

FAST Panel Explores AI And Armenia’s Future

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The dangers and promises of artificial intelligence (AI) have been constantly in the news recently. These are issues that concern all mankind, so naturally Armenia cannot but be part of this rapidly evolving story. Consequently, a panel organized by the Foundation for Armenian Science and Technology (FAST) and Flagship Pioneering, in partnership with the Armenian Biotech Group, Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) New England and the Armenian American Medical Association (AAMA), on September 10 at Flagship Pioneering’s offices in Cambridge was quite timely. While it was titled “From Classrooms to Innovation: Building Armenia’s AI Future,” the panelists touched upon many universal issues.

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Noubar Afeyan, left, with Daron Acemoglu after the presentations (photo courtesy FAST)

Masco Corporation Chairman Emeritus Richard Manoogian Dies at 90

LIVONIA, Mich. — Richard Manoogian, Chairman Emeritus of Masco Corporation, passed away on September 25 at the age of 90.

Richard Manoogian was the son of Alex and Marie Manoogian. Alex, an Armenian immigrant and founder of Masco Corporation, brought to market the single-handle Delta® faucet, which today is a leading brand in the home improvement and remodeling industry.

Richard joined Masco in 1958. With his strong leadership skills, he was elected to Masco’s Board in 1964 and named president and Chief Operating Officer in 1968.

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Pashinyan Highlights Armenia’s Peace with Azerbaijan, Democratic Reforms and Expanding International Relations in UN Speech

NEW YORK (Caucasus Watch) — On September 27, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan highlighted Armenia’s peace initiatives with Azerbaijan, regional cooperation, domestic reforms, and expanding international relations during the 80th UN General Assembly. Pashinyan stated that the primary focus of speeches by Armenian leaders at the UN had historically been the conflict with Azerbaijan, and he highlighted Armenia’s recent shift toward promoting peace. He noted that in his 2022 speech, he first spoke not of conflict but of peace, despite uncertainties at the time, when over 12 kilometers of the Armenia-Azerbaijan border had already been demarcated and joint commission regulations signed by both countries’ deputy prime ministers. He highlighted that these regulations were ratified by both Armenia and Azerbaijan, marking the first bilateral international



al document between the two states and referencing the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration as the basis for border demarcation. see UN, page 3

Armenian Security Chief Sees No Threat From Turkey, As Pashinyan Meets with Erdogan in New York

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in New York on September 23 to discuss Turkish-Armenian relations and the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace process.

The talks were held at the Turkish House on the sidelines of the ongoing session of the UN General Assembly.

In a statement, the Turkish presidency said that Erdogan voiced support for “the normalization process with Armenia in the areas of bilateral trade and transportation” and praised “growing cooperation with Armenia in international organizations.” He was also reported to hail “reciprocal steps” taken by Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Pashinyan’s office reported, for its part, that the two leaders expressed readiness to “advance” that process and, in particular, commercial ties between their countries. It said they also “stressed the need” for the implementation of an agreement to open a US-administered transit corridor for Azerbaijan through Armenia.

Turkey continues to make the opening of its border with Armenia conditional on an Armenian-Azerbaijani peace deal acceptable to Azerbaijan. That means accepting Baku’s demands for a change of Armenia’s constitution and the opening of the corridor that would connect Azerbaijan to its Nakhichevan exclave and Turkey.

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Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan meet at the Turkish House in New York, September 23, 2026.

Armenian and Azerbaijan Agree to ‘Promote Positive Agenda amid Tension

By Arshaluys Barseghyan

YEREVAN (OC-Media) — The Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers, Ararat Mirzoyan and Jeyhun Bayramov, met on the margins of the UN General Assembly on September 25 amidst a rise in tensions between the two countries. According to almost identical readouts, they “exchanged views on the possibility of promoting a positive agenda in various multilateral platforms.”

It remains unclear which “multilateral platforms” the ministers were referring to or what exactly the “positive agenda” would entail.

“Both Ministers emphasized the importance of peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan, reviewing the progress achieved since the 2025 Washington Peace Summit Agreements. Particular attention was paid to unblocking the economic and transport infrastructure between Armenia and Azerbaijan,” the Armenian readout of the meeting said.

