, again as with most Armenian stories, evokes memories of resilience and innovation through necessity. Yerevan, at the time, the capital of Soviet Armenia, witnessed the first inklings of an emerging technology sector during World War Two, when the retreating soviets sought to move sensitive technology development away from the front lines and towards the “interior.” This growth continued well into the 1980s as money and talent poured into the small soviet republic to develop everything from transistors to personal computers and guidance systems for soviet ICBMs in between.

Right about the time when the Soviet Union’s experimenting with Perestroika unveiled the first cracks which would soon lead to its demise, on the other side of the Atlantic — and far closer to the Pacific — Aart J de Geus and David Gregory founded Synopsys Inc., focusing on silicon design and verification, silicon intellectual property and software security and quality. Their office would be just a few miles down the road from the iconic Fairchild Semiconductor building, located at 844 East Charleston Road, Palo Alto, the site which created Silicon Valley as we know it today.

Founded in 1957, Fairchild Semiconductor literally pioneered the transistor and

integrated circuits industry. While the company was eventually sold and resold before being merged through an endless series of corporate reshuffling, its legacy continues to shape the way humanity interacts with

to turn these people into a nucleus for an emerging indigenous tech scene. Among the early pioneers in the Armenian technology industry Monterey Arset and Leda Design. Due to the considerable capital



Raffi Elliott at the Synopsys offices in Yerevan

technology today, with spin off companies spanning some 6 generations of technological iteration. Hewlett Packard (HP), Intel, AMD, SanDisk and more.

Back in soon-to-be-independent Armenia, massive state-owned semiconductor and microchip manufacturers were feeling the pinch of economic liberalization.

Recognizing the need to preserve the accumulated talent and knowledge of this highly educated workforce, well connected Armenians in the Diaspora would soon act

expenditures, political risk and logistics issues involved, microchip manufacturing was soon discounted as a viable option, but chip design and iteration, on the other hand, was perfectly suited for the Armenian tech climate.

A well-known fellow and chief architect at Synopsys, Dr. Yervant Zorian, was instrumental in Synopsys’ entry into the Armenian chip design market, navigating the purchase of several smaller companies and integrating them into Synopsys’ glob-

al ecosystem. Spearheading the acquisition of HPLA in 2005 and Virage Logic in 2010, Dr. Zorian turned Synopsys into one of Armenia’s top tech employers, and one of the largest taxpayers, hiring almost 1000 programmers and designers. In 2015, Dr. Zorian was made President of Synopsys Armenia. Synopsys eventually instilled a Silicon-Valley style work culture and business acumen among their employees.

This working culture is what Synopsys Armenia head of Communications Dr. Gayane Markosyan says is the company’s most prized contribution to the Armenian tech ecosystem. “Our employees feel like they’re part of a community and treat the company like home” she said. Markosyan pointed out that workers who leave the company often return years later, even after gaining experience abroad.

In cooperation with local business, government, and academic organizations, the company has also sponsored a number of STEM-related events for the youth of Armenia, and also helped put Armenia on the global IT map by inviting foreign participants to coding competitions held in Yerevan. This is what Markosyan calls “corporate citizenry.”

With several indigenous Armenian tech startups making global headlines and raising multi-million dollar funding rounds, it’s only a matter of time before the first of them goes public. Industry watchers like Dr. Armen Kherlopian expect such an IPO to “instantly create 50 new millionaires in the country.” Such a sudden growth of wealthy risk-tolerant entrepreneurs ready to reinvest into the ecosystem is likely to spur and inspire the rise of generation after generation of Armenian startups, much like the Fairchildren did back in Silicon Valley.

## Armenian, Iranian Leaders Emphasize Need to Boost Trade

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan paid a one-day working visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran on Tuesday, November 1. Iran’s Vice President Masoud Mir Kazemi met Prime Minister Pashinyan at Tehran International Airport.

Then Prime Minister Pashinyan headed to Sa’dabad Palace, where the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ebrahim Raisi welcomed Pashinyan, and the official welcoming ceremony took place.

Before starting the negotiations, Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures of Armenia Gnel Sanosyan and Iran’s Deputy Minister of Petroleum and CEO of the National Iranian Gas Company Majid Chegeni signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of natural gas.

First, the meeting of the leaders of Armenia and Iran took place in the narrow format and then in an expanded format. The interlocutors discussed a number of issues related to the development of Armenian-Iranian relations. In particular, the opportunities for the expansion of trade and economic relations, continuous increase of trade turnover volumes were discussed. In particular, the need to increase the volume to 3 billion USD per year was emphasized, for which, according to Prime Minister Pashinyan and Ebrahim Raisi, there is enough potential.

The sides also discussed issues related to the development of cooperation in infrastructure, energy, agriculture, construction and other fields. The implementation of joint projects for the facilitation of car-

go transportation, the need to complete the construction of the third power transmission line between Armenia and Iran were highlighted.

After the meeting, the leaders of Armenia and Iran made statements for media representatives summarizing the results of the negotiations.

Ebrahim Raisi said: “I welcome the Honorable Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and the members of the delegation accompanying him. I have no doubt, I am sure that the visit of Mr. Prime Minister will contribute to the further development of bilateral relations.

“The neighborhood policy is one of our main policies, and we have had several meetings with Mr. Pashinyan during these months. During those meetings and today’s visit, we emphasized the importance of developing ties between the two countries, especially in the economic, trade, political and security spheres.

“During the previous months, we recorded 43 percent increase in trade and economic relations with Armenia, but the goal, the target is \$3 billion. We will definitely achieve this goal. Good relations between the two countries will surely lead to strengthening of relations and security in the region.

“The Caucasus region is a cultural and civilizational part of Iran’s historical past, and we are very sensitive towards that region. Establishing security and peace in the region is very important for the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the negotiations with Mr. Pashinyan, we came to the conclusion that the issues and problems of the region should

definitely be solved through the leaders of the countries of the region. The presence of foreign powers not only does not solve any problems, but creates additional problems.”

Pashinyan said: “Honorable Mr. President, thank you for the invitation and warm welcome. I have to record that we are having a very full visit. We discussed issues related to the economic and political relations of the two countries, emphasized our historical ties, including recording the subtleties of our relations. I also highly appreciated the attitude and policy of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the opportunities created for the Armenian community of Iran. I must emphasize that the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Armenia are a very bright example of cooperation and friendship between Islamic and Christian civilizations.

“We also discussed issues related to the regional agenda, and in this direction the Republic of Armenia and the Islamic Republic of Iran see a very large field of cooperation as well. We emphasize and appreciate Iran’s firm positions in terms of ensuring regional security and stability. I told Mr. Raisi about the results of yesterday’s trilateral meeting in Sochi and shared my impressions about the agenda and current processes for estab-

lishing stability and peace in the region.

“We consider it important that our Iranian partners are informed about what is happen-



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan with President Ebrahim Raisi (Photos by Gevorg Perkuperkyan)

ing in the context of Armenia-Azerbaijan relations, in the context of Armenia-Turkey relations, in the context of the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

“A huge part of our conversation, of course, is about developing economic cooperation, and we see a huge potential here. There are concrete perspectives in the fields of energy, agriculture, infrastructure development, water resources management, the conversation around which should be made as concrete as possible. And I am glad that we achieved concrete results during the visit and a memorandum on the extension of the ‘Gas for Electricity’ contract was signed,” he said.





## Inaugural Meeting of ‘We Are Our Mountains’ Tackles Artsakh’s Strategic Issues

STEPANAKERT — On September 28-30, the first strategic session of the regional development agency “We Are Our Mountains” was held in Stepanakert, which was attended by more than sixty specialists of various fields from Armenia, Artsakh, and the Diaspora. The event was organized on the initiative of public and political figure Ruben Vardanyan and with the support of Artsakh government.

The purpose of the session was to discuss and outline the priority issues in the spheres of strategic security, demography, education, economy, healthcare, social maintenance and national identity for Artsakh and the possibilities of implementing programs and initiatives aimed at resolving them.

Thanking the guests for their readiness to participate in the event, public and political figure Ruben Vardanyan emphasized that such visits are also a support to show that the people of Artsakh are not alone. “I have been here for two months and, every time I analyze the situation, I understand that the people who live here are also heroes, because they prove with their daily lives that their homeland is important to them, that they see their future in Artsakh. To take part in this gathering is to outline Artsakh’s development and security strategy, to preserve the cultural and economic environment, where the people of Artsakh will feel successful and see a long-term future for themselves and their children,” said Vardanyan.

Artsakh’s State Minister Artak Beglaryan expressed confidence that the work of the strategic session will contribute to the solution of vital problems for Artsakh. “Quite a respectable group is represented here, including people who are in Artsakh for the first time. You have supported the motherland for a long time, and now, this is



The panel, featuring Ruben Vardanyan, center, and Artak Beglaryan at right

a chance for us to work together in a different format, for a longer-term, and in a more consistent way to understand how we can use our potential to save and strengthen our motherland,” said Beglaryan.

The results and ideas of the three-day discussions will be summarized and presented to the best specialists in specific fields to examine and turn them into practical programs.

“We need to make the best changes in

Artsakh in a very short time. We discussed projects and ideas that can be implemented in the short-term and long-term perspectives. At least within 3-6 months, we should start the work and show tangible results. We have had opinions and proposals, also made an idea of who can participate in the implementation of projects and in what format, from consulting to investments in Artsakh,” said Onik Aznauryan, the chief director of the regional development agen-

cy “We Are Our Mountains.”

Before starting their work, the participants of the first strategic session of the territorial development agency “We are our mountains” visited the memorial-pantheon of Stepanakert and paid tribute to the memory of the heroes who sacrificed their lives for the motherland. At the end of their work, the guests also visited Gandzasar and got acquainted with the historical and cultural heritage of Artsakh.

## COAF Embarks on New Project to Boost Women’s Employment in Lori

YEREVAN — The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) has received a contribution from the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) to provide 30 women with employment opportunities in the hospitality industry of Lori Province. The project, entitled “Empowering vulnerable women through job-oriented skills development and employment services in the hospitality sector in Lori region of Armenia”, kicked off on September 1, 2022 and will conclude on February 28, 2023.

The Project seeks to promote gender equality and economic empowerment for women in the workforce in Lori by addressing disadvantages in the labor market, and filling skill gaps to meet the hospitality industry’s needs. This, in turn, will boost the sector’s regional competitiveness and economic development.

Thirty women, aged 18 and above, will receive intensive training in culinary arts, restaurant management and servicing, delivered by the Yeremyan Academy of Culinary Arts and Hospitality. Seven women-owned partner institutions in Lori (Debed Life, Chamich, Angar, Kaghni, Tezh Ler, Tumanyan Development Foundation and both the COAF Concept Hotel and Conference Center) have guaranteed to hire graduates of the training program: 6 chefs, 6 restaurant managers and 18 waiters. In addition, the Marriott Armenia Hotel, The Concept Hotel by COAF and the COAF SMART Conference Center are committed to hosting post-training internships.

According to the Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia (Armstat),

Lori Province ranked among the highest with poor households and second highest nationwide with its level of migration in 2020. Moreover, the International Labor Organization (ILO) recently reported Armenia as having the highest unemployment rate of women among post-Soviet countries, with women constituting 60 percent of the unemployed population. The Project will be implemented in the rural areas of Lori, where these issues are deeply rooted, alongside gender inequality, gender stereo-

types, domestic violence, and other related phenomena.

COAF will manage the CFLI project, which totals \$52,714 Canadian, and act as a co-financing organization, with contributions that amount to 27 percent of the total costs.

As a leading rural development foundation with a mission to advance communities in Armenia through innovative programs, COAF has brought about dramatic results in terms of empowering individu-

als, and especially women (who make up 71 percent of COAF staff), to define their own futures and become active participants in their local communities. With the CFLI funding in place, COAF will increase its efforts by providing 30 disadvantaged women and their families with opportunities to maximize their potential, gain financial independence and increase their household incomes, thus fostering gender equality and social inclusion in Lori’s burgeoning hospitality industry.

## Russian-Led Bloc Still Cautious on Armenia-Azerbaijan Tensions

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — The Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) did not announce military aid or voice support for Armenia on Friday, October 26, after a virtual summit of its member states that discussed recent fighting on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border.

CSTO member Armenia initiated the summit in another attempt to secure such support in the face of what it regards as Azerbaijani military aggression. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan again urged the military alliance to condemn Azerbaijan and come up with a “roadmap for restoring Armenia’s territorial integrity.”

According to Pashinyan’s press office, a report presented by CSTO Secretary General Stanislav Zas confirms that Azerbaijani forces invaded Armenian territory and stresses the need for their withdrawal.

However, a CSTO statement on the summit said that the presidents of Russia and the

other member states only “expressed a firm conviction that the existing disagreements and contentious issues should be settled by political and diplomatic means.”

They discussed “joint measures to provide assistance to the Republic of Armenia” and made “a number of proposals to further work on relevant draft decisions,” the statement said, indicating a continuing lack of consensus within the bloc.

There was no word on the dispatch of CSTO monitors to the Armenian border areas affected by the September 13-14 hostilities. Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on October 12 that the CSTO secretariat in Moscow proposed such a monitoring mission and is waiting for Yerevan to secure the other member states’ approval of it.

Lavrov spoke in response to growing Armenian criticism of the CSTO’s reluctance to side with Armenia in the border conflict.

Armenia appealed to Russia and the CSTO for military aid on September 13 hours after Azerbaijani forces attacked many of its positions along the border. Its allies effectively declined the request, deciding instead to send two fact-finding teams tasked with studying the situation on the ground. The report presented by Zas during the summit is based on the findings of those teams.

In his speech at the CSTO partially publicized by the Kremlin, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Russia has for centuries been “supporting our Armenian friends in ensuring the security of the Armenian people.”

Putin went on to say that both Armenia and Azerbaijan are “states close to Russia” and that Moscow is doing its best to normalize their relations. Their strict compliance with Russian-brokered agreements is “the only possible and realistic path to peace,” he stressed.





## INTERNATIONAL

# Archbishop Barsamian Participates in Sant'Egidio's International Meeting for Peace

ROME — The Community Sant'Egidio hosted the 36th edition of its annual "Spirit of Assisi" event in Rome from October 23 to 25. The three-day peace summit welcomed presidents, religious leaders, and various high-ranking authorities. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Representative of the Armenian Church to the Holy See and the Pontifical Legate of the Western Europe, also was invited to take part in the activities.

The event was inaugurated on Sunday, October 23rd at the "Nuvola" Congress Center in Rome with the presence of French President Emmanuel Macron and Italian President Sergio Mattarella. Macron in his speech twice said that because of the war in Ukraine, the world should not forget the wars in Armenia, Syria, Iraq and Somalia.

On Monday, October 24, several forums took place. Barsamian was asked to participate and make presentation in one of the forums titled "A Shared Easter Date: No Longer a Dream, but a Necessity to Unite the World."

In the beginning of his presentation Barsamian expressed his appreciation to the Community of Sant'Egidio for organizing once again this International Meeting for Peace "The Cry for Peace – Religions and Cultures in Dialogue." And he expressed his joy to be part of this Forum in which they were asked to discuss a very important topic "A Shared Easter Date: No Longer a Dream, but a necessity to Unite the World."

He mentioned that the past few years have been very challenging to the world: Covid-19 Pandemic has shaken the entire humanity and the recent serious political conflicts have created an atmosphere of major threat to the world. For that, he stressed that there is an urgent need for unity.

He reminded the audience saying "How the modern ecumenical movement during the last century has become a springboard to create an environment of mutual respect, openness and rapprochement among the churches which have been deeply divided by history, theology, culture and geography. And how in 1948 the World Council of Churches was established in Amsterdam and how the ecumenical movement destroyed the walls of isolation and open the gates for dialogue, cooperation, understanding and respecting each other and through which active interaction began."