In this context, the sides underscored “trade and transit interactions” between them “as practical examples of the benefits of peace” and “agreed to continue their direct dialogue.”

That same day, Armenian authorities disclosed that the country had shipped aluminum foil to Azerbaijan in what appears to be its first export of products to the country since the two intensified peace talks in 2025. Azerbaijan has been regularly supplying Armenia with petroleum products since December 2025.

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UZBEKISTAN

Armenia Finishes Sixth at Chess Olympiad, Claims Bronze



MASSACHUSETTS

New Cohort of Tavitian Scholars Arrive at Tufts’s Fletcher School



LOS ANGELES

TUMO Raises \$17m at 15th Anniversary Fundraising Gala





ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Mass Vandalism
Recorded in Artsakh,
Ombudsman Says

YEREVAN (Pan.am) — More than 1,000 cases of vandalism have been reported in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) since 2020, with more than seven churches completely destroyed, according to Artsakh Cultural Heritage Ombudsman Hovik Avanesov on September 28.

Avanesov made the remarks during a discussion marking the sixth anniversary of the Artsakh war. He said around 10 villages had been completely destroyed and about the same number had been partially destroyed. Stepanakert’s architectural and monumental heritage had also been destroyed, he said, including entire residential neighborhoods.

Avanesov said efforts to preserve Artsakh’s cultural heritage and document damage to historic sites were essential to holding Azerbaijan accountable and deterring further destruction.

He urged Armenian officials to avoid statements that could be interpreted by Azerbaijan as a signal that it could act with impunity.

Three Die in Crane
Accident

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — Three people have reportedly been killed after a crane partially collapsed during construction work in Yerevan on September 29, Armenia’s Ministry of Internal Affairs reported.

At 2:10 p.m., the city’s main emergency center received a report that a crane had been partially damaged and fallen while construction work was being carried out near 120 Tichina Street in Yerevan.

One firefighting and rescue crew from the Yerevan Rescue Department and a rescue team from the Special Rescue Operations Center were dispatched to the scene.

Cardiovascular
Diseases Responsible or
Half Deaths in 2025

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Cardiovascular and other diseases of the circulatory system accounted for more than half of all deaths in Armenia in 2025.

A total of 25,564 people died in Armenia last year, including 13,125 — or 51.3% — from diseases of the circulatory system, according to figures cited by the Heratsi Analytical Center.

The number of deaths from these diseases fell by 2.7% from 2024, the data showed.

The figures were released ahead of World Heart Day on September 29.

Cardiovascular diseases remain the world’s leading cause of death. The World Health Organization estimates that about 19.8 million people died from cardiovascular diseases in 2022.

Deaf Community Seeks to Have Access
To Better Education, Inclusion

By Armik Grigoryan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — According to official and community estimates, there are over 3,500 to 4,000 deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals in Armenia, alongside a broader community of sign language users, interpreters, and family members who rely on Armenian Sign Language (ASL) for daily communication. Armenian Sign Language is not a recent invention, nor is it a direct translation of spoken Armenian; it is a language that has evolved organically.

Behind official summaries and project reports, however, the deaf and hard-of-hearing community faces an impenetrable wall of informational, educational and cultural barriers every day. Media materials, videos, and official pages created about deaf issues often lack ASL translation or adequate accessibility.

Community advocate Astghik Alaverdyan recently highlighted the negative impact of this inaccessibility in a social media statement regarding content created about deaf issues without actual sign language translation.

“My husband is deaf, and sign language translation and context are completely inaccessible to him, just as they are to the entire deaf community,” Alaverdyan stated. “Producing materials about deaf people without involving them and offering inaccessible content constitutes pure discrimination.”

The native language of deaf individuals is sign language, meaning written text

ror-Spectator, representatives of the Armenian Deaf Society emphasized that community involvement in developing educational programs, textbooks, dictionaries, and methodological materials related to Armenian Sign Language remains dangerously inadequate.

“Today, the involvement of the deaf community in developing educational programs and dictionaries is neither sufficient nor systematic,” the Armenian Deaf Society stated. “Our firm position is that native speakers of Armenian Sign Language must be involved at every stage of the process

clusivity as service provision rather than an equal partnership.

“Armenian Sign Language is not simply a tool of communication for which a new gesture can be ‘created’ at any moment — it is a natural language,” the Society emphasized. “explicit demand from the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports is that no program regarding Armenian Sign Language should be developed or funded without the genuine participation of the deaf community.”

The Armenian Deaf Society was founded in 1931.



Deaf children in Armenia

— from collecting linguistic material to evaluating textbooks and methodological guides.”

These linguistic discrepancies become critically dangerous in classroom settings when non-deaf specialists or organizations invent artificial signs by translating spoken Armenian words verbatim, the statement continued.

They added, “When a specialist or project independently creates a new sign and presents it as ‘official,’ that sign is often either not used in the community at all or carries an entirely different meaning,” the Armenian Deaf Society explained. “If a teacher, an interpreter, and a deaf child use different signs for the exact same concept, the child is forced to learn conflicting variations rather than a unified linguistic system, hurting language development.”

The Society noted that the core reason the deaf community continues to be bypassed is that certain entities still view in-

In response to an official query, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports clarified that the legal framework of Armenian Sign Language is regulated by the Republic of Armenia (RA) Law “On Language” and the RA Law “On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.” However, the ministry acknowledged that an institutional framework for the development and approval of new signs is currently not fully established, and there is no mandatory procedure for state evaluation of sign language materials developed independently by private entities or NGOs.

To resolve this gap, the Armenian Deaf Society proposes a path forward based on the principle of “nothing about us without us.”

“We propose establishing a National Professional Commission for Armenian Sign Language with decisive representation of Deaf native speakers,” the Society outlined. “Decisions regarding Armenian Sign Language must not be made in place of the deaf community — they must be made with the deaf community.”



The Armenian Sign Language alphabet

alone does not always ensure full comprehension. For a significant part of the community, written Armenian is a second language, making delivering information in their native language essential for both linguistic and cultural appropriateness.

In a statement provided to the Mir-

‘Yet Another Fabrication’: Armenia Denies Conceding
Land to Azerbaijan during Demarcation

By Ani Ghulinyan

YEREVAN (OC-Media) — Armenia this week denied reports circulating on social media that they conceded five combat positions in the north to Azerbaijan during the border demarcation process.

OC Media was unable to find the original source for the reports that Yerevan was rebutting. A couple of social media posts spread the news on Facebook without giving a specific source.

Armenia’s Defense Ministry called claims that four or five Armenian positions near the village of Berdavan in the Tavush Province had come under Azerbaijani control “yet another fabrication,” with the local authorities in Noyemberyan also denying the claims.

The Office of Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan has also issued a statement denying that Armenia made the concessions and said the reports did not correspond to reality.

The border delimitation commissions of the two countries were created in 2022. Armenia’s commission is headed by Grigoryan, while Azerbaijan’s is headed by Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev.

In 2024, Armenia’s agreement to delimit parts of its border with Azerbaijan, with a potential transfer of control over four disputed villages sparked protests in Tavush. The protests then escalated into a larger movement, Tavush for the Motherland, led by Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan. Residents raised security concerns and accused the government of making unilateral con-

cessions.

On September 5, 2025, the heads of the border delimitation commissions of the two countries made reciprocal visits across the Armenia–Azerbaijan border. This was the first confirmed instance of the two officials visiting each other’s territory.

Earlier this year, the Defense Ministry rejected another claim that positions near Jermuk had been handed to Azerbaijan.

In early September, controversy erupted in Armenia after a newspaper quoted a local official as saying that Azerbaijan had attempted to advance towards the Hakari Bridge, which connected Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh.

Local officials have denied the reports. (This article originally appeared on www.oc-media.org on September 29.)



ARMENIA

Pashinyan Highlights Armenia’s Peace with Azerbaijan, Democratic Reforms, And Expanding International Relations in UN Speech

UN, from page 1

He emphasized that in March 2025, Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed on a draft peace and interstate relations agreement, confirming their recognition of each other’s sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of borders, and political independence, with territories corresponding to the former Armenian and Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republics. Pashinyan noted that this agreement was initialed on August 8, 2025, in Washington, DC, by the foreign ministers of both countries in the presence of US President Donald Trump. The meeting culminated in a Declaration recognizing the need to move beyond past conflict, ensuring the inviolability of international borders, and a rejection of revenge.