He also reminded that the 16 documents produced by the Second Vatican Council 60 years ago proposed significant developments in doctrine and practice: an extensive reform of the liturgy, a renewed theology of the Church, a new approach to relations between the Church and the world, to ecumenism, to non-Christian religions and to religious freedom, stressing that how in modern history, inter-church relations received a completely new development after the Second Vatican Council. And with such spirit the Christians can search new ways to

bring healing to the divided world and find paths of reconciliation.

Speaking about "A Shared Easter Date" Barsamian spoke about the importance of Christ's Resurrection for all Christians saying "it is the foundation of our Christian faith. Celebrating together on the same day of this important feast will be a very important step to realize our unity in our Risen Lord." He also presented some of the recent positive developments in order to resolve this issue.

Barsamian suggested that the year 2025, which coincides with the 1,700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) might be an opportune time to reform the calendar.

He concluded his presentation saying "time has come to look with hope to a common Easter celebrated and witnessed in unity, in the East and the West, following the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea. The time for Christians to proclaim: 'Christ is risen! Indeed, he is risen!'" and share their liturgical treasures and services might be nearer than we think, and the Church of the first millennium is coming to the rescue."

The three days events concluded with a prayer service in Rome's Colosseum, presided by Pope Francis. Before the service Archbishop Barsamian had the opportunity to greet the Pope. When he told the Pope about his coming trip to Armenia, Pope Francis said "I pray for Armenia."

## French Military Officials Visit Armenia

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — A delegation of France's Armed Forces Ministry has visited Armenia to explore the possibility of deepening military ties between the two states.

French Armed Forces Minister Sebastien Lecornu announced the trip late last month after meeting with Armenian Defense Minister Suren Papikyan in Paris in the wake of the September 13-14 fighting on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. He said that the delegation will "assess the situation" on the ground.

The two ministers met the day after France's President Emmanuel Macron received Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Paris. Macron blamed Azerbaijan for the hostilities and said Azerbaijani forces must "return to their initial positions."

The French defense officials on Thursday, October 27, held separate talks with Papikyan and Major-General Eduard Asrian, the chief of the Armenian army's General Staff. The Armenian Defense Ministry said that they discussed the implementation of "understandings" reached during Papikyan's trip to France. It did not give any details.

The delegation headed by Guillaume Ollagnier, a senior official at the French ministry's Directorate General of International Relations and Strategy, met with Armenia's High-Technology Minister Robert Khachatryan on Wednesday.

Khachatryan's press office said they discussed "possible cooperation in the research-and-scientific and a number of other spheres." It did not elaborate.

"The delegation exchanged views with

its interlocutors on the modalities of reinforcing military cooperation between France and Armenia," the French Embassy in Yerevan said for its part.

Following the two-day border clashes, which left at least 280 soldiers dead, Armenian officials complained about the Armenian army's lack of modern weapons. Some of them did not rule out the possibility of French arms supplies to Armenia.

Pashinyan again heaped praise on France when he met with a group of visiting French lawmakers on Friday. He described it as a "friendly country" that "always stands with Armenia in difficult situations."

Earlier this month, Macron accused Russia of inciting Azerbaijan to attack Armenia in a bid to destabilize the South Caucasus. Moscow angrily rejected the accusation.



A French military delegation meets with Armenian High-Tech Industry Minister Robert Khachatryan, Yerevan, October 26

## INTERNATIONAL

### Yerevan to Host CSTO Meeting on November 23

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — An extraordinary session of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Collective Security Council will be held in Yerevan on November 23, the Russian-led security bloc said in a statement on November 1.

"On November 1, 2022, President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko met with CSTO Secretary General Stanislav Zas, who was on a working visit to Minsk," the organization's statement read.

### Putin and Erdogan Discuss Sochi Summit Results

MOSCOW (Public Radio of Armenia) — Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan discussed the results of the trilateral meeting of the Russian President with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev held in Sochi on October 31.

"The results of the trilateral meeting of the President of the Russian Federation with President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan, which took place on October 31 in Sochi, were discussed," the Kremlin's press service said on November 1.

### French Parliament Discusses Resolution To Impose Sanctions on Azerbaijan

PARIS (Public Radio of Armenia) — At the initiative of the Renaissance parliamentary group, the French National Assembly is planning to offer a resolution that will impose certain sanctions on Azerbaijan, condemn the Azerbaijani aggression, demand the return of the occupied territories and return to the negotiating table, French MPs said at a meeting with their counterparts at the National Assembly this week.

Armenian parliamentarians praised the resolution. Vladimir Vardanyan, head of the Armenian National Assembly's Armenia-France friendship group, valued the development of dynamic relations with France, particularly between the legislative bodies. On behalf of the friendly group, the deputy congratulated the newly elected members of the French National Assembly. It was noted that the friendly group with Armenia will be formed in the French parliament in the near future.

Issues related to the development of Armenian-French cooperation in the economic sphere, implementation of joint projects and long-term stable investments were discussed. It was noted that Armenia is improving the economic and competitive environment to attract new investments. From the point of view of economic development, regional stability and the inviolability of borders were highlighted.



# Armenian Genocide Discussed at UK House of Lords

LONDON (Public Radio of Armenia) — The Genocide Determination Bill sponsored by Lord David Alton was given a Second Reading in the House of Lords this week as peers agreed to commit it to a Committee of the whole House for further consideration.

“Next year will mark the 75th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Pre-

mar, the Tigrayans in Ethiopia and others experiencing genocidal attacks in the 21st century without telling the truth about the past. Indeed, sacrificing the truth about the past for the convenience of the present is dangerous. In 2020, the invasion of Nagorno-Karabakh by Azerbaijan, supported,” Lord Darzi said.

He noted that the bill is not simply about addressing a historic injustice. “It is about how our understanding of the past shapes our actions in the present. It is about giving the full message of meaning when we say, ‘Never again’. I ask that your Lordships give the Bill your full support,” he said.

“I was very struck by the speech of the noble Lord, Lord Darzi. I have read *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* by the Jewish writer, Franz Werfel. It is a novel about the experiences of the Armenians during their genocide. It is a very

powerful account. It is not surprising that Adolf Hitler had that Jewish writer’s books burned, because, as the noble Lord told us, Hitler himself said, ‘Who now remembers the Armenians?’ — effectively, ‘Why



Lord Ara Darzi

should we worry when nobody else seems to worry?” Alton said.

“I have been to Nagorno-Karabakh with my noble friend Lady Cox. I took my daughter with me, and said to her, ‘If ever you go into public life, speak up for those for whom there is no voice.’ My grandfather gave me pictures that he brought back from the Holy Land during the First World War that showed executed Armenians who had been murdered as the Ottoman Turks retreated from Jerusalem. We saw those same photographs in the genocide museum in Yerevan. I was personally very taken not

only by what the noble Lord, Lord Darzi, had to say but by what everyone has said in this debate,” he noted.

“This bill should be committed to a Committee and we should have further discussion. We should thrash out the details and honor the promises that were given to me by two former Foreign Secretaries, who are also now former Prime Ministers. We should be as good as our word in politics. They said that this would be reformed. This bill provides an opportunity for it to be reformed. I commend it to the House,” Alton said.



Lord David Alton

vention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, but we are nowhere near having clear mechanisms to help us deliver on the duty contained therein to prevent the very core of the convention — “never again” — happening all over again,” Alton said at the debate.

Lord Ara Darzi paid tribute to Alton for the passionate and determined way he has pursued this vital issue over many years.

“As the first Armenian in the British Parliament, and as a descendent of a Genocide survivor, I owe him a particular debt. I was born in Iraq to Armenian parents made refugees by the 1915 genocide, in which more than 1 million ethnic Armenians were massacred by the Ottomans. I say that I am a Genocide survivor, and in 33 countries around the world that description would be acknowledged, yet the country I have made my home is not one of them,” he said.

“My great-grandfather, who lived in Erzurum in what is now north-east Turkey, was executed along with his sons by the Ottoman forces. My grandmother, then just a teenager, escaped with her mother, and the two of them walked barefoot for weeks before finally finding sanctuary in Mosul in northern Iraq. They were the lucky ones. Many other women and children were sent on a death march across the desert from which they would never return. Half a century later, my family and I emigrated from Iraq to Ireland, where I studied medicine, before moving to London in the 1990s, where I have dedicated my career to the NHS [National Health Service],” he noted.

“As the first Armenian in this House, I was overjoyed when President Biden decided a year ago to break with his predecessors and recognize the Armenian genocide. The vote in the US House of Representatives in October 2020 was overwhelming. It was a hugely emotional moment for me and for Armenians all over the world. Most European countries—including France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden—have recognized the Armenian genocide, but the UK has not,” Lord Darzi stated.

“Unless we, as members of the international community, call out genocidal violence wherever it occurs, its perpetrators will feel encouraged to continue. We should use the experience not to fuel bitterness and revenge but to set a stake in the ground and declare, “Never again”—not just for the Armenians but for people all over the world. We cannot protect the Uighurs in Xinjiang, the Rohingya in Myan-

## Putin Hosts ‘Useful’ Talks Between Azeri and Armenian Leaders

TALKS, from page 1

In that statement, Aliyev and Pashinyan said they “agreed to refrain from the use of force or the threat of its use and discuss and resolve all problematic issues solely on the basis of mutual recognition of sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders.”

“On the basis of existing proposals, it was agreed to continue the search for mutually acceptable solutions,” said the statement. “The Russian Federation will render all possible assistance to this.”

Neither Aliyev nor Pashinyan made public statements right after the summit preceded by their separate talks with Putin.

The Sochi summit underscored Russian efforts to regain the initiative in the Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiating process which has been coordinated by the United States and the European Union in recent months. Moscow has been very critical of the Western mediation, saying that it is aimed at “squeezing Russia out of the South Caucasus.”

In remarks that caused a stir in Armenia, Putin claimed last week that the US has put forward an Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty that would commit Yerevan to recognizing Nagorno-Karabakh as an integral part of Azerbaijan. He implied that Moscow favors a different deal that would keep Karabakh’s status unresolved.

Meeting with Putin earlier on Monday, Pashinyan said he supports “the Russian draft of basic principles and parameters” of the peace agreement.

“I hope that you will support the [Armenian] proposal to refer to this document in the text of today’s possible trilateral statement following our trilateral meeting,” he said.

The statement issued late in the evening contains no such reference.

Aliyev reiterated, meanwhile, that Azerbaijan’s victory in the 2020 war with Armenia will put an end to the Karabakh conflict. “So there is practically nothing to discuss in this context,” he told Putin.

Aliyev also said that the peace treaty must be based on five elements proposed by Baku earlier this year. They include mutual recognition of territorial integrity.

Pashinyan has repeatedly stated that the

Azerbaijani proposals are acceptable to Yerevan in principle, fueling allegations by his domestic political enemies that he is intent on helping Baku regain full control over Karabakh.

## Armenian Soprano Juliana Grigoryan wins Operalia 2022

RIGA, Latvia (Panorama.am) — Armenian soprano Juliana Grigoryan and U.S. tenor Anthony León won the first prize at the 2022 edition of Operalia held in Riga, Latvia from October 24 to 30.

She also collected the Rolex Prize of the Audience at the annual opera competition.

Juliana is the most recent winner of the International Stanislaw Moniuszko Vo-



From left, Juliana Grigoryan, Plácido Domingo and Anthony León

cal Competition Grand Prize. She has performed with the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra, the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra, and the National Chamber Orchestra of Armenia.

She holds a Master’s from Yerevan State Conservatory and is a member of their Young Artist Opera Programme.

Operalia was founded in 1993 by tenor Plácido Domingo to discover and help launch the careers of the most promising young opera singers of today. Operalia’s goal is to attract singers between the ages of 18 and 32, of all voice types from and all over the world, to have them audition and be heard by a panel of distinguished international personalities, in the most prestigious and competitive showcase in the



# Community News

## Professor Ohanyan Argues Democracy, Connectivity Can Save Armenia

By Harry Kezelian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

BELMONT, Mass. — On September 29, Professor Anna Ohanyan of Stonehill College spoke at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) about her recently published book, *The Neighborhood Effect: The Imperial Roots of Regional Fracture in Eurasia*.

The book grew out of Ohanyan's research and interest in approaching the study of politics from a regional perspective. In it, the scholar tries to answer why, when empires fall, some regions (for example, the Baltic States) emerge as democratic and prosperous while others (such as the Transcaucasia) erupt in interstate or ethnic conflict.

Ohanyan's short answer seems to



Prof. Anna Ohanyan

be “democracy.” Despite widespread criticism of the Nikol Pashinyan administration, Ohanyan argues that the 2018 Velvet Revolution was a valuable and necessary development for the country.

She said, “For a small nation, security comes from democracy. If you don't have democracy, forget about security, forget about your statehood. Because at its core, democracy is for people to decide who is going to govern them. When they don't have that choice, external powers can influence politics.”

### Imperial Roots

Ohanyan said regionalism is “both part of the problem as well as the solution.”

Having edited a 2018 scholarly volume, *Russia Abroad*, Ohanyan and others argued that Russia was using “deliberate fracturing,” and “undoing of regional ties to project global influence.” She stated that she then realized this phenomenon of “regional fracturing” may have “imperial roots.” For that reason, in her latest book she looked at the history of three major empires on the Eurasian continent in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, namely the Tsarist Russian Empire under the Romanov dynasty, the Ottoman Turkish Empire, and the Habsburg (Austro-Hungarian) Empire.

see CONNECTIVITY, page 9



Patricia Barteveian in her shop, Barteveian Inc., on Boylston Street, Boston

## Barteveian Inc. Is A Boston Landmark

By Melanie Tuysuzian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BOSTON — If you're familiar with Boylston Street, you've probably seen Barteveian inc., a shop owned and operated

by Patricia Barteveian, 99. She manages the business, founded by her father, as the last member of her family.

The quaint antique/consignment shop at 160 Boylston St., at Edgar Allen Poe Square, has been there for more than 100 years. Fans of Poe have sought out the place; passersby would simply be intrigued by the woman waving hello through the window. The smell of antiquity pervades the interior. There are some old CD, DVD, purses, jewels, but also kerchiefs, old cameras, paintings, VHS tapes, and even some antique kettles and vases. In the middle of this endearing mess, some treasures hide in plain sight. Barteveian is one of them. She had a big smile, long grey hair, and deep blue eyes. Her dazzling voice alone indicated that she'd had real-life adventures — adventures that she liked to tell anyone passing by her door.

### Fleeing Death in the Ottoman Empire

Barteveian wrote a book five years ago about her family's history, *The Barteveians, A Boston Family*, which she said, “is the history of a family of Armenian descent from 1900 to 2021.”

It all began with Patricia's father, Gregory (Krikor) Barteveian, who came to the United States to flee the first wave of the killing of Armenians that preceded the genocide. He hailed from Van, Turkey, and studied in Istanbul. After graduating, he helped his father, Hagop, who owned a shoe factory. But Gregory lost his parents when he was a teenager, in the early 1900; his mother died from an illness, and his father was murdered by the Turks while he was travelling for work. Gregory joined the Armenian resistance and fought against the Turks. During one battle, he was seriously wounded and was sheltered by the Armenian monks. At that time,

see LANDMARK, page 11



Customers in the shop “Barteveian Inc”, Boylston Street, Boston

## Ghapama Tradition Celebrated at Saints Vartanantz

CHELMSFORD, Mass. — The walls of the Kazanjian Ballroom were vibrating on Saturday, October 22, to the rhythmic clapping of some 160 guests as three parish young ladies dressed in traditional Armenian costumes gracefully danced into the ballroom each holding a “Ghapama” (a stuffed pumpkin) to the folk tune, *Hey Jan Ghapama*.

“Tonight, the meaning of the centuries old custom of Ghapama truly took on a new flavor,” commented Milka Jeknavorian, who had originally proposed the idea of combining music, dance, and the sumptuous Ghapama.” The idea of quickly excited a key group of ladies in the parish, who then with the support of the Women's Guild, organized a spectacular evening for the community.”

With the ballroom beautifully decorated for the fall season, along with a very popular Armenian style photo station, the evening program began with a warm welcome and prayer by Father Khachatur Kesablian. Yeretzgin Anna Kesablian, the Ghapama committee chair, expressed the committee's joy to see the ballroom filled with so many parishioners and friends who “are anxious to celebrate and share our rich and priceless culture and Christian heritage.”