The Prime Minister underscored that the Declaration included commitments to open communications for bilateral and international transportation, promoting peace, stability, and prosperity, including unimpeded

connectivity between mainland Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic through Armenia, with reciprocal benefits for Armenia. He detailed the “Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity” (TRIPP) project, emphasizing that implementing these agreements requires a pro-peace and legitimate narrative. He noted that terms such as the “Zangezur Corridor” used by Azerbaijan were not part of the agreements and could be misinterpreted as territorial claims.

Pashinyan highlighted that Armenia’s democratic development, respect for sovereignty, and promotion of peace form the foundation for implementing the agreements. This includes the TRIPP route infrastructure project encompassing railways, highways, pipelines, and electricity transmission lines, connecting East and West and linking the North to the South as part of the “Crossroads of Peace” program, in cooperation with the United States. He stressed

that the opening of communications must respect state sovereignty and international standards, including modern border and customs controls, and noted the importance of progress in Armenia-Turkey relations toward establishing diplomatic ties and opening the border.

Pashinyan also underscored Armenia’s expanding diplomatic relations, including new ties with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan; strengthened relations with Iran, Georgia, China, India, Japan, Mongolia, the Middle East, and Central Asian countries; as well as participation in the 3+3 regional format, noting that a balanced foreign policy opens new horizons for Armenia.

Pashinyan highlighted domestic reforms, including the adoption of the law initiating Armenia’s EU accession process, emphasizing that EU membership is a democratic choice and requires compliance with European standards. He announced plans to hold a nationwide referendum on a new constitution

after the 2026 parliamentary elections to link all branches of government to the people, ensuring lasting, people-centered statehood.

Looking ahead, Pashinyan invited heads of state to the 8th Summit of the European Political Community in Yerevan in May 2026 and to the 17th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in October 2026. He concluded by reaffirming Armenia’s commitment to the peace agenda with Azerbaijan, stressing that with regional and international support, Armenia would remain firmly on the path of peace. “Long live dialogue, long live diplomacy, long live peace!” Pashinyan concluded.

On September 27, within the framework of the 80th UN General Assembly session, Nikol Pashinyan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, held meetings with OSCE Secretary General Feridun Sinirlioglu and UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

Fallen Soldier’s Father Urges Authorities to Notify Families Before Altering Memorials

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — The father of Albert Hovhannisyan, an Armenian serviceman killed in the 2020 Artsakh war, said on September 29 that authorities should notify the families of fallen soldiers before making any changes to memorials honoring them.

Artak Hovhannisyan was speaking to reporters at Yerablur Military Pantheon after a large portrait of his son was removed from a wall near the main entrance to Victory Park in Yerevan.

Hovhannisyan said he understood that renovation work was underway in the area

and his family is now discussing how to honor his son at the site, possibly with a sculpture or another large-scale portrait.

“The location will definitely be Victory Park,” Hovhannisyan said, adding that he would approve the final proposal after discussions.

“Whatever is done concerning fallen soldiers, their families should at least be notified in advance, rather than having us wake up and find out that a portrait has been removed,” he said.

Hovhannisyan also criticized the decision to broadcast a concert by singer Tata



The memorial to Albert Hovhannisyan at Victory Park in Yerevan, which has since been taken down

but said he could not accept the removal of his son’s portrait without prior notice.

“If there is a decision to carry out renovation work, the issue of the portrait should have been discussed beforehand – whether it would be repainted or covered,” he said.

Hovhannisyan said he learned about the portrait’s removal from media reports. He later spoke with Yerevan Municipality spokesperson Julieta Azaryan, saying offi-

cially on Armenia’s Public TV on September 27, marking the sixth anniversary of the war.

“Whoever is responsible should be held fully accountable, whether it’s the head of programming or the television station’s director,” he said. “There has to be some order in this country. This isn’t a place where everyone can just do whatever they want.”

Armenians Remember Six Years Since The Start of the 2020 Artsakh War

YEREVAN (The Armenian Report) — On the morning of September 27, 2020, Azerbaijan launched an attack on Artsakh, beginning a 44-day war that took thousands of Armenian lives. Six years later, Azerbaijan occupies indigenous Armenian Artsakh, and families who buried their sons still return to their graves.

For thousands of Armenian families, the anniversary is measured not only in years, but in lives that never returned from the battlefield.

Armenia’s Investigative Committee said this month that 3,833 people on the Armenian side were killed in the war — 3,755 servicemen and 78 civilians. The whereabouts of another 191 people, including 172 servicemen and 19 civilians, remain unknown.

The updated figures came after President Vahagn Khachaturyan said during a visit to Prague that 4,800 people had been killed. His office later said he had mis-spoken, while the Investigative Committee restated the official count.

The fighting continued through October and into November, despite several attempts to establish a ceasefire.

One of the decisive battles came around Shushi, a strategically important city overlooking Stepanakert. Azerbaijani forces took control of the city in the final days of the war.

The fighting ended under a statement signed by Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Russian President Vladimir Putin. The agreement took effect at midnight Moscow time on November 9, 2020.

Under its terms, Armenian and Azerbaijani forces stopped at the positions they then held. Azerbaijan retained the territories it had captured during the fighting, while additional districts were transferred to Azerbaijani control. A Russian peacekeeping force of 1,960 troops was deployed along the line of contact and the Lachin corridor, which at the time provided Nagorno-Karabakh’s main connection with Armenia.

The agreement stopped the 44 days of fighting, but it did not bring an end to the conflict or its human consequences.

Families continued searching for missing servicemen. Armenian prisoners remained in Azerbaijani custody. Thousands of people displaced from communities that came under Azerbaijani control had no homes to return to.

The fragile postwar order established in November 2020 would itself collapse less than three years later.

After months of restrictions on movement through the Lachin corridor, Azerbaijan launched a military offensive in Artsakh on September 19, 2023. The authorities in the region agreed to disarm the following day, and within days virtually the entire ethnic Armenian population was forced to flee to Armenia.

For Armenians, the events of 2023 changed the meaning of the 2020 war as well. What began six years ago with trenches, air raid sirens and artillery ended years later with Artsakh emptied of its Armenian civilian population.

The memory of the 44-Day War remains most visible at Yerablur Military Pantheon in Yerevan, where rows of graves hold many of the young servicemen killed in 2020.

Every September 27, parents return to their sons’ graves. Widows arrive with their children. Families bring flowers, light incense and stand beside photographs of young men whose lives ended during those 44 days.

Six years have passed since the first day of the war. For the families who still come to Yerablur, September 27 has never really ended.



INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL

Corporacion America Airports to Expand Operations in Armenia

YEREVAN (ARKA) — Martin Eurnekian, CEO of Corporacion America Airports, presented the progress of ongoing projects and prospects for expanding operations in the country to Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on September 28.

According to the Armenian government's press service, the parties discussed, in particular, the development of Yerevan's Zvartnots International Airport and Gyumri's Shirak Airport — both under the company's concession management — as well as infrastructure improvements and the implementation of other investment projects.

It was noted that these projects aim to develop the aviation market, increase passenger traffic and airport capacity, improve service quality, and support the growth of the tourism industry.

Pashinyan highlighted the importance of the company's work in Armenia and expressed the government's interest in further developing mutually beneficial cooperation.

Following the meeting, the parties agreed to continue discussions on future areas of cooperation.

Zvartnots International Airport is operated by Armenia International Airports CJSC under a 30-year concession management agreement signed with the Armenian government in 2001. The company also manages Gyumri's Shirak Airport. The owner of CJSC Armenia International Airports is the Argentine company American International Airports, which belongs to Eduardo Eurnekian, an Argentine citizen of Armenian descent.

Jerusalem Man Filmed As He Was Trying to Urinate on St. James Monastery

JERUSALEM (Times of Israel) — A Jewish man was filmed on Monday, September 28, apparently trying to urinate on the outer wall of the St. James Monastery in the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City.

Security camera footage shows a security guard at the monastery rushing to stop the man and directing him to leave the area.

The monastery has been targeted by Jewish extremists who spit in its direction as they walk by.

Hours before the incident at St. James, an Orthodox Jewish man was filmed spitting on the ground as he walked by Christian pilgrims at the nearby Armenian Catholic Church of Our Lady of Sorrows.

Law enforcement in Israel has been struggling to stop harassment and attacks against Christian clergy and church property in the Old City, including frequent incidents of people, mostly young Orthodox Jews, spitting on the ground in front of clergy and other Christians — an act that may be prosecuted in Israel as a hate crime.