Deacon Ara Jeknavorian next of-



Women carry trays of Ghapama

fered a narrated PowerPoint presentation about the meaning of Ghapama. At the conclusion of the presentation, Maria Kesablian, Mila Shirikyan, and Grace Dion, dressed in traditional Armenian attire, danced into the ballroom to the popular folk song, *Hey Jan Ghapama*, each holding a Ghapama. The ballroom immediately filled with clapping and singing as the Ghapama dancers made their way around the ballroom. Following dinner, the evening continued with dancing with music provided by DJ Ray.

The proceeds from the evening were donated to support the Artsakh families of fallen or disabled soldiers defending Artsakh and Armenia against attacks by Azerbaijan. Commenting on the importance of dedicating the evening to the families of Artsakh, Yeretzgin Anna reflected, “we were blessed to have the opportunity to bring our parish families together this evening to celebrate our rich Armenian heritage and honor the sacrifice of those who have defended our Artsakh and Armenian homelands, and that their families may have a dignified life.”





## COMMUNITY NEWS

## NAASR to Host Lecture on Armenian of Abkhazia

BELMONT, Mass. — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) will host an in-person and online program, “The Armenians of Abkhazia: Identification and Self-Identification in the Early 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” presented by researcher Zadig Tisserand, on Tuesday, November 8, at 7:30 p.m., at the NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, 395 Concord Ave. This program will be presented under the auspices of the NAASR / Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues.

This will be an in-person event and also presented online live via Zoom For those attending in person, NAASR recommends the wearing of masks to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

Having arrived in successive waves on the shores of the Black Sea in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Armenians of Abkhazia today constitute more than 20 percent of the population of the de facto Republic of Abkhazia. The Armenian community of Abkhazia, the members of which self-identify as “Hamshen,” emigrated from north-east Turkey and have preserved their traditions and dialects, which they still use in the private sphere.

Thirty years after the war in Abkhazia (1992-1993), the Armenians of Abkhazia are embedded in the fragile process of Abkhazian national construction. Within this young ethnic democracy, they are thus regularly questioned on several aspects of their identity: Are they Abkhazians or Armenians? Are the Hamshen and Armenian identities contradictory? How do they identify themselves and how are they identified by the Abkhazian State? Finally, what might their relationship to the Republic of Armenia be?

Tisserand received a BA in Political Science (2018) and an MA in Political Theory (2020) from Sciences Po Paris. His master’s thesis, based on six months of field research in the de facto state of Abkhazia, examined the political mobilization of Abkhazian Armenians within that ethnic democracy. He continues to study the geopolitics of the South Caucasus. An article on the Persian Gulf-Black Sea Transit Corridor is forthcoming in the academic journal *Confluences Méditerranée*.

For more information about this program, contact NAASR at [hq@naasr.org](mailto:hq@naasr.org).

## Archbishop Vicken Aykazian Ordains Four Sub-Deacons at Holy Trinity Church

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — On October 23, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston welcomed Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Diocesan Legate and Ecumenical Officer. On this day, he ordained Robert Dulgarian, Gregory Dorian, Edward Khatchatrian and Kevork Atinikian to the liturgical rank of sub-deacon. After celebrating the Badarak, he presided over the Parishioners of the Year reception and spent time with the parishioners.

The faithful filled the Holy Trinity sanctuary to witness the very special ceremony. Each of the men who had the honor of being ordained is very in touch with their Armenian heritage and their faith. From attending Badarak each week, and reading and teaching Armenian literature, to dancing for Armenian dance companies, and participating in Armenian clubs, these men are truly well deserving of this honor.

Aykazian, sharing his joy for such a celebration as this, said, “I always think of this altar as among the most beautiful in our diocese, however today I saw its true beauty...it rests in the great number of altar servers who surround it with love and devotion...and today I have the honor of ordaining four of them to the rank of Sub-deacon”

Following church services, the celebration continued in the newly renovated Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, as Holy Trinity honored two couples as their Parishioners of the Year — Ara and June Hollisian, and Bob and Marilyn Takvorian. Both couples were equally deserving of the honor as they have served the parish with great faith and passion over the years. From serving on the Parish Council, and teaching Sunday school, to baking choreg for events and coordinating live streams of Sunday Badarak, each couple has dedicated their time and talents to the Holy Trinity community in wonderful ways.

“These couples are remarkable examples to all of us as to what it means to be dedicated and devoted,” stressed the archbishop.



Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, seated in the middle, with Rev. Vicken Kouzouian, right, and his father, Rev. Mampre Kouzouian, with new deacons and sub-deacons

## Prof. Mutaflan to Speak about Armenians until the Ottoman Conquest of Jerusalem at Fresno State

FRESNO — Dr. Claude Mutaflan will give a presentation on “Jerusalem and the Armenians until the Ottoman Conquest (1516)” on Tuesday, November 15, at 7 p.m., in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, on the Fresno State campus.

In the four-fold division of the Old City of Jerusalem, the Christian and the Armenian Quarters are contiguous but independent. This situation corresponds to the ancientness and the importance of the Armenian presence. Jerusalem has indeed remained a myth for Armenians since the fourth century, when Christianity was proclaimed a national religion.

The relations of the Armenians with the Holy City have never ceased, and they culminated at the time of the Crusades, which gave the opportunity to found in Cilicia, at the end of the 11th century, an Armenian State bordering Frankish Syria, which was to convert into a Kingdom one century later. Jerusalem was then home to the seat of an Armenian Patriarchate and the cultural activity was intense: inscriptions, sculp-

tures, mosaics, pieces of goldsmithery, superb manuscripts decorated with miniatures which are among the masterpieces of Armenian art. Under the rule of the Mamluks, Armenian culture continued to flourish in Jerusalem, and the accounts of European travelers never omitted a section devoted to the Armenians.

Today, Jerusalem is the most important repository of Armenian culture outside Armenia.

The aim of the new book is to present the relations between Armenia and Jerusalem in their historical and artistic context. The abundance of maps and genealogical charts makes it easy to read. The iconography plays a fundamental role, the text being essentially treated as captions for images, let them be reproductions of miniatures, monuments, works of art, or manuscript pages of historians and travelers.

Mutaflan is the son of parents who were survivors of the 1915 Genocide. His father is the well-known painter Zareh Mutaflan. His studies led him towards mathematics, and he taught for more than 40 years in

various universities: Paris, Princeton, New Jersey, Havana, Mexico and Yerevan. His passion has always been history and he has written about the Genocide and Karabakh, but his main field of interest remains the Medieval period, in particular Cilician Armenia and its relations with the Crusaders and the Mongols. *Cilicia at the Crossroad of Empires* was published in 1988, and the *Historical Atlas of Armenia* in 2001.

The lecture is free and open to the public.

For information about upcoming Armenian Studies Program presentations, visit <https://fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies>.



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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Professor Ohanyan Argues Democracy, Connectivity Can Save Armenia

CONNECTIVITY, from page 7

Ohanyan freely admitted that she was not a trained historian and has utilized the latest scholarship of her colleagues in the historical field who work from primary sources, including names such as Houri Berberian, Bedross Der Matossian and Ronald Suny. Analyzing the latest available historical scholarship from a political science point of view, she arrived at the conclusions made in *The Neighborhood Effect*.

She noted, “I’m trying to investigate whether the power of connectivity has anything to do with whether these regions are stuck. And why is it that some of those regions have emerged peacefully.”

The theme of connectivity came up throughout her lecture. Ohanyan promotes this as the key to regional peace. While harboring no rosy view of the current regimes in Azerbaijan and Turkey, she seemed to hold out hope that these states would become more peaceful in the future, and that the way to guarantee Armenia’s security is, in a sense, to work toward creating an environment where it benefits Azerbaijan to leave Armenia and Karabakh alone, for example.

Filtering the questions from the viewpoint of “regionalism,” Ohanyan suggests conflicts exist as a product of instability in the area, while not absolving states like Azerbaijan and Turkey, and indeed Russia, for taking advantage of or further promoting instability for their own, in her view short-sighted, ends.

“The one question I’m trying to answer is, how do regions pacify? When you visit Armenia and Georgia, it’s doom and gloom and ‘this is a tough neighborhood,’” she says. Her question is as to why it is a tough neighborhood and what would make it less so.

Democratization is the inevitable answer, she said, while admitting that Armenians can’t just wait and hope for Azerbaijan to become more democratic so that Armenia can have peace.

She also criticized the widely-held notion that to live in a peaceful region or even to be democratic, you have to be industrialized, rich, and European. “Peaceful regions are not the privilege of the rich or the Europeans,” she stated, and later in her talk made several references to the vastly diverse ethnic makeup of a place like India, which while not as developed as Europe economically, is democratic and largely peaceful.

Making reference to the ongoing war in Ukraine, Ohanyan stated, “I don’t have to tell you that the Eurasian continent as we speak is going through some pretty significant tectonic shifts when it comes to geopolitics. I don’t have to tell you that the post-post-Cold War lull is seeming to come to an end, and the rules-based world order is frayed.”

According to Ohanyan, while everyone in the Eurasian continent is now looking for stability and assurance such as existed during the Cold War (1947-1991), a period when relative peace was due to a stalemate between the two world superpowers, the US and the USSR, this period might be coming to an end. The concept of “deterrence” does not seem to be as valid as a stabilizing factor as it once was.

“I hope I’m wrong, but security needs to come from various levels,” says Ohanyan. Yet the future state of world geopolitics is unclear. According to Ohanyan, political scientists and analysts are wary of the current developments, not knowing where it will lead. She asked rhetorically, “Are we going to be back to feudalism, to countries invading each other?”

Ohanyan stated that political scientists have two main theories of how regions can become pacified. On one hand you can have two major hegemonic powers that balance each other out. Another approach is that regions will enjoy peace through democracy.

Ohanyan states that this approach is problematic, because for example when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the dominant narrative was that this was peaceful, and while it’s true that the system collapsed without much of a fight and some nations, like Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (the Baltic States) had a stable freedom, on the other hand, conflicts and small wars broke out throughout the post-Soviet space in areas like the Caucasus. “The theory has never been reconciled with the varying levels of violence,” said Ohanyan.

## Policy Implications

Ohanyan next addressed what the implications of her analysis are for the current cases of the South Caucasus as well as Ukraine. She argues that although the conflicts that broke out after fall of the USSR are referred to as “post-Soviet wars,” this is a misnomer, as they conflicts have pre-Soviet, imperialist roots.

What has been missing, Ohanyan said, is a theoretical approach to explain how these imperial roots still reverberate.

Next, Ohanyan directly explained the meaning of her book’s title. Her concept of the “neighborhood effect” refers to the way that “geographically contiguous units,” whether contemporary states or ethno-religious communities during the imperial era, relate to one another.

The neighborhood concept was developed to capture the nature of the regional fabric. In terms of “imperial peripheries” (areas of an Empire that were not central to its government or inhabited by the ruling ethnic group), “neighborhood effect” refers to societal connectivity between and within ethno-religious groups.

Ohanyan stated that at its core, the argument she is making is for connectivity through civil society. She cited contemporary India as a place where criminal violence between Muslims and Hindus was less likely to take place in neighborhood where “bridging” social capital existed. Areas where each community kept to themselves were more prone to violence.

Another example came from Africa, where after the fall of colonialism, groups that had been excluded from power in the new states were able to have more say in society if they had traditional institutions that predated colonization. Regions where traditional institutions were present succeeded in staying out of armed conflict.

Civic ties and social capital has long been applied in the context of the United States as a benefit to the social cohesion and prosperity of country, by authors such as Alexis de Tocqueville and Robert Putnam, who stressed the importance of volunteerism and professional groups to the success of the US. The strength of democracy comes from these community organizations, according to such authors.

Summing up the concept of “neighborhood effect,” Ohanyan stated that it is what differentiates between fractured and resilient communities/regions. In a fractured neighborhood, societal fabric is “clustered” with shallow institutional connections between and even within ethnic groups. This makes the region more vulnerable to attack from the center as well as victim to rivalries between powers. Resilient neighborhoods are those which have better social capital, and they end up being less vulnerable.

## Historical Examples

Ohanyan analyzes three different 19th-century empires in her book, the Habsburgs, the Russians, and the Ottomans. During the lecture she spoke briefly on the Russian Empire, focusing on Transcaucasia, and on the Ottoman Empire, focusing on Eastern Anatolia; in other words, the two sections of Historic Armenia. She noted that she was surprised to find the implications of her theory for the history of the Armenian Genocide, but gave the caveat that she was not a Genocide scholar.

According to Ohanyan, all empires went through a period when they centralized and modernized, in the late 19th and early 20th century.

The Russian Empire constantly tried to deal with its problems by expanding its territory. It saw territorial expansion as leading to security, and President Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine shows the same attitude. However, Ohanyan notes, territorial size is a liability, especially when it creates problems with institutional consolidation. While Russia has made territorial expansion its “signature move,” in terms of statecraft, trying to then centralize the government without allowing political participation from the peripheries was a dangerous move. Doing so caused unrest, for example in 19th-century Poland. The Russians feared ethnic uprisings and so divided the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth between themselves and the Habsburg Empire. After the division, civic traditions and institutions developed on both sides of border in a divergent way, said Ohanyan. But after the USSR dissolved, conflict did not arise between Ukraine and Poland, though the Ukrainian and Polish peoples had been at odds in the past. Apparently this was due to “bridging” ties created when both were under Russian rule.

Moving to Transcaucasia, Ohanyan credited the book *Roving Revolutionaries* by Houri Berberian with providing her with much material. Transcaucasia is, of course, a “fractured” neighborhood. Ohanyan stated that Great Power rivalry was rife in the region, which was nestled between the Russian, Ottoman, and Persian Empires.

On the other hand, Russian imperialism in Transcaucasia polarized the main ethnic groups through socio-economic differences that became politicized and “securitized.” Particular occupations were dominated by different ethnicities, creating class and economic division. There were civic ties, but they were “clustered,” and there were no formal institutions where “bridging” ties could form between ethnic groups.

Another problem was that in the Russian Empire, the peoples of the peripheral areas like Transcaucasia had no say in the government, and did not have access to parliamentary politics. In contrast, such rights were extended to most regions of the Habsburg Empire, where the varying ethnicities could form political parties, come together and bargain.

In addition, the revolutionary political parties that existed under Russian rule were “globally deployed,” and they crossed national/ethnic divisions. This led to some level of organizational resilience when the Empire collapsed. Ohanyan noted that although the short-lived Transcaucasian Federation (a state unifying modern-day Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, before those three countries’ declarations of independence in May 1918) is dismissed by many as having been inconsequential since it only lasted 2 months, on the other hand, this Federation did not “come out of thin air,” Ohanyan pointed out. She also mentioned that most parties wanted to reform the empire,

and did not seriously consider creating their own sovereign nation states, at least at that point. “The dominant trend was self-governance, representation and democracy within a reformed multinational state,”

The Ottoman Empire was a total contrast. Here, the situation in Eastern Anatolia was of a totally fractured region. The Ottoman Empire did not manage the pressures of centralization and modernization at all. Its signature approach was the “millet system,” where ethnoreligious groups were represented through their organized religious institutions under an overall Muslim hegemony. This proved a liability as soon as the imperial center tried to centralize and modernize its relationship with the peripheries, i.e. provincial areas like Eastern Anatolia.

While the millet system “managed” plurality, it also created a political hierarchy and institutional segregation between various groups. This meant that ethnoreligious groups such as Armenians and Kurds had a high level of “bonding” social capital as groups but no “bridging” social capital between groups, because there were no formal political institutions through which the different ethnicities or “millets” could interact with each other. Ohanyan notes that day-to-day interactions between individuals and their neighbors are not the same and are not enough. This system allowed for ad hoc negotiations between the empire and the various peoples and regions within it.

Eastern Anatolia in particular was subject to Great Power rivalry and was a “fractured” region with “bonding” ties and few “bridging” ties.