Rosatom Has Proposed Construction of a New Nuclear Power Plan to Armenian Government

YEREVAN (Pan.am) — Rosatom has submitted a specific proposal to the Armenian government to build a nuclear power unit with a capacity of at least 1 GW, Rosatom State Corporation Director General Alexey Likhachev told reporters on September 28.

According to him, along with the issue of extending the operating life of the existing nuclear power unit, the construction of a new unit was also discussed during meetings with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan, Sputnik Armenia reports.

“And here, for the first time, Nikol Pashinyan's very important words were heard, stating that in the coming months Armenia will make a decision on the technical specifications and select partners who will build the new plant. This is a novelty that sets us the task of formulating a more competitive offer in the coming months for Armenia to select a company to build a new unit,” Likhachev noted.

According to him, Rosatom considered it advisable to build a unit with a capacity of at least 1 gigawatt. The corporation made such an assessment taking into account the projected requirements and deficit of Armenia's energy system until 2040.

He reported that the corporation has submitted a specific proposal to the Armenian government regarding the unit within the framework of its VVER-1000 project.

According to him, Rosatom is willing to implement the project also with the participation of international suppliers, with whom the corporation, despite external pressure, continues active cooperation.

Likhachev noted that the best solutions available in world practice have been applied in international projects implemented in Egypt, Turkey, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan, in coordination with the national customer.

“A number of competent companies from the European Union and Asian countries may be involved. We are not talking about specific companies yet, since here we will act exclusively in accordance with the wishes of the customer, the Armenian government, and the specialists who will lead the technical side of the negotiations. But it is a well-known fact, for example, that our latest achievement in the global nuclear market is our intergovernmental agreement and the deal with Kazakhstan,

where the two-unit VVER-1200 will be implemented in the format of an international consortium, with the involvement of French, Korean and Chinese manufacturers,” Likhachev noted.

In his assessment, this is one of the examples of the implementation of Rosatom programs with the participation of international suppliers.

While justifying the need for a unit with a capacity of at least 1 gigawatt, Likhachev drew attention to the demand for electricity in Armenia. According to him, currently the demand for electricity is met at acceptable prices, and last year consumption in the country increased by 7%.

“Even if we assume a moderate growth in consumption of 4 percent per year, we

will reach a capacity deficit of about 1 GW in 2036 (i.e., at the very end of operation), taking into account the “extraction” of Metsamor. Therefore, perhaps in terms of wind, solar energy, you have sufficient capacity, but in terms of practical and affordable electricity in the grid, the issue is not resolved,” Likhachev said.

He also noted that daily fluctuations in electricity consumption in Armenia are pronounced, which he attributed to the large share of solar generation. At the same time, the nuclear power plant operates in a “24/7” mode, regardless of the sun, wind and weather conditions. According to him, if fuel is provided for ten years, the unit can be operated as a “nuclear battery” for the same period.

Yerevan Says Won't Cede More Stakes In 'Trump Route' Through Armenia

By Robert Zargarian

YEREVAN (Azatutyun) — The Armenian Foreign Ministry this week essentially denied a report claiming that Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan offered Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan stakes in a U.S.-controlled company which is due to manage a transit corridor for Azerbaijan passing through Armenia.

Under a U.S.-Armenian agreement signed in June, the U.S. government will own 74 percent of the company that will have “exclusive land use rights, development rights, related permissions, and all other rights” necessary for the establishment of the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP). The Armenian government is to own the remaining 26 percent of the TRIPP Development Company (TDC).

A Kyrgyz media outlet reported last month that Pashinyan proposed to Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev that Kazakhstan and neighboring Kyrgyzstan invest in the project and each take 5 percent stakes in the company in return. It did not cite any sources of the information.

Pashinyan did not explicitly deny the report when he spoke to journalists on August 27. His office afterwards forwarded a relevant written question from RFE/RL's

Armenian Service to the Foreign Ministry. The ministry spokeswoman, Ani Badalian, answered it in writing on Thursday.

Citing a U.S.-Armenian agreement on the TRIPP, Badalian said: “A format for the transfer of a stake [in the TDC] in exchange for investments is neither provided for nor under consideration.”

Tokayev and Pashinyan spoke by phone on August 24. An Armenian government statement said they discussed “opportunities for cooperation in the implementation of regional transport projects.” It did not give any details. Pashinyan indicated three days later that the TRIPP was on the agenda of their conversation.

“Now different countries are showing interest [in the TRIPP,] and naturally, we welcome the interest shown by them,” he said without elaborating.

Earlier in August, a senior adviser to U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff visited Yerevan to discuss with Pashinyan and other Armenian officials practical modalities of the TRIPP. The transit route connecting Azerbaijan to its Nakhichevan exclave and Turkey would run along Armenia's border with Iran. Tehran remains opposed to the planned arrangement, fearing that it could lead to U.S. security presence along the border and undermine Armenian control of it.

Armenian and Azerbaijan Agree to 'Promote Positive Agenda amid Tension

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The Mirzoyan-Bayramov meeting came amidst renewed tension, sparked by a dispute over the origins of monasteries in Nagorno-Karabakh. There was uproar in Armenia after Azerbaijani presidential aide Hikmat Hajiyev gave a group of foreign diplomats a tour around Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas in mid-September, claiming that the monasteries were Caucasian Albanian rather than Armenian — a theory widely dismissed as pseudohistoric.

Azerbaijan further accused Armenia of “looting” a monastery in Nagorno-Karabakh and reportedly decided to postpone a meeting of the Peace Bridge Initiative, which was due to bring Armenian and Azerbaijani civil society representatives together in Armenia, “until tensions subside.”

On Tuesday, September 22, Boris Navasardyan of the Armenian Press Club, which is part of the initiative, told RFE/RL that the Armenian side was “in favor of

such planned meetings taking place rather than being postponed.”

Mutual visits of Armenian and Azerbaijani civil society representatives were launched following the August 2025 summit in Washington, which saw the initialing of a peace treaty that remains unsigned.

Days after the news of the postponement of the visit emerged, on Thursday, Security Council Secretary Alen Simonyan said that Yerevan was “awaiting” the visit of Azerbaijani non-governmental organizations' representatives.

“We would be very happy for that visit to take place; we follow and wait for them to come,” Simonyan said, adding that the Armenian side was “prepared to host them very well,” comparing Azerbaijan's hosting of Armenians earlier in 2026.

Simonyan admitted the existence of “general tension,” but expressed confidence that the talks and visit would resume.

The bilateral tension was also touched upon in Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's address at the UN General

Assembly on Thursday. In his speech, he highlighted the unresolved issues of demining, the unclarified fates of missing people, and the release of Armenian detainees held in Azerbaijan when discussing the peace process with Azerbaijan.

There are 19 Armenians, including former Nagorno-Karabakh officials, currently being held in Azerbaijan.

Pashinyan also stated that, alongside these unresolved issues, “another reason that fuels pessimists is the use of conflict rhetoric from time to time in certain circles of Armenia and Azerbaijan, sometimes at the official level.”

“I think that we, I mean Armenia and Azerbaijan, have achieved more than sufficient results, which should be more valuable for us than the use of conflict rhetoric, whether it is about history or historical-cultural monuments or anything else,” Pashinyan concluded.

(This article originally appeared on www.oc-media.org on September 25.)



INTERNATIONAL

Armenia Finishes Sixth at Chess Olympiad, Claims Bronze

By Haykaram Nahapetyan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

SAMARKAND, Uzbekistan — Armenia’s national teams, both Open (men) and Women’s, won bronze medals at the Chess Olympiad held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. However, these were not the tournament’s overall bronze medals. In the Open competition, Germany won the overall bronze, India took silver, and Uzbekistan, the host nation, claimed gold winning the Olympiad. Among the Women’s teams China claimed the gold, Kazakhstan won silver and India took bronze.

However, the International Chess Federation (FIDE), has introduced a system that allows more teams to earn medals. In addition to the overall tournament winners, FIDE created five rating categories, or sub-

and suffered only one defeat, against host Uzbekistan.

The Armenian Women’s team won eight matches, against Hong Kong, Singapore, Croatia, Peru, Latvia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and the United States, and drew one against Greece, and suffered two defeats, against Kazakhstan and China.