Ohanyan challenged the “deterministic” approach to explaining the causes of the Armenian Genocide (i.e. that it was the inevitable result of Great Power rivalry) by stating that the Ottoman imperial center was responsible for “fraying the regional fabric” which heightened the rivalry. One major blow was the Ottoman state’s erosion of the semi-autonomous Kurdish Emirates, leaving only “tribes” with little political power or status to negotiate with. This, argues Ohanyan, actually made the region less secure for both Kurds and Christians. The reason she gave is that “only centralized institutions are able to bargain credibly and effectively.”

Ohanyan further stated that the Ottomans made Eastern Anatolia into a fractured region by “default and by design.” On one hand, for various historical and social reasons, Armenians were more integrated into the world economy, and socio-economic stratification between different groups then coincided with their being connected to different “stakeholders” outside the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, the Ottomans attempted the Tanzimat reforms, resulting in increased political activity by Armenians, Turks, and others, but did not create spaces for “bridging,” thus creating a problem of “political parties without parliament.”

Ohanyan also noted the elimination of the Kurdish emirates, the creation of the irregular Kurdish militias, land grabs, settling of the Kurds and so on.

Ohanyan concluded her lecture by giving recommendations, founded on the idea that “connectivity matters.” She stated that “civic peace is important,” “local actors have agency,” and “grand geopolitical theories” are limited in how much they can explain regional politics. Top-down approaches for security are no longer enough, she said. Deterrence, the hallmark subject of Cold War era political science, “is not security,” at least not in the 21st century. “We need to be looking for ways to build security in conflict regions,” Ohanyan stated.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Armenian EyeCare Project Marks 30th Anniversary With Mission Trip and Upcoming Gala

LOS ANGELES — The Armenian Eye-Care Project (AECPP) is commemorating its 30th anniversary by celebrating the milestone with a series of events, both in the U.S. and Armenia. The AECPP's 62nd Medical Mission to Armenia concluded in October, encompassing several momentous events that marked the organization's 30-year-long dedication to advancing healthcare in Armenia.

This included the AECPP's 20th International Conference organized alongside Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) and Armenia's Ministry of Health; visits to AECPP facilities like its Mobile Eye Hospital and Regional Eye Centers; a special High Order that was appointed to AECPP Founder Dr. Roger Ohanesian by the President of Armenia and much more.

Continuing the tradition that began back in 1992, AECPP volunteer physicians traveled again this year to Armenia to hold master classes and share experiences with their Armenian peers; provide hands-on training and perform simulation exercises as well as real surgeries together. Over the years this invaluable opportunity has built the capacity, knowledge and expertise of Armenian ophthalmologists and developed long-lasting partnerships with physicians from the U.S. and Europe.

During this year's trip, one volunteer physician, Dr. Mitra Gonzales, performed over 20 surgeries together with Armenian doctors including an orbital decompression procedure that was done in Armenia for the first time! A cutting-edge technique



AECPP-CHLA International Conference Group Shot

care services and allow for a timely detection of eye diseases, which helps to prevent complications and prevent blindness in the future.

Earlier this year, in partnership with French NGO Lumière Française, the AECPP established the first Armenian-French Ophthalmic School within its Regional Eye Center in Gyumri with the goal of improv-

The AECPP team also visited its Mobile Eye Hospital (MEH) during the trip, which was stationed in the town of Yeghvard at the time. Led by Ohanesian and AECPP Country Director Nune Yeghiazaryan, the team of visiting physicians toured the mobile clinic, observed surgeries, met with patients and provided guidance to local physicians. More than 60,000 detailed eye examinations have been conducted on the MEH and over 25,000 surgeries have been performed since 2003 at no cost to residents of villages and towns across Armenia.

## AECPP-CHLA 20th International Conference

The AECPP-CHLA 20th International Conference was held in Yerevan from September 23 through October 5, as part of the AECPP's 62nd Medical Mission. The packed program included lectures, professional discussions, master classes and workshops for health care providers (ophthalmologists, neonatologists, pediatricians and endocrinologists) as well as activities celebrating the AECPP's 30-year dedication to Armenia. The conference attracted over 400 in-person participants and more than 1,000 virtual participants, both from Armenia and other countries in the region.

The lineup of conference speakers included lecturers from Armenia as well as physicians from top universities and hospitals in the U.S., Europe and Russia. Organized in collaboration with Armenia's Ministry of Health, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, the World Diabetes Foundation and a number of medical associations in Armenia, the conference focused on various topics including glaucoma, refractive surgery, retinal disease, neuro-ophthalmology and oculoplastic, pediatric ophthalmology and corneal disorders. The second part of the Conference focused on general pediatrics, neonatology and pediatric endocrinology as well as new methods of pediatric disease diagnostics and treatment.

## Mesrop Mashtots Order Given to Dr. Ohanesian

During the trip, Armenia President Vahagn Khachaturyan awarded the Order of Saint Mesrop Mashtots to Ohanesian for outstanding achievements. Ohanesian is only the 106th recipient of this prestigious

award for his distinguished achievements in healthcare and many years of service to Armenia. His humanitarian work was also recognized earlier this year by the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery (ASCRS), which awarded Ohanesian with the foundation's 2022 Chang-Crandall Humanitarian Award for his life-changing work in Armenia through AECPP.

Despite the packed schedule, the AECPP did carve out time to celebrate its 30th anniversary with its physicians and staff in Armenia. A tour of the Armenian Wine Museum was followed by a social gathering hosted by AECPP Board Member Michael



AECPP Mobile Eye Hospital

of scleral fixation of an artificial lens called Yamane technique was introduced by another volunteer physician, Dr. Matthew Wade, who together with local doctors, successfully performed the operation at the Malayan Ophthalmological Center in Yerevan. Doctors Sarkis Soukiasian and John Hovhannesian worked on complicated cases together with Chief of the Corneal-Uveitis Clinic at the Malayan Ophthalmologic Center Dr. Anna Hovakimyan and her staff. This training of cutting-edge eye treatments ensures local doctors in Armenia are prepared to offer the best care possible to their country's residents.

Top physicians from the U.S. and Europe also visited the John Ohannes Khachigian AECPP Regional Eye Center in Gyumri to screen patients and to discuss complicated cases together with their Armenian peers. The regional eye care facilities AECPP has been establishing across the country provide access to life-changing quality eye



AECPP Volunteer Physician Dr. John Hovhannesian examines patient

ing the skills and knowledge of local physicians through a series of training courses and hands-on practice. The joint program kicked off in April in Gyumri, Armenia's second largest city, becoming another strategic location that serves a large population that would otherwise be unable to access high-quality eye care services. Cooperation continued during the medical mission as well, as Dr. Marilyn Nodarian visited Gyumri to see patients and train the staff, continuing to work in Gyumri for several days after the conference concluded.



Founder Dr. Ohanesian receives St. Mesrop Mashtots Order from President of Armenia

Sahakian. The extraordinary performance by "Geghard" vocal ensemble singing Armenian medieval melodies and folk songs by Armenian classical and contemporary composers was one of the highlights of the event. Certificates of Appreciation for 30 years of dedicated service were awarded to AECPP physicians, volunteers, fellows, partners and staff with endless words of gratitude for their commitment and service.

As for upcoming events, the AECPP is gearing up to celebrate its milestone 30th anniversary gala on Saturday, November 19, at the Balboa Bay Resort in Newport Beach. The evening will include a cocktail reception, dinner, live Armenian music by the Hosharian Brothers Band, auctions and more.

For more information, visit [www.eyecareproject.com/gala](http://www.eyecareproject.com/gala)



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Bartevian Inc. is a Boston Landmark

LANDMARK, from page 7

according to Patricia, the Apostolic Church used to secretly hide resistance fighters and secured immigration sponsors to the United States for them. Once healed, he managed to escape to England. Eventually, in 1905, he sailed on a boat from Liverpool to Boston.

In the United States, he worked for several businesses and made some crucial friendships. One of his friends was Jack Lowell Gardener, Isabella Stewart Gardener's husband — yes, that Isabella. They both became loyal Bartevian Inc.'s customers when Gregory first opened it in 1910, supported by his friends, when he gathered enough money to buy the building.



Patricia Bartevian showing her book,

Gregory decided also to help the neighborhood and to use the building not only to house his shop, but also to offer space to non-profit organizations.

According to Patricia, Isabella and her husband relied on him to find the perfect art and antique objects. Gregory even met his wife, Vera May Retan, in his shop.

In addition to that, Gregory was also involved in the Armenian community of Boston since he wrote articles for the Armenian-language version of this newspaper, which was called *Baikar*.

## To the White House

If the Bartevian family's path crossed the American one, it's also thanks to Patricia's aunt, the sister of her mother, Emma Elizabeth Retan or "Aunt Ibbey." When Ibbey was in high school, she contracted polio



Outside Bartevian Inc shop, Boylston Street, Boston

and went to Georgia to recover. There, she met another patient: Franklin Delano Roosevelt. According to Patricia, they became close friends and after her studies, she worked at the Library of Congress and White House Library. That's how Patricia and her sister Priscilla were able to spend time in the White House: "We sat in the Oval Office and rolled Easter eggs with First lady Eleanor Roosevelt on the white house lawn," she remembered.

But the Bartevians were also known in Hollywood. Patricia and her younger sister Priscilla spent a year singing and dancing as "The Hickory Sisters." "After our graduation at Emerson with our theater degree

and passionate by music and dance, we went to Hollywood and were lucky to enjoy it," Patricia said while holding a whole album of black and white pictures, full of huge pictures of two look-a-like girls acting and performing on different stages. They also had small parts in several films, including "The Emperor's Waltz," produced by Billy Wilder and starring Bing Crosby and Joan Fontaine.



Inside Bartevian Inc.

## Her father's legacy

After their Hollywood journey, in the late 1970s, the two sisters came back in Boston to run the business. Priscilla died in 2006, leaving Patricia alone at the helm. Now she is running it with John LaFleur, both members of The Edgar Allan Poe Foundation of Boston.

Priscilla and Patricia helped to recognize Edgar Allan Poe Heritage in Boston. They even wrote to then Boston Mayor Thomas Menino to re-name the area "The Edgar Allan Poe Square" after the poet and in 2014, Patricia asked for the installation of the poet's statue.

The Bartevians had altered the Bostonian landscape in their own distinct way. Their building is still used for non-profit organizations: "Now we also have Emerson College upstairs and I take things on consignment to help the old people in need to get money so they can get food delivered here. When I'll go, then the board of directors will take charge and still keep [working] for the old people," Patricia specified thoughtfully.

Patricia Bartevian is proud to follow her father's path, who lived his own American Dream and who wanted to help people as much as he was helped.

More than 100 years after his first opening, "Bartevian Inc." is still open every day. Between 1910 and 2022, the city and its streets changed, but "Bartevian Inc." remained the same. Thanks to her book, her family's history won't be forgotten, so Bostonians can know the story behind this antique shop and how an Armenian family played an unique role in Boston. To learn more, visit <https://www.facebook.com/Bartevians/>

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LEVON *piano*  
HOVSEPIAN

ASATUR  
BALJYAN  
*baritone*





## COMMUNITY

# A Story of Friendship and Paying it Forward

FRIENDSHIP, from page 1

Chobanian simply described his friend as “very thoughtful” when it comes to donations. Avedisian’s previous large donation was to the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), which again did not include his name, but that of another friend and hero, Dr. Vartan Gregorian.

Similarly, when he made large donations to the American University of Armenia, he put the names of his parents (Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian) or his siblings (Paul Avedisian, Paramaz Avedisian and Zvart Avedisian Onanian), on the buildings he funded.

“It is wonderful what he is doing in that regard,” Chobanian said. “To be able to honor our predecessors who were our heroes and role models,” he said, is right.

Avedisian deflected all complements, suggesting that he “can’t compare” to Chobanian. “I’m just signing the checks. It’s a lot easier that curing hypertension,” he replied.

Interviewed last week, both were humble and stressed the importance of sharing one’s wealth and lifting up those in need.

University President Robert A. Brown called it “one of the most remarkable grants in the history of higher education” at a private signing ceremony at his residence in late August to accept the gift and formalize the school’s name change.

The \$100-million gift will be divided three ways: \$50 million to support scholarships for medical students, \$25 million to support endowed professorships and \$25 million to the Avedisian Fund for Excellence to keep the school at the forefront of research and teaching.

According to the school, Avedisian’s gift “will approximately double the endowed scholarship aid we can offer.”

In addition, an endowed professorships from the fund will be created in the name of Richard K. Babayan, a BU School of Medicine professor and chair emeritus of urology and former chief of urology at Boston Medical Center.

## Medical School Debt

Chobanian, a cardiologist who is a pioneer in hypertension research, was the first recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award in Hypertension of the American Heart Association.

He was philosophical about the cost of medical schools, especially if it means not accepting a student for lack of funds. He said private medical schools, such as Boston University, without funding from the state, are very expensive to operate and therefore they pass on the cost to students. “All through my career, I worried about tuitions and scholarships,” he said.

He stressed that excluding students based on their financial abilities is wrong. “You may be excluding people who could be good physicians,” he said.

Instead, he said the graduates of the medical school need to reflect the society and the world at large.

“It is important to get people there who can do the work and not shy away from careers in primary medicine. There are so many openings and needs,” he added.

(A September 2021 report from the Kaiser Family Foundation noted that 83.7 million people in the U.S. live in a designated primary-care health professional shortage area (HPSA), and more than 14,800 practitioners are needed to remove the HPSA designation.)

The lowest tuition rates, he continued, are those at state schools. “It is a disadvantage for a medical school if they are not getting a well-rounded candidate,” who might not

apply because of worry about the cost of tuition.

Currently the tuition for the BU medical school is around \$100,000 annually, a figure that is comparable to other medical schools in the area, but double that of the University of Massachusetts School of Medicine, a public university.

Chobanian noted that he is a very strong advocate for medical education. “Despite all the issues and the economic aspects of medicine and the business part overtaking some of the other aspects,” it is “still a wonderful program.”

In fact, he is delighted that his granddaughter just graduated from the medical school in May.

“It’s probably a good example of how I feel about” the importance of a medical education, he said.

“Some physicians are so worn out that they are not positive” about continuing their work, Chobanian said, with a sigh. He added, “I don’t think there is a better career.”

Avedisian concurred with Chobanian about the cost of education. “It is an opportunity for them to get an education and reduce the cost and afford them an opportunity to give back,” Avedisian said. “It is not the end of anything but just the beginning.”

Similarly, Avedisian is concerned with the recipients of care.

“It is a good way to do something,” Avedisian said, of his donation, especially because of the leadership of Dr. Chobanian of that school, as well as of Boston University itself, and its work in the city of Boston.

A great focus for Avedisian is that BU is affiliated with the former Boston City Hospital, now Boston Medical Center, after its merger with the Boston University Medical Center Hospital. Helping the poor has always been a centerpiece of Avedisian’s philosophy.

“It is in the poorest section of Boston. The people there are hard-pressed to get attention medically,” he said.

## The Arts

Chobanian said he was delighted that BU, as a way of thanking the two men for the donation, had created two scholarships in the names of their wives: the Jasmine Chobanian Endowed Fellowship Fund for Visual Arts and the Pamela Avedisian Endowed Fellowship Fund for Performance Music.

Jasmine Chobanian, a respected artist, died in 2014. She served on the board of the Boston Ballet and a talented painter who studied at what is now the School of the Museum of Fine Arts.

Pamela Avedisian studied the piano for years and even attended a conservatory for a year before giving it up for a career as a legal secretary.

“The university decided to do it on its own. It’s very special to have Jasmines’ name on the scholarship with the Fine Arts Department. And Pamela is an accomplished musician. The university’s recognition is important,” Chobanian said. “The recognition of our spouses is very heartening to me.”

For Ed Avedisian, BU is also a sort of home. He studied the clarinet there, and other family members attended as well. “I wanted to do something important” for the university, he said in a recent interview. “This is the opportunity.”

He chose BU after becoming entranced with the clarinetist on a recording of the Boston Symphony Orchestra he heard on the radio. “Who is this guy?” the teenage Avedisian asked himself. “I want to study with him.” The musician was Manuel Valerio, a professor at BU’s College of Fine Arts.

In an interview with this newspaper in

2012, Avedisian gave credit to Chobanian for his interest in music: “The credit — or blame — goes to Aram Chobanian who was our next-door neighbor,” he recalled. He was a few years older than Avedisian and a contemporary of his older brother. “Aram played the clarinet. He was like the pace car. My older brother followed him” and then gave it up, only for the younger Avedisian to pick it up.

## Bringing Medical Education to Armenia

Under Chobanian’s tenure as dean of the medical school, in 1991, the Boston University Medical Center/Armenia Medical Partnership program was launched. It has since been renamed as the Charles Mosesian Boston University Medical Center and Republic of Armenia Medical Partnership Program. Dr. Richard Babayan, Professor & Emeritus Chairman in the Department of Urology, is director.

Chobanian explained that various agreements were signed between BU and the government of Armenia as part of the program, specifically with Yerevan State School of Medicine and work at the Loosavorich Medical Center in Yerevan.

Chobanian recalled that he first went to Armenia in 1970 to give a talk. “It was very much a Soviet state,” he said. “I went back two or three more times before the quake” in 1988. Things shifted gear in 1992 during the Karabakh war for independence. He went on a trip there with US Agency for International Development to evaluate the hospitals and help hospital to hospital. Other components of the program included coordinating with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to monitor the workers’ safety at the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant outside Yerevan. The program eventually morphed into the BU Armenia program.

Chobanian noted that the physicians trained in Armenia went on to train others in the Newly Independent States, including bringing others from those states to Oakridge, Tenn., for specialty training.

He also singled out the cooperation of the University of Massachusetts Medical School in BU’s efforts in Armenia, especially former associate dean Richard Aghababian.

The program has been halted temporarily due to Covid and then the 2020 war waged by Azerbaijan.

The program was funded with grants from the USAID, the IAEA, as well as the Lincy Foundation, therefore there was no cost to the university. He stressed proudly, however, that all the physicians went as volunteers.

## What’s in a Name

Avedisian stressed that Chobanian was very humble about adding his name to the name of the medical school, saying “I don’t think it’s necessary.”

As a compromise Avedisian struck, the names of both men would be there.

Just don’t call Avedisian a legend. “I’m just me. You learn these things.”

Avedisian expanded on why he wanted the university’s medical school to be the recipient of such a vast sum. He said that the medical school and Chobanian’s leadership of it have “exemplary” and that the latter has contributed so much to the field of hypertension and vascular heart disease.

What makes this donation even more incredible is that Avedisian is not a dotcom millionaire; he made his money through the stock market. Again, just don’t give him credit. “It is one part luck and the other part is being prepared,” he said.

The mild-mannered and soft-spoken Avedisian is “a risk taker.” He said, “If you don’t take a risk, you can’t get anything.” He add-

ed, “Nothing ventured, nothing gained. It’s as simple as that.”

These two men have much in common, other than their Rhode Island roots. They are also both people who will donate large sums and do the work, without much fanfare and certainly without cultivating an aura of specialness.

He learned humility and a desire to help others from his parents. “They are heroes, my parents. That’s how they lived. They said help other people. When you grow up with that,” he said, you have little chance to be any other way.

His parents were Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian, in whose name he has built buildings for AUA, as well as a K-12 school in the Malatia-Sepastia neighborhood of Yerevan, are always on his mind. He recalled that his father came from Kharpert in the 1900s to the US to make money in construction and return to Western Armenia.

He wanted to marry a woman who was educated, he said, and he found exactly who he wanted in Shooshanig, who had been brought up in a German orphanage and was educated. He managed to flee the Armenian Genocide and she did as well, landing first in Beirut. Eventually, the two met in Cuba, married and then moved to the US.

The school is in the very poorest section of the city. Avedisian expressed his delight with the students who have benefitted from his efforts. “The very first graduate” of the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian school graduated summa cum laude from the American University of Armenia. “It is quite remarkable,” he said with delight.

Most of the students from that school continue their education either at AUA or at the French University.

Again, Avedisian boils down his support to the most basic terms: “It is a question of need and assistance.” He decided to “give it a chance and see what happened.”

The donation to NAASR in the name of Vartan Gregorian is still close to Avedisian’s heart. “It opened up so many doors and a lot more support,” he said. With the bigger building, and one that is state-of-the-art, NAASR can do much more, especially when it has the name of Vartan Gregorian, he noted.

He had much praise for the late Gregorian, noting that he had asked that Gregorian speak to some students in Armenia when the two men met. Being “a man of his word,” Gregorian, who had a fully-booked schedule, came and spoke to the students at the Avedisian school for more than one and a half hours.

He also hoped others with similarly deep pockets would make donations of such a scale that would make the news. “Hopefully this will inspire more people” within the Armenian community, Avedisian said.

Not only was Chobanian very positive, but he had a great sense of humor. When asked what his plans for the future were, he laughed and replied, “At age 93, I don’t buy green bananas anymore.”

For now, he is concentrating on doing what makes him happy: writing music. He is currently working with a member of the music faculty on composing a new work. He was thrilled that the piece was recently sung by mezzo-soprano Victoria Avetisyan.

“I’ve always been a music enthusiast. I also try to keep up with the medical stuff” as an observer, he added, enough to “keep my mind active.”

“I’ve had a good life, a wonderful family, a phenomenal wife and wonderful children. I’ve done a lot of things,” he concluded.

Concluded Avedisian, “My work is finished and that’s OK. I’ve done as much as I could.”





# Arts & Culture

## Actress Ani Marderosian to Play Title Role In ‘Warrior Queen: Anahit The Brave’

GLENDAL — Award-winning actress, singer, and director, Ani Marderosian has been cast to play the title role in Imagine Theatre Company’s production of “Warrior Queen: Anahit the Brave.” An adaptation of Ghazaros Aghayan’s fairytale “Anahit,” the play is a musical production for young audience members. “Theatre is a powerful medium for young people,” says Marderosian. “It is crucial in a child’s development that they are exposed to theatre. It has the power to educate, inspire, and teach empathy.” The story is filled with music, Armenian dancing, multi-media spectacle, and sword fighting. The production will play on



Ani Marderosian

weekdays for students from various Southern California schools and on weekend evenings to the public. “It is important that audience members see themselves and their stories being represented on stage. A big part of being Armenian is the pride we have in our culture and our people. I am honored to tell this story to the public and represent the Armenian community.”

Marderosian, the granddaughter of well-known entertainer Guy Chookoorian, most recently directed the premiere of Ailema Souza’s “Fort Huachuca” for the SheLA Arts Theatre Festival and “Witness for the Prosecution” at Glendale Centre Theatre, where audiences will remember the actress for her critically acclaimed portrayal of Maria in “West Side Story.”

Following her run, she will be touring Southern California singing this holiday season. To find out more about Ani at her website at [www.animarderosian.com](http://www.animarderosian.com). “Warrior Queen: Anahit the Brave” runs at the Colony Theatre in Glendale from November 5 through the 18.

For tickets and information, visit [www.imaginetheatreca.com](http://www.imaginetheatreca.com).



## Essai Altounian: Pop Star Behind Noah’s Ark Musical Takes France by Storm

By Christopher Atamian

*Special to the Mirror-Spectator*

PARIS — A song-through musical about Noah’s Ark, with life-sized mechanical animals and a multiethnic cast of performers singing in French is no easy theatrical task to pull off, but that is precisely what French popstar crooner Essai Altounian accomplished in 2020-21.

Based in the Biblical story of Noah and how he is said to have repopulated the Earth, the 2020 “Noé ou La Force de Vivre” ran for over several months at the legendary Hippodrome de Longchamps in the Bois de Boulogne, in the French capital.

The musical takes place after the great flood that many archaeologists believe may have actually occurred sometime over 5,000 years ago in Mesopotamia or present-day Iraq. It’s a story that has something for everyone. As told in the Old Testament and now recounted by Altounian and his cast, the flood serves as a parable of sorts for rebirth and cunning in the face of natural disaster. But Essai also staged his story in a contemporary context, in light of the environmental challenges that we are facing on Earth, with increased pollution and global warming seemingly progressing unabated around the globe. As he told one French TV reporter: “The Earth doesn’t need humans to survive, but humans need the Earth to survive.” Hence the need to get out this preservationist message to the general public and remind them that we are headed for disaster if we don’t quickly change gears and protect what has been bequeathed to us on the Big Blue Marble we all call home.

The songs in “Noé” are catchy, and the cast delivers them with brio, though they are not quite as easily memorable perhaps as the songs in “The Lion King,” which relies on similar mechanisms to move story and songs forward: puppetry, the relationship between humans and other creatures of the Earth, a patriarch who saves his kingdom. As for the muscular, sometimes-bare-chested Essai, he looks more like an Olympic swimmer than the patriarch Noah whom he depicts in the lead role — at least as we remember him in the Old Testament — but that is a small quibble. Along with fellow actors Yanis Siad, Julien Vital, and Jade Boinet, Essai delivers memorable tunes that have you tapping your feet and smiling throughout, particularly the lead song “Terre”: “O Terre/ Les hommes sont fiers/L’amour te sauvera” (“O Earth/Men are proud/Love will save the day”) There’s also an amazing Kochari in one segment, a reference to the fact that the Ark is said to have landed in Armenia at the foot of Mount Ararat, in a nod as well to Altounian’s Armenian origins.

Even the briefest conversation or Zoom interview with Essai reveals a very French desire to seduce the listener. It’s not the worst quality to have in a performer—and one that promises more success for this talented, strong-willed Parisian star.

A triple theatrical threat — songwriter, actor, singer — Essai has been blessed with marquee good looks, a strong singing voice and a seemingly indefatigable work ethic.

Known in Europe simply by his first name, Essai was born in 1980 to a family of Armenian Genocide survivors from Kharpert. He started off performing in public as the lead for the Soul/R & B band Ideal 3 when he was just 19 years old, singing the

see MUSICAL, page 16

## Armenia Honors Charents in Frankfurt

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

*Special to the Mirror-Spectator*

FRANKFURT — The Frankfurt Book Fair, the largest and most important worldwide, is something I look forward to every October. This year, after two years of limitations imposed by the Covid pandemic, the fair opened as an in-person event, and people came in droves. Though the numbers still do not reach those of pre-pandemic years, there were a good 4,000 exhibitors from 95 countries and 180,000 visitors. In the first two days, reserved for trade visitors, there were 93,000 in attendance, and from Friday to Sunday, that figure was augmented by another 87,000 private visitors.

“Translate, Transfer, Transform” was the theme this year, and it could not have been more appropriate. In these times of strategic crises and war, we need more than ever to enhance communication, speak the language of others and, through fruitful exchange of ideas, contribute to transforming a suffering world.

It came as no surprise, then, that the Armenian Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport set up a stand dedicated to the art of translation, not in the abstract, but very much in the concrete. The spacious stand bore the name and image of Yeghishe Charents, in commemoration of the 125th anniversary of his birth. And featured among the many books on display were translations of his works into various languages: among the new editions appearing this year are those in English, French and Italian.

I spoke to Armen Sargsyan, a senior specialist in the field of literature from the Ministry in Yerevan, his colleague, Tatev Sukiasyan, and Astghik Saribekyan, an Armenian living in Germany who was volunteering her services to translate for German guests. Sargsyan pointed to the various new translations of Charents’ works, and then took one special book down from the shelf to show me. This anniversary edition contains the most famous work by the beloved Armenian poet, “Yes Im Anoush Hayastani” (“My Sweet Armenia”). The deluxe edition contains the poem as translated into 35 languages. Illustrations by artist Martiros Sarian grace the pages. Charents’s granddaughter, Gohar Charents, organized the ambitious translation project which was presented in 2019. In her introduction, she quoted Sarian’s praise of the literary masterpiece as a “panoramic portrait of our ancient country ... both a prayer and an oath ... a hymn to freedom.”

What better way to celebrate the anniversary of Charents’ birth than with a deluxe edition of translations that make his monumental poem

see CHARENTS, page 14





## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# Cut From a Different Cloth: Taleen Batalian at WaterFire Arts Gallery

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — The WaterFire Arts Center (WFAC), a multi-use arts venue, located at 475 Valley Street, in October opened “Tender Cargo,” a month-long exhibition by Taleen Batalian which will be on view at WaterFire Arts Center gallery through Sunday, November 20.

The exhibition explores how bodies hold and carry trauma across time and geography, drawing on artist Batalian’s legacy as the granddaughter of four grandparents from Western Armenia. Batalian grew up surrounded by references to the Genocide her family endured, but it was never discussed openly. After the death of her mother in 2012, Batalian began using textiles and sculpture to unpack this murky silence and interpret her cultural history to understand the legacy of trauma passed down from her grandparents to her parents and ultimately to her.



Taleen Batalian

*Tender Cargo* investigates what it means to wear and carry our trauma and asks us to consider how the body traverses under the weight of these heavy loads.

“Tender Cargo” comprises sculptural garments, other 2D



“Allegory” by Taleen Batalian



“Mother” by Taleen Batalian

and 3D artworks, and an original soundscape. The exhibition will culminate in a live performance with dance, original sound score, and scenic design.

In addition to the opening event, visitors are invited to a film screening and discussion on Thursday, November 10

starting at 6 p.m. and a Live Performance on Thursday, November 17, starting at 7 p.m. November 17 is also Gallery Night Providence with a trolley tour leaving the WFAC at 6:30 p.m. However the tour is scheduled to return to the *Tender Cargo* gallery in time to view the exhibition and participate in a post-performance talk back with Batalian.

The exhibition collaborators are Antonio Forte, sound design, Heidi Henderson, choreography/dance, Keri King, scenic design/project consultation, and Michele L’Heureux, curation.

The WFAC store + gallery are open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and until 9 p.m. on Thursdays. The exhibition is free and open to all, donations encouraged.

This exhibition is supported by the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, The City of Providence Department of Art, Culture + Tourism, Real Dream Design, and The Wilbury Theatre Group.

Batalian, is an artist and educator. Her work explores emotional landscapes and ways in which the body can serve as a vehicle for carrying experiences and memories through complex terrain. Among her recent projects: ‘Waves and Shadows’, a collaborative film; ‘Disassemble’, a performance installation at RISD Museum; and ‘Graft’, a solo exhibition and site-specific installation of sculptural garments, paintings and video. Taleen has been awarded grants from Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (RISCA), Providence Art, Culture + Tourism (ACT) and The Arts and Cultural Alliance of Newport County. <https://taleenbatalian.com/>



“Mountain” by Taleen Batalian

## Armenia Honors Charents in Frankfurt

CHARENTS, from page 13

available to the readers of the world? But it is not only the translations honoring the achievements of this great Armenian poet that are noteworthy. Publishing houses in Armenia have been active over the last 20 years, and in the last four years have concentrated efforts on a project to promote translations. The aim is to make Armenian classical and contemporary literature available in modern translations to a worldwide readership. To date, a good 70 books in over 20 languages have been published.

The “Armenian Literature in Translations” program launched by the Ministry, I read in a brochure, “aims to ensure that the best of Armenian prose, poetry, drama, journalism, and children’s literature is accessible and known beyond the borders of Armenia.” Under the program, financial support is available to foreign publishers who will produce books of Armenian literature in translation.



Armen Sargsyan, Tatev Sukiasyan and Astghik Saribekyan (left to right)





## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



Women's Guild members at St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church in Washington (2016 photo courtesy St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church)

## The Armenian Kitchen Klatch

By Polly Clingerman\*

Contributed by Christine Vartanian Datian

This following story about the many devoted and dedicated members of the Women's Guild at St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church in Washington, D.C., was published on November 3, 1993 in *The Washington Post* by Polly Clingerman. The Women's Guild programs include the following service projects for the parish and Armenia: Annual Women's Saints Day Celebration; fundraising activities such as the Annual Food Festival and Lenten Food Festival and Armenian Cultural and Christian educational programs. This year, the St. Mary 74th Annual Fall Food Festival was held on Friday and Saturday, October 7 thru 9.