In the individual standings, Shant Sargsyan won bronze for his performance on the third board, earning eight points in 11 games. Mariam Mkrtchian earned silver for her individual performance on the third board of the Women’s games, scoring nine points in eleven games. Armenian-American Grandmaster Levon Aronian won an individual bronze medal on Board 4 playing for Team USA. Another Armenian-American Tatev Abrahamian played for the Women’s Team USA coached by GM Melik Khachian.

Samarkand, Uzbekistan, hosted the 46th Chess Olympiad from September 15 to 27. Uzbekistan entered the tournament as the defending champion, having won the previous Chess Olympiad in China, and suc-



The Armenian men’s and women’s chess teams

ceeded in winning again on home soil. The remarkable progress made by Uzbek chess over the past decade has been impressive.

Armenia’s Open team, meanwhile, lost only one match throughout the entire Olympiad, underscoring the strength and consistency of its performance. Armenia has won the Chess Olympiad three times: 2006 (Turin, Italy), 2008 (Dresden, Germany) and 2012 (Istanbul, Turkey).



Bronze winner Shant Sargsyan and silver winner Mariam Mkrtchian

groups, labeled Groups A, B, C, D, and E. These subgroups are established before Round 3 in both the Open and Women’s sections. Teams are divided as evenly as possible based on their initial average rating rankings. Armenia was placed in Group A, the most competitive subgroup, and won bronze in that category. The United States claimed gold in Group A in both the Open and Women’s competitions, followed by Azerbaijan in the Open section and Poland in the Women’s section. This innovation introduced by FIDE allowed the Armenian grandmasters to return home with medals despite finishing outside the overall top three.

During the Olympiad, which lasted about two weeks, the teams played 11 matches in total. Armenia’s Open squad won seven games against Barbados, Scotland, Sweden, Azerbaijan, Argentina, Iran and Croatia and drew three, against the United States, China and the Netherlands,

SOCAR to Sponsor Italian Football Team as Azerbaijan And Italy Expand Energy Cooperation

By Rafiq Shahbazov

BAKU (OC-Media) — Azerbaijan’s state oil company SOCAR is expanding its footprint in Italy beyond oil and gas, entering a long-term partnership with the country’s national football teams and joining efforts to cap fuel prices at its Italian petrol stations.

The moves come as Azerbaijan and Italy seek to deepen economic ties beyond their longstanding energy partnership. SOCAR’s growing presence in Italy follows its acquisition of energy operator Italiana Petroli in 2026. Baku and Rome are also pursuing cooperation in investment, industry, transport, connectivity and technology.

On September 26, SOCAR and the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) signed an agreement under which the Azerbaijani company will become the global energy partner of Italy’s national football teams from January 2027 until December 2030, with an option to extend the partnership until 2032.

The agreement was signed on the sidelines of the Second Azerbaijan International Investment Forum in Baku.

On September 28, SOCAR also agreed to match fuel price caps introduced by

Italy’s Eni, setting the price of diesel at €2,19 (\$2.49) per liter and petrol at €1.99 (\$2.26) per liter at participating IP stations. The move came as the Italian government seeks to contain rising fuel costs. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni welcomed the companies’ measures and i also thanked Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on X for the decision.

Energy continues to form the backbone of Azerbaijan–Italy economic relations. Italy is Azerbaijan’s largest trading partner, with bilateral trade reaching approximately \$12 billion in 2025, according to Aliyev.

Azerbaijan exported 25 billion cubic meters of natural gas in 2025, of which 9.5 billion cubic meters went to Italy. The gas is transported through the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP), a key part of the Southern Gas Corridor. Baku and Rome have discussed increasing gas supplies to Italy and further expanding TAP.

Azerbaijan also remains a major supplier of crude oil to Italy. According to Azerbaijan’s Energy Ministry, Italy received 10.34 million tons of Azerbaijani oil and 9.5 billion cubic meters of gas in 2025.

As of January 2026, TAP had transported 54.3 billion cubic meters of Azer-

bajani gas to Europe, including 45.4 billion cubic meters to Italy.

During Meloni’s visit to Baku in May, Aliyev said the State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan had invested approximately \$3 billion in the Italian economy and that the two sides were discussing directing additional investments towards new projects. He also said around 130 Italian companies were operating in Azerbaijan and that Italian companies were involved in 23 projects in Nagorno-Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur.

Meloni said during the visit that an Azerbaijan–Italy business forum