Every autumn for 44 years, the women of St. Mary's Armenian Apostolic Church have plunged into a six-week frenzy of chopping and stirring and rolling and patting and baking that ends in four days of glorious eating: the buffet lunches and weekend dinners of the annual bazaar. Today, when the bazaar opens its doors for the 45th year, Washingtonians will throng buffet and carryout lines. Many will leave laden with jars and bowls of soups and spicy mixtures (the regulars bring empties), boxes and bags of pastries, meatballs and meat pies. And no wonder. The food is rich-flavored, but the cooks are quick to point out that Armenians don't do much frying.

Every Thursday right up to the big day finds 30 to 40 women bustling about the big church kitchen and community rooms, turning out vast quantities: 200 quarts of the garlicky mixed pickles called tourshi; 4,000 cheese boureg (chubby, Muenster cheese-filled turnovers); 4,000 yalanchi (rice-and onion-stuffed grape leaves); 2,000 luleh kebabs, ground lamb rolls scented with allspice, cumin and paprika. Then there are the stars in the crown of Middle Eastern cookery -- giant trays of nutty, flaky, buttery, syrup-soaked, cholesterol-be-damned pastries: baklava and bourma (baklava's lighter, cylindrical cousin -- only two layers of buttered phyllo).

This is serious cooking. Witness the grocery list: 48 quarts of lemon juice; 150 pounds of bulgur; 250 pounds each of rice, Muenster cheese, walnuts and butter; 500 pounds of ground beef; 1,000 pounds of ground lamb.

And guess what? "We always run out!"

Here are a few of the cooks' recipes to try at home.

### MOCK SOU BOUREG (10 servings)

Packaged wide noodles replace the traditional giant homemade ones, making this dish easier and quicker to make.

- 8-ounce package square, wide egg noodles (Pennsylvania Dutch "Bot Boi")
- 1 pound Wisconsin sharp brick cheese, grated
- 8 ounces small-curd cottage cheese
- 2 eggs, slightly beaten
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1 tablespoon butter or margarine

Cook noodles according to package directions. Drain and rinse in cold water. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a bowl, mix grated cheddar, cottage cheese and eggs. Divide mixture in half and add parsley to one half. In a 7-by-12-inch pan, place half the noodles. Top with the parsleyed cheese. Add the remaining noodles, then the plain cheese mixture. Dot with butter. Bake until browned and bubbly, about 20 to 25 minutes. Let the Mock Boureg sit for 10 minutes before cutting in squares.

Per serving: 318 calories, 19 gm protein, 18 gm carbohydrates, 19 gm fat, 11 gm saturated fat, 118 mg cholesterol, 403 mg sodium

### EGGPLANT TAVA (Eggplant Slices With Beef and Tomatoes)

(10 servings)

- 1 1/2 pounds ground lean ground beef
- 28-ounce can Italian tomatoes, juice reserved
- 1/4 cup tomato paste, divided
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 medium green bell pepper, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon ground allspice, or more to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed or minced
- 2 medium eggplants (about 1 pound each), unpeeled
- A little oil for rubbing

Preheat oven to 500 degrees. Mix ground meat with 1/2 cup of the juice from the tomatoes and 2 teaspoons of the tomato paste. Add onion, green pepper, allspice, pepper, salt and garlic. Mix well and set aside.

Rub the unpeeled eggplants all over with oil. Then cut them in 1/2-inch-thick slices. Place half the slices in a 9-by-13-inch pan, top them with the meat mixture, then with the remaining eggplant slices.

In a bowl, mix the canned tomatoes, what's left of their juice, and the remaining tomato paste. Pour this over the stacks of eggplant. Bake, uncovered, in the preheated oven until the liquid starts to boil. Then reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees and bake for 1 hour longer.

Per serving: 223 calories, 14 gm protein, 10 gm carbohydrates, 14 gm fat, 6 gm saturated fat, 50 mg cholesterol, 448 mg sodium

### EECH (Cracked-Wheat Salad) (6 servings)

- 1 small onion, chopped medium fine
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 cup very fine bulgur\*
- 3/4 cup green onions (scallions), chopped
- 2 cups chopped parsley
- 1 ripe tomato, peeled, seeded and chopped
- 1/2 sweet red or green bell pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1/2 cup tomato paste
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- Cayenne pepper to taste
- Garnish: slices or coarsely chopped chunks of peppers, green onions, tomatoes, parsley

Sauté onion in olive oil until limp. Add 1/2 cup of boiling water and mix well. Place bulgur in a container that can be tightly covered and pour the onion mixture over it. Cover tightly and allow mixture to steam while you chop the vegetables, about 15 minutes.

Uncover bulgur and add green onions, parsley, tomato, red pepper, tomato paste, lemon juice, salt, pepper and cayenne pepper to taste. (Mixture can be mild with no cayenne, or quite nippy, according to what you enjoy.) Toss to mix thoroughly and refrigerate.

To serve, garnish the top with lots of peppers, green onions, tomatoes and parsley, all sliced or coarsely chopped. Serve chilled. This will keep well in the refrigerator for 3 or 4 days.

\*Available in most supermarkets, at health-food stores or wherever Middle Eastern ingredients are sold.

### BOURMA (Makes about 50 to 60 pieces)

- 1 package phyllo dough, thawed and at room temperature
- 1 pound walnuts, finely chopped
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 8 ounces unsalted butter, melted and separated (discard the white milk solids)

### FOR THE SYRUP:

- 2 cups sugar
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- Be sure the phyllo is thawed according to package's directions.
- In a bowl, mix the walnuts, cinnamon and sugar.

Set the pile of phyllo sheets on your work surface, covered with a very slightly damp towel so they don't dry out while you work. Place one sheet of phyllo in front of you, with a long side facing you. Brush lightly with melted butter (you don't have to cover every bit of surface). Top with a second sheet. Cover this with a thin layer of walnut mixture, leaving at least a 1/2-inch margin all around. Fold in the two short sides 1/2 inch. Lay the dowel along the long side near you, fold the edge over the dowel and start rolling loosely. As you roll, brush the bottom side of the phyllo lightly with butter so the finished cylinder looks shiny. Don't touch the dough or you'll disturb the butter glaze. Now gently nudge the roll toward the center, first from one end, then from the other. It will shorten (like an accordion) by a couple of inches. Slide off the rod onto a baking sheet. Continue preparing and rolling sheets until all ingredients are used.

Bake the bourma in a preheated 350-degree oven for 30 to 40 minutes or until nicely golden. Cool. Cut in 1- or 2-inch lengths. Store tightly covered in a cool, dry place for up to 2 weeks. (Some of the cooks freeze their bourma at this point, some view this idea with horror -- all assured me that their bourma are excellent). The bazaar bourma have not been frozen.



# CALENDAR

## OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

CALIFORNIA

NOVEMBER 19 — AECP 30th Anniversary Gala. Join the Armenian EyeCare Project (AECP) as the organization celebrates its milestone 30th anniversary of providing sight-saving service in Armenia with a special 30th Anniversary Gala! Held at the beautiful Balboa Bay Resort in Newport Beach, CA at 6:00pm. Evening begins with stunning cocktail reception and silent auction followed by a delicious coursed dinner, live Armenian music by the Hosharian Brothers Band, a thrilling live auction and more! Tickets are \$500/person and \$250/person for those age 35 & under. All proceeds to benefit the AECP's sight-saving programs in Armenia. To RSVP or for more information, call 949-933-4069, email [info@eyecareproject.com](mailto:info@eyecareproject.com) or visit [eyecareproject.com/gala](http://eyecareproject.com/gala)

MASSACHUSETTS

NOVEMBER 7 — St. James Men's Club Monthly Dinner Meeting with speaker Zack Armen, Co-Founder and President of Storica Wines. Storica Wines is the leading US importer of fine wines from Armenia, The company was formed two years ago with the mission to spread awareness of the beauty and heritage of wine from Armenia, the oldest producing wine region in history now experiencing a modern day winemaking resurgence. Losh Kebab and Kheyma Dinner . 6:15p.m. Social Hour, 7p.m. Dinner. \$20 per person, Ladies Welcome. St. James Armenian Church - 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown. For more information contact Robert Berberian e-mail [mensclub@stthagop.com](mailto:mensclub@stthagop.com)

NOVEMBER 12 — Annual Fall Bazaar at the Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe, 1280 Boston Road,(Rte. 125) Haverhill, 12 to 6 p.m. Delicious Armenian Food, Lamb Shish, Chicken, Losh Kebab, Kheyma, Vegetarian Menu, Lulu Kebab (limited), Hot Dog and Chips. Pastry and Cuisine Table featuring Spinach Pies, Vospov Kheyma, Lamejun,Ghapama, Tourshi, Paklava, Choereg, Khadaif. Gifts Baskets and Cash Prize Raffles, winner need not be present to win For more information visit: [www.hyepointearmenianchurch.org](http://www.hyepointearmenianchurch.org) or call (978) 372-9227.

NOVEMBER 19 — Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, Chelmsford, Food Festival. 12 Noon – 7 p.m. Eat-in or Take-out. All lunches and dinners along with Country Store items are to be pre-ordered by Wednesday, November 9. The Food Festival menu includes shish-chicken-losh kebab dinners, a vegetarian platter, a variety of desert items, and a country store featuring eetch, cheese beureg, spinach pita, vosbov kofta, tourshi, choreg, and green beans. Food order and Festival Sponsor forms are available on the church website, [www.stsvartanantz.com](http://www.stsvartanantz.com).

DECEMBER 8 – Join the Trustees of the Armenian Museum of America for a Christmas Reception in the museum galleries. All Museum Members are cordially invited for socializing, networking, and to enjoy the exhibitions including “On the Edge: Los Angeles Art 1970s-1990s from the Joan and Jack Quinn Family Collection.” 5:30 p.m. – Save the date!

DECEMBER 11 — Holy Trinity Armenian Church presents a Christmas Holiday Concert by Erevan Choral Society in memory of Fr. Oshagan Minassian on what would have been his 90th birthday, at the Sanctuary of Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St, Cambridge, MA. Sunday, 7 p.m. Conductor will be conductor/composer Konstantin Petrossian and will feature soloists Rosy Anoush Svazlian, soprano, and Giovanni Formisano, tenor. The free concert is open to the public.

NOVEMBER 13 - Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. GIVIING THANKS! TOGETHER IN CELEBRATION. Sunday at 2pm.Meet & Greet. Refreshments. Share the Warmth: Bring a winter hat, scarve or gloves . RSVP [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

NOVEMBER 18 — St. James Armenian Church Presents A Classical Evening Featuring Armenian Composers. A Concert with Asatur Baljyn, Baritone and Levon Hovsepien, Piano. Friday, 7 p.m.. Doors Open; 7:30 p.m. Concert. Reception to follow. Open to the public; complimentary admission. St. James Charles Mosesian Cultural & Youth Center, Keljik Hall. 465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA.

DECEMBER 11 – Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. CANDLELIT LABYRINTH WALK: IN PEACE & HARMONY. Sunday at 4:45pm. “Boston’s Newest Holiday Tradition” Hot Chocolate & Festive Cookies. RSVP [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

NEW YORK

NOVEMBER 6 — The 13th Annual United Solo Theatre Festival. Theatre Row 410 West 42nd Street, New York City. “Mercedes and Zaruhi” at p.m. Performed as part of the United Solo Theatre Festival on Theatre Row, in Nora Armani’s English translation of the Armenian original by Anush Aslibekyan. A solo play starring Nora Armani, about life behind the Iron Curtain during Stalin, told through the correspondence of two sisters, one of whom repatriated to the Soviet Union in the late 1940s from post-WW II Greece. It is about patriotism, shattered ideals, flickers of hope, and the joy of creating a new home and rebuilding a new Homeland. Ticket price: 42.50\$ - 46.50\$. Tickets may be booked: <https://bfany.org/theatre-row/shows/united-solo-theatre-festival-2022/>

RHODE ISLAND

NOVEMBER 4, DECEMBER 9 — Cultural Committee of the Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church presents: •November 4 - Biblical music from the Louvre, Paris by Edouard Barseghian, Dr. of Philosophy (Musicology), 7:30 p.m. •December 9 Christmas concert at Church sanctuary featuring Armenian Chorale of Rhode Island, Junior Choir, soloist Friday at 7.30 p.m., free.

Armenian Cultural Hour: Whether or not you have a Facebook account, you can find the LIVESTREAM of the event through the parish’s Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/armenianchurchprovidence/videos/>

# Pop Star Behind Noah’s Ark Musical Takes France by Storm

MUSICAL, from page 13

hit song *Pardonne-Moi* on the popular French TV show “Le Monde est à Vous.” He signed early on with Mercury Universal and has composed and performed on a host of French shows, including “C’est la Mème Chanson,” “50 Ans de Tubes” and “Retour Gagnant.” Essai has also portrayed Count Paris in the 2001 French musical version of “Romeo and Juliet: from Hatred to Love” (“Roméo et Juliette: de la Haine à l’Amour”) and has written for and arranged songs and lyrics for stars such as the Academy and Grammy Award-winning Michael Legrand (“Les Demoiselles de Rochefort”) and Anthony Cavanaugh.

For added good measure, he also signed with the legendary Motown label while still in his early 20s. You may also have caught sight of Essai as a judge on Armenia’s “Destination Eurovision” or on the CBS show “The World’s Best” alongside Drew Barrymore, Faith Hill and RuPaul.

Perhaps more memorably for Diasporan Armenians, he was one of the six members

of the Armenian supergroup Genealogy that performed *Don’t Deny* to mark the 100th commemoration of the Armenian Genocide at the 2015 Eurovision song competition, along with Tamar Kaprielian, Vahe Tilbian, Stephanie Topalian, Mary-Jean O’Doherty-Basmadjian and Inga Arshkyan.

It doesn’t hurt that Essai stands over 6 feet tall, and oozes charisma and charm from every pore in his very fit body. This sexiness is evident in his video for the song *Erebuni* in which he and Armenian star Emmy burn up the screen in what may well be the catchiest rendition ever recorded of Paryur Sevak and Edgar Hovannissyan’s iconic tribute to the Armenian capital.

Essai wears both his French identity and his Armenian one equally comfortably, much like one of his idols, the legendary Charles Aznavour, who was quoted on several occasions as saying: “I am 100-percent Armenian and 100-percent French.” The bilingual singer’s rendition of *Tchem Morana/I Won’t Forget* powerfully delivers an

oft-repeated message.

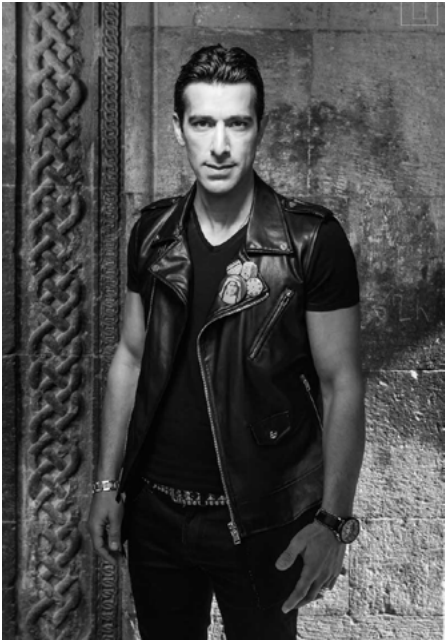
Back at the ark, Essai’s “Noé” earned critical and popular kudos although the production was delayed several times by the COVID-19 epidemic, but Essai persevered throughout. Essai’s philosophy about both performing and life outside the stage can best be summed up as “never give up.”

So now that “Noé” is history, should you happen to be walking down the street sometime soon and you meet a friendly gorilla named Djoko, please put him on the next flight back to Paris: he may just have lost his way from the set department at “Noé.”

Meanwhile, Altounian is hard at work on a few new projects. Stateside, an Aznavour-related project may even be in the works starring Essai as the legendary French crooner. More to come on that, at a later date.

Learn more about Essai Altounian: [www.essaimusic.com](http://www.essaimusic.com)

Listen to/Watch Essai sing *Erebuni* with Emmy: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=unY-](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=unY-)



dOS5YcYE

Learn More About Noé, La Force de Vivre: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTmYaBIeL94>



# THE ARMENIAN MIRROR SPECTATOR

SINCE 1932



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## COMMENTARY

# EDITORIAL

## Spinning Wheels in Sochi



By Edmond Y.  
Azadian

Following the September 13 Azerbaijani attacks on Armenia, which led to more than 200 casualties and the occupation of a swath of Armenian territory, a flurry of intense diplomatic activity has taken place.

The US State Department and French President Emmanuel Macron have issued stern statements blaming Azerbaijan as the aggressor and calling for the withdrawal of its forces from Armenia's sovereign territory.

That stance injected some assertiveness into Armenia's diplomacy; thus Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan took to task his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, demanding from the Kremlin a clear position on the grave situation.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan also blamed the passive stance of the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which is supposed to defend its members against foreign aggression.

These actions were accompanied by some substantive summits in Brussels and Prague, as well as high-level visits of delegations to Armenia, resulting in concrete actions.

As a result of these developments, the European Union dispatched a contingent of 40 civilian monitors to observe the damage caused by Azerbaijan's military attacks on Armenia's border towns. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) also took the initiative of sending a technical group to the border, in preparation for the arrival of a full-scale observation group.

As the Western mediation began making headway, Russia felt that the West was trying to squeeze it out of Caucasus, as Maria Zakharova, the Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson, said. Because of Russia's war in Ukraine, it had been losing its singular foothold in the Caucasus and its impotence in view of evolving events could no longer sustain its reign in the region.

Russia does not have much to offer to the warring sides. The most that it could do was to devise a tactical move to woo the parties back into its fold. Therefore, President Putin offered a very slippery bait to Armenia in a statement made at the Valdai Discussion Club.

He remarked, "As far as I understand, the so-called Washington Variant envisages recognition of Azerbaijan's sovereignty over Karabakh as a whole. If Armenia thinks so, well, no problem. We will support any choice by the Armenian people. If the Armenian people and leadership believe that Karabakh has its own specificities and these specificities must be taken into account, defined in a future peace treaty, this is also possible," he said. "But we need Azerbaijan's consent, which is very difficult to obtain."

Of course, the catch is in the last sentence; if in the end Moscow fails to deliver its pledge, it is always Azerbaijan that will be blamed.

This was a most disingenuous statement; the State Department reacted, accusing Putin of spreading "disinformation." Spokesman Ned Price did not go so far as to state whether indeed there was a Washington plan. Most probably, the alluded to Washington plan is the OSCE Minsk Group position, which calls for settling the Karabakh conflict through peaceful negotiations, taking into consideration the principles of territorial integrity and the people's right to self-determination.

What Moscow has been offering thus far is that Karabakh is Azerbaijan's territory and the settlement of its status must be left to an indefinite future date.

Nikol Pashinyan took President Putin at his word and said that he accepts the Russian proposal and attended the Sochi summit on October 31, where President Ilham Aliyev dismissed the Karabakh issue out of hand. "There is no more Karabakh conflict. That was resolved two years ago. Now it's time to negotiate a peace treaty with Armenia and we appreciate your mediation," he said, as Putin was looking on peevishly.

Coming back to Russia's jealous initiative, we should also analyze another factor. Although Russian and Iranian interests coincide on some issues, this time around, Tehran's offer seemed more tantalizing, and it impacts Russia's concerns. Indeed, Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian visited Syunik on the occasion of the opening of the Iranian consulate in Kapan. During the inauguration, he stated that "Armenia's security is Iran's security."

Before arriving in Kapan, he had reiterated President Ebrahim Raisi's and spiritual leader Ali Khamenei's statement that any border change in the region is a red line for Iran. These statements were preceded by war games on the Iranian-Azerbaijani border.

Iran's position was motivated by two factors. First, the visits of Turkey's and Israel's defense ministers, in addition to that of the Saudi Arabian foreign minister, to Azerbaijan, obviously plotting against Tehran. The other factor was the arrival of European observers to the region, who may also have as part of their intentions to peek through the Iranian border.

At the conclusion of the Sochi summit, the parties did not issue any individual statements. Instead, a joint communique was released, rehashing all the earlier statements and rhetoric. The communique calls for Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan to comply with the agreements of

November 9, 2020, January 11 and November 26, 2021.

The statement ceremonially gave credit to the Russian peacekeeping forces. They agreed to refrain from the use of force or threat of force, discuss and solve all the problematic issues exclusively on the basis of mutual recognition of sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders, in accordance with the UN Charter and the Declaration of Alma-Ata of 1991.

These very same words

have been used again and again, to no avail.

The summit did not move the conflict forward toward a resolution because there are underlying principles and the interests of the parties which supersede any good intentions contained in those documents.

If there was any good that came out of this summit for Armenia, it was that Pashinyan stated his position in front of the media, putting President Putin on the defensive. He asked for the full implementation of the November 9 agreement, which calls for the release of all prisoners of war, and asked for the removal of Azerbaijan's occupation forces from Armenian territory. He also clarified his position on the corridor issue, refusing any compromise of Armenia's sovereign territory.

This summit proved to be a ploy by President Putin to delay Armenia's move towards the West. It is not in Russia's interest to resolve this conflict, because that will move Russian peacekeepers out of the area, which will then reduce Moscow's leverage on Armenia and Azerbaijan.

For Azerbaijan, hatred toward Armenia is a necessary tool to hold together the regime's authoritarian rule, one which is increasingly unpopular. Azerbaijani society has been agitating in view of the Aliyev clan's opulent lifestyle; \$700-million property in London and the arms race which impacts on the livelihood of the people. Azerbaijan thus far has been refusing to reveal its losses in the 44-Day War. By some estimates, it is more than double the 4,000 dead of Armenia. And the families of all those *shahids* (martyrs) have been resenting Aliyev's self-serving wars.

Incidentally, a videotape emerged recently from an Azerbaijani general killed during the 44-Day War, which expressed fear that the Azerbaijani Army could not win the war without the active participation of Turkey.

Monitors on the border may restrain Azerbaijan for a while, during which time Armenia will have the daunting task of rebuilding its armed forces and developing its multilateral foreign policy.

There is nothing promising in being trapped in Russia's sphere of influence.







COMMENTARY

Perspective on Ouster of Russia From the South Caucasus

By Lt. Gen. Hayk Kotanjian  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Given the growing threat of the ouster of Russia from the South Caucasus, I would like to focus on large-scale and at the same time practically realizable possibilities of overcoming existential threats towards the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh.

Under current conditions, the realization of the projects elaborated by the Armenian Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) of the Armenian Ministry of Defense in 2016-2017, which were prepared taking into account the allied interaction between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia — a relationship which has no alternative — has a special significance.

Armenia, using the advantages of the US – Russia “restart,” enjoyed the status of a participant at the intersection of the security interests of the Russian Federation and the US, through the strategic scientific-expert platform operating in Yerevan. Armenia’s INSS, as a sister organization of the National Defense University of the US, acquired the privilege of continuously updating the strategic consulting tools of the top leadership of partner and ally states for a 20-25-year perspective. In particular, our INSS was conceived as a state think tank unique in the entire post-Soviet space with continuously innovative research and expert tools in the system of building bridges between the strategic interests of the Russian Federation and the US in the South Caucasus.

I would like to present two projects elaborated respectively 5 and 6 years ago for a medium-term perspective of 20-25 years. The projects were reviewed at the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Expert Research Council under the chairmanship of Colonel General, Ambassador Nikolay Bordyuzha, at the MGIMO University, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of the Russian Federation, China Institute of International Strategic Studies, MFA of the People’s Republic of China, and Kennedy School of Government of the Harvard University.

Project I

The first project is to establish joint ventures in the military-industrial complex for the modernization of the 102nd military base in Gyumri, approved in 2017 by President Vladimir Putin. The origins of this idea were formulated by Armenian and Russian experts following the joint visit of the presidents of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia to the 102nd military base in 2013 during the regional Russian-Armenian business forum in Gyumri. A group of highly qualified young researchers of the Armenian INSS and Russian colleagues, involved under the auspices of the Research-Expert Council of the CSTO, developed a project based on agreements on friendship and cooperation between the Shirak Province and its partners, the Ulyanovsk and Rostov Provinces. Taking into account the modernization of the armed forces of states that challenge Russian strategic interests in the South Caucasus, including Turkey, the launch of the joint Russian-Armenian military-industrial complex in Gyumri is urgently needed as never before.

Project II

In the conditions of a hybrid war against the Russian Federation, Russian-Chinese strategic interaction gains special importance, for which Armenia can serve as a convenient alternative platform. In particular, INSS proposed the geo-economic-geostrategic project of the synthesis of two integration initiatives – “Belt and Road” of China and the multimodal international transport corridor “Persian Gulf - Black Sea” with the land-sea transit route China - India - Iran - Armenia - Georgia - Southern Europe. The project was developed as a result of multi-stage joint discussions during mutual working visits to Armenia and China by Armenian and Chinese strategic analysts. In the process of developing this geo-economic project, it was reviewed by experts of INSS and China Institute of International Strategic Studies at international scientific conferences in Xi’an, Shanghai, Beijing, Tehran and Yerevan.

The idea of reflecting the interests of the Russia was considered at the meetings of the inter-parliamentary commissions of the Russian Federation Council and the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia from the point of view of Russia’s participation in transcontinental transit.

It is important to note that the Armenian-Chinese project “Strategic orientations for the involvement of the Republic of Armenia in the Chinese initiative Belt and Road” was submitted to the Central Military Commission of the People’s Republic of China, headed by the President of the People’s Republic of China, Xi Jinping.

I strongly believe that after relevant updates, these two projects may serve as a sound basis for fostering the Armenia–Russia strategic alliance and eliminate the threat of genocide against Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh.

(Lt. Gen. Hayk Kotanjian (retired) is a Doctor of Political Science, Professor in State Security and Strategic Studies (Russian Academy of Public Administration to the President of the Russian Federation) and International Counterterrorism Fellow (US National Defense University).)

US Arms Sales Regulations And Restrictions: Can the US Sell Arms to Armenia?

By Suren Sargsyan  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

The possibility of selling US-made arms to Armenia has been discussed often. There are all sorts of interpretations and approaches. Many claim that it is a matter of political expediency for the US. Others say that for such a deal it is necessary for Armenia to break its military ties and legal obligations with the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and Russia. The answer to this question must be sought not only in Armenian foreign policy but also in the American legal and political context.

History of US Arms Sales and the Main Regulatory Documents

The United States began its international arms sales after World War I, but it was only after World War II that US arms sales reached large volumes. One of the main reasons for the unprecedented increase in arms sales was the rivalry between the USSR and the USA during the Cold War. During those years, the United States used arms sales as a means of defending Western Europe, and in a broader strategic sense, the US goal was to prevent the advancement of the USSR and the spread of communism.

Now the United States is the world leader in arms exports. US arms exports grew by 14 percent in 2017-2021 compared to 2012-2016 and the US increased its global share from 32 percent to 39 percent.

The modern process of arms sales by the United States is regulated by the 1976 Arms Export Controls Act (AECA). The act authorizes sales by the United States government to “friendly countries having sufficient wealth to maintain and equip their own military forces at adequate strength, or to assume progressively larger shares of the costs thereof, without undue burden to their economies.” However, the sale should also be in accordance with the restraints and control measures specified in the act and in furtherance of the security objectives of the United States and of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

In addition to the legal regulation of arms sales, there is also a political component. US arms sales policy is stipulated in the following document: Conventional Arms Transfer Policy, which is regularly updated by US presidents. In general, no major changes are made, but there is a difference in the emphasis of this or that criterion. For example, unlike Nixon’s 1995 policy, Obama’s 2014 directive put a greater emphasis on human rights and their violations, the purpose of which was to prevent the USA from being involved or associated in any way with such violations. In addition to Obama’s policy, Trump’s policy also emphasized the issue of US economic security. The Biden administration has not yet issued its policy in this area; however, it is clear from the president’s political priorities that human rights and the preservation of democracy will be of key importance in this area as well.

Prohibition of US Arms Sales to Countries in Conflict

As for the ban or restrictions on US arms sales to countries in conflict, such a measure is stipulated in Section 38 of the Arms Export Control Act, according to which, when granting licenses for the sale of arms and the provision of military services, the US president must take into account whether it “would contribute to an arms race, aid in the development of weapons of mass destruction, support international terrorism, increase the possibility of outbreak or escalation of conflict, or prejudice the development of bilateral or multilateral arms control or nonproliferation agreements or other arrangements.” In other words, the factor that arms sales can result in the emergence or escalation of the conflict, does not directly prohibit the sale of weapons, but it is a circumstance that must be taken into account during the sale.

Restrictions on arms sales to conflicting parties are also regulated by the presidents themselves in their policy documents. A similar restriction was incorporated in both Obama’s and Trump’s presidential directives. Their policies implied restrictions on US arms sales if a sale could be destabilizing and dangerous to international peace and security. However, if US interests prevail, the sale could be carried out after a detailed examination of the circumstances, especially if there is no absolute legal prohibition in this matter.

As for the ban on arms sales to Armenia and Azerbaijan, that legal prohibition was enforced in 1993. According to §126.1 of International Traffic in Arms Regulations, Azerbaijan and Armenia were included in the list of countries to which it was forbidden to sell weapons. §126.1 is a regulation that prohibits granting of arms and defense service licenses to certain countries. However, after the events of 9/11, significant changes were made to this list. First, in 2002, Tajikistan and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia, Montenegro) were removed from the list of those countries. And in 2003 Armenia and Azerbaijan were excluded from the list. Since then US arms sales to Armenia and Azerbaijan is subject to separate discussion and examination.

With the amendment to §126.1 of the International Traffic in Arms Regulations, the list of countries is divided into two groups. The first group includes those countries to which US arms sales are absolutely prohibited. Among those countries are Belarus, Myanmar, China, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Syria, Venezuela. Arms sales to the countries of the second group are prohibited, except in cases specified by law. That list includes Afghanistan, Cambodia, the Central African Republic, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Haiti, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Russia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. Thus, the US is prohibited to sell weapons to the countries mentioned in this list, in which Armenia and Azerbaijan are no longer included.

Thus, from a legal perspective, there is no strict restriction for the arms sales by the United States to Armenia. Section 38 of 1976 U.S. Export Control Act requires consideration of whether an arms sale would “increase the possibility of outbreak or escalation of conflict.” However, this is not an absolute prohibition, but simply something that must be considered and often can be circumvented. Thus, the law authorizes the president’s administration to implement policy of arms sales in line with US national economic and political interests. In the case of Armenia, as a country in conflict, there is no absolute legal prohibition for buying weapons from the USA, especially when Armenia is not the side inciting a conflict, but the side defending against Azerbaijani aggression, which has also been confirmed by US officials. In case weapons are bought from the USA, they will be used to protect the Armenian people from the genocidal crimes of Azerbaijan. However, in order for Armenia to acquire weapons, first of all the unanimous agreement of both the executive and legislative branches of the USA is necessary. That is because for Armenia, being in the zone of Russia’s direct influence and having a membership in the CSTO are no less problematic than being in a conflict.





## COMMENTARY

## MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

## Presidents of Turkey and Azerbaijan Split the Loot of The 2020 Artsakh War

While Armenia has been licking its wounds of the 2020 Artsakh War, the presidents of Azerbaijan and Turkey wasted no time to get together and split with their families and cronies the loot they acquired after occupying the territories in and around Artsakh.

Azerbaijani journalist Ulkar Natiqqizi posted on the eurasianet.org website his investigative article on October 24, titled: “‘Brotherly’ Azerbaijan and Turkey build lucrative Karabakh business ties.” It reveals how the two presidents have divided among their family members and close associates what they plundered from Artsakh.

Natiqqizi wrote that “Companies close to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan have received at least hundreds of millions of dollars in contracts, particularly in the reconstruction of the territories in Karabakh that Azerbaijan retook in the war.... In one large new agricultural complex in the Zangilan region, members of Erdogan’s family are business partners with members of President Ilham Aliyev’s family.”

In October 2022, Erdogan and Aliyev together toured “Dost [Friend] Agropark, a \$100 million project that will eventually employ 500 people raising up to 10,000 head of cattle.” The two presidents placed ‘Made in Karabakh’ labels on the packages of meat products from the cattle brought to the region by Dost Agropark.

Accompanying Erdogan was “Abdulkadir Karagoz, the owner of Dost Ziraat, the Turkish investor in Dost Agropark.” Karagoz is “a member of Erdogan’s family; he is married to Erdogan’s niece, the daughter of Erdogan’s brother Mustafa Erdogan.” Shortly after his 2016 marriage, when Erdogan’s family members joined his company, “Karagoz began winning conspicuous amounts of government contracts, in many of which his firm was the sole participant.”

President Aliyev’s official website stated that “office buildings, 5,200 square meters indoor and 113,000 square meters outdoor animal husbandry complexes, social facilities, café, cinema, recreation area, swimming pool, and buildings for service personnel were built in the first phase of the [Agropark] project. A total of 3,500 head of cattle were brought to the complex and production of tillage carried out. Harvesting of wheat and barley planted last year was completed with the participation of both presidents.”

One of Erdogan’s allies managing Agropark is Mehmet Zeki Tugrul, the company’s CEO, a former board member of the youth wing of Erdogan’s ruling Justice and Development Party.

“On the Azerbaijani side, the investor [in Agropark] is Pasha Investments, part of the Pasha Holding company that brings together all of the firms owned by the family of Aliyev’s wife who is Azerbaijan’s first vice president, Mehriban Aliyeva,” eurasianet revealed.

Joining Erdogan’s entourage during his last month’s visit was “Cemal Kaly-

oncu, chairman of Kalyon Holding; Mehmet Cengiz, chairman of Cengiz Holding; and Yıldırım Demiroren, chairman of Demiroren Holding. All three had also joined Erdogan in his previous Karabakh visit.”

“Cengiz and Kalyon are two of what has become known as the ‘Gang of Five’ Turkish firms that have close links to Erdogan and the ruling party and which have been awarded most large government tenders during Erdogan’s rule.” The Turkish newspaper Cumhuriyet reported that within one year of his marriage, Erdogan’s cousin “Karagoz obtained a total of ten tenders from Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality companies and certain public companies.”

Natiqqizi reported that “Both Kalyon and Cengiz have been awarded lucrative contracts for work in Karabakh, ...including the construction of roads and operation of three mines, particularly of gold and copper. Kalyon is constructing the Horadiz-Aghband railway line that is envisaged as part of the transport route connecting Azerbaijan’s exclave of Nakhichevan to the mainland via southern Armenia. That project is projected to cost over \$180 million and to be completed in 2023.”

According to a second eurasianet article titled, “Turkish Firms Benefit from Azerbaijan’s Victory,” stated that “another company run by Mehmet Cengiz won a contract from Azerbaijan’s state water management company for the construction of a massive hydroelectric dam, the Organized Crime and Corruption Project reported. Following the award, a company controlled by Cengiz made a payment to an offshore company which in turn bought a luxury apartment in London, in which the son of the then-head of the water company lived.”

Furthermore, Kolin Insaat, another ‘Gang of Five’ company, “also has gotten a lucrative road construction contract in Karabakh, to build the ‘Victory Road’ to Shusha [Shushi] along with an Azerbaijani firm, Azvirt. Kolin also was involved in the establishment of a market (located on ‘Turkey-Azerbaijan Friendship Street’) in the village of Agali, where the first few Azerbaijanis to resettle in Karabakh have moved.”

Another major Turkish firm, Demiroren Holding, got in 2021 a 10-year contract to run Azerbaijan’s state lottery, and “signed a memorandum of understanding with Azerbaijan’s Ministry of Economy “to build a \$40 million pharmaceutical plant.”

Natiqqizi reported that “In total, the Azerbaijani government has allocated nearly \$2.9 billion for reconstruction and restoration projects in Karabakh. Data have not been published breaking down which countries’ companies get contracts, and other countries perceived to be friendly, including Italy, Israel, and the United Kingdom, also have gotten contracts. But Turkish firms appear to be the biggest winners of the contracts. There are roughly 30 Turkish companies operating in Karabakh, according to the Turkish embassy in Baku. ‘These companies have already invested \$1 billion, and these investments will continue to grow,’ said Yakup Sefer, Turkey’s chief trade counsellor in Baku.”

Natiqqizi wrote that when an Italian journalist asked Pres. Aliyev about the prospects of Italian companies getting a piece of the action in Artsakh, Aliyev said that “Italy would be in second place—behind Turkey. ‘It is our neighbor and they have very prominent construction companies,’ he said of Turkey. ‘Because it is our ally and close friend.’”

## Trouble at the CSTO: Ukraine Should Not be Putin’s Only Concern

By Elena Roubinski

*Special to the Mirror-Spectator*

While the Ukraine war is diverting Moscow’s attention, Putin’s control over its neighbors in Central Asia and the Caucasus is lessening. The deployment of troops in Kazakhstan in January put the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) on the map of actively engaged regional military alliances. While setting a precedent, the recent casualties at the borders of Armenia and Kyrgyzstan demonstrate CSTO’s inefficiency in maintaining order.

The regional organization remains ruled by Russia, focused on preserving its geopolitical interests — pushing some of its members to reconsider their participation and reliance on the CSTO. This could result in a shift of alliances, leaving space for new allegiance opportunities.

If Russia gets defeated in Ukraine it will discredit its authoritative and paternalistic position towards ‘smaller’ states in the region, explains expert Ben Dubow. Belarus is the only member that backed Russia’s invasion, as the rest are trying to distance themselves, rebranding as neutral out of fear that the West or Putin might come after them. Sanctions are already making Russia more reliant on its neighbors to bypass trade and investment restrictions. As a result, the whole region is taking advantage of the weakened position of Russia to equilibrate its relationships with Moscow.

The Russian-initiated Collective Security Organization was created in 1992. It later became in 2002 the CSTO made of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and

Tajikistan. The CSTO pledged to defend all members in exchange for an exclusive military alliance.

After the deployment in Kazakhstan, the Armenian leadership hoped that Russia through the CSTO would be willing to take on a more active role in maintaining and protecting the security of its members. In the past, during the 2020 ‘44 days war’ between Baku and Yerevan, the Armenian PM’s calls for the dispatch of troops were ignored. As ceasefires and breaches are multiplying, the country’s security is now increasingly relying on the presence of Russian peacekeepers at the border.

The heavy shelling on the night of September 12-13 has once again angered the population and calls to withdraw from the CSTO have been voiced across the country. On September 20, a group of CSTO rapporteurs arrived in the Karabakh region to recommend crisis resolutions policies, and Sergey Lavrov assured that Russia was committed to convene a meeting for the dispatch of more permanent observers. However, Armenians are still waiting for more adequate defense from the CSTO. In protest, Yerevan took a raincheck for the special forces exercise operation “Interaction-2022” that started on September 26 in Kazakhstan.

Kyrgyzstan also decided to abruptly cancel the military drill “Indestructible Brotherhood” following heavy shelling on its border with Tajikistan on September 18. President Sadyr Zhaparov expressed his discontent with the CSTO at the Summit on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures held in Astana on October 13. He stated that “existing authoritative regional organizations are not effectively using all their tools at their disposal to prevent conflicts from destabilizing in the region.”

Other former Soviet states are increasingly repositioning their foreign policy, such as Kazakhstan, which grew diplomatically closer to Beijing, defending China’s internal policies at the UN. Previous Russian statements on the ‘fictitious’ creation of Kazakhstan resonated with the in-

vasion of Ukraine to the point that China warned against an incursion into its ally’s territory.

Yerevan has been trying to find alternative supporters, knowing that close economic relations with Baku, exacerbated by the war in Ukraine, are limiting Russia’s willingness to act. The European Commission stepped in as a fellow mediator in the negotiations between the belligerents and sent a fact-finding mission on October 13. Moreover, Nancy Pelosi’s visit to Yerevan on September 17 demonstrates the Armenian efforts to voice out what they need.

The CSTO is perceived by Russia as a way to exert and maintain dominance on its neighborhood while keeping foreign powers such as the United States and China away, explains analyst Ecaterina Locoman. Russia’s positioning as a fellow victim of Western domination, justifying the need to regroup against foreign powers, will not convince other members that Moscow is their best defense — rather it might push them further east. Tajikistan’s PM Emomali Rahmonh at the Astana conference expressed the growing irritation of Central Asian countries with Moscow’s imperial attitude.

Even if the secretary of Armenia’s security council, Armen Grigoryan, bluntly declared that “there is no more hope for the CSTO,” it is too soon to announce its demise. Due to the members’ high military, financial and political reliance on Moscow, it is very unlikely that they will break away from the CSTO. Armenian ex-President Kocharyan recalled that the organization continues to limit the scope of Baku’s aggression. Yerevan will not leave Moscow’s security umbrella without “a real alternative for balancing out the negative consequences of that decision,” declares expert Leonid Nersisyan.

Russia’s growing isolation forces Putin to revise its geopolitical priorities in the Caucasus and Central Asia. His minimum engagement to maintain good relations with all members of the CSTO will push frustrated states to eventually revise their allegiance. The current conflicts

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# Residents of Armenian Borderline Communities Yet Again on the Brink

SHATTERED, from page 1  
two grandchildren. Half barefoot, he ran out to turn on the car. The car stopped working, so they started running toward his friend’s house. “It wasn’t even a few minutes we ran when it fell on the house,” he says, whipping the sweat from his forehead.

Azerbaijan launched a wide-scale attack against Armenia around midnight of September 13, targeting at least three dozen locales along the southern and south-eastern borders, including small settlements like Sotk, Vardenis, Goris and Kapan. This escalation which ended on September 14 through international mediation, has been the largest escalation between the two sides since the Second Nagorno-Karabakh war in 2020.

Armenia has announced the death of 207 of its soldiers, while Azerbaijan has claimed 77 casualties of its service members. Three civilian fatalities have been reported in Armenia, and several civilians on both sides were wounded.

Martirosyan built his house from scratch in September 2020, a few days before Azerbaijan launched a full-scale war on the territory of the self-recognized Republic of Artsakh (Karabakh). He didn’t stop the construction when the war started and still doesn’t plan to move. Yet, his daughter and grandchildren are displaced, temporarily residing with relatives in towns closer to the capital Yerevan. The schools are closed, and the older granddaughter hasn’t been in class since the attacks.

### Gardening in the Wreckage: the Comeback

While Martirosyan’s farming stopped, Slavik Galstyan has just dug out the potatoes earlier than the usual mid-October. The 59-year-old gardener and constructor is left with nothing but a demolished house, a few sheep, and a garden. Slavik lives with three sons and his wife. The youngest one, Suren (22), fought in the 2020 War and finished his service about a year ago.



One of the hotels in Jermuk, Armenia, after the Azerbaijani attack on Sep 13, 2022

Slavik was displaced from Kirovabad (now Ganja), Azerbaijan, back in 1989 when the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict ignited. The tension in the country towards Armenians intensified, so he moved to Sotk with his family and switched houses with an Azerbaijani. “It was a common practice back in 1989. People made deals and exchanged the houses as we did,” says Slavik.

More than nine bombs fell in his neighborhood consecutively. They focused on Vardenis (8.5 km from Sotk). He said they stayed outside for a few days and returned to see the remains of the house. He added, “They don’t want to leave us alone. I want the kids to finally go to school and not be scared. I want to go to bed in peace.”

According to the villagers, the Azerbaijani forces set fire to some parts of the forest to scare them and spread panic. The smoke has been rising for a few days now, but Armenians can’t go close to extinguish

the fire. Its smell and heaviness spreads in the village, obscuring any future plans.

“We’re not planning to leave the village, but neither can we bring the kids back to this wreckage. There’s no guarantee they won’t attack again,” says Slavik. He is just sitting and looking at Azerbaijani trenches in the mountains, foreseeing another attack. Potato bags and ripened pear trees guard the remnants of the house, giving Slavik hope for revival.

### Just Two Among Many

“The total number of temporarily displaced people from Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor and Syunik provinces of Armenia is more than 7,600 people — mostly women and elderly, as well as 1,437 children and 99 people with disabilities.

“About 192 residential buildings, three hotels, two schools, one medical facility were partially or completely destroyed. Seven electricity supply facilities, five water supply facilities, three [natural] gas pipelines, and one bridge were damaged. Two ambulances and four private cars were shot at. The Kechut Reservoir was also shelled,” announced Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

Armenia’s Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports, Vahram Dumanyan, called on the international community to condemn Azerbaijan’s hostile actions in his speech at the 9th Ministerial Conference of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe held in Nicosia, Cyprus, from October 5-7.

In his official letter to UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay, he stated that 24873 school children of 172 schools and 5808 preschool children from 69 kindergartens studying in Syunik, Gegharkunik, and Vayots Dzor regions were deprived of the right to education as a result of the military aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan. The activities of extracurricular educational institutions, colleges and universities

operating in these regions are also under threat. A special report prepared by the RA Human Rights Defender was also attached to the letter.

### Jermuk: From Medical Tourism to Guns

When driving to Jermuk (155 kilometers from Sotk), a touristic spa town in the southeast of Armenia, another bushfire appeared in the mountains, delineating the new borders. The road, which used to be packed with tourist cars and buses, is blocked with a military checkpoint. “Tourist town has become a military polygon,” sighs Jirayr Babayan, 49, the owner of a local store in Jermuk.

This part of the country is renowned for its natural resources, healing waters, and wineries. Jermuk is a leading health resort that hosted hundreds of tourists just before the attack. The hotels and spas were packed with tourists and reservations were booked for the upcoming months. Like in Sotk and other areas of attack, the entrance to the city is restricted. Cars are being checked in the new “Jermuk gates” by the military and police. This reporter was escorted with fellow colleagues by a military representative, likewise, going through a 40-minute scan. The Azerbaijani assault left the town bare, with only a few businesses open.

The only light bulb of Babayan’s store trembles, shifting the eyes of the visitors to the half-emptied shelves. He and his wife, Gayane Matevosyan, 44, run a family business to make a living. The war left its scar on their store too. Most of their customers were tourists who left the city and won’t be back until safety is guaranteed. The local businessman says the market was full a few days before the Azerbaijani attack, but now they get 2-3 people daily, mostly servicemen.

“Have you seen the smoke rising in the mountains? That’s them. It’s dark now, but in the morning, we can see them standing and observing us from above. It’s not safe,” Martirosyan explained.

It was 12:05 am when he heard the bombing and was convinced it was a firework. Fireworks without lights. Women, children, the elderly, and tourists were evacuated. He didn’t leave the town even for a second and isn’t planning to.

“They deliberately targeted hotels, the ropeway, and touristic places. It’s the main source of income for people, so they want to cut it and make people leave voluntarily,” the 49-year-old man says. He describes the situation as “critical but stable” in medical terms.

The smoke in the mountains chokes Jermuk’s emptied streets, hanging all the plans in the air. Yet, Babayan brings the missing bottles back to the shelves. “Do you think a tourist will come back? Maybe in a year, in two years,” says the Armenian entrepreneur. He’s far from positive about the future of his business in the short term.

“Until safety is guaranteed and Azerbaijanis recede to their initial positions, it will not be safe.”


## Ukraine Should Not be Putin’s Only Concern

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will continue obstructing political stability and stir popular discontent. Russia should clear its position and act as a real resolution broker on both border conflicts, making the costs of rejecting peace settlements too high. World geopolitics are shifting East and will continue attracting more foreign interests. New alliances palliating the lack of regional alternatives and offering material gains could arise. If China and the Eu-

ropean Union strongly engage and support Russian neighbors, it will ultimately loosen Putin’s grip on the post-Soviet region.

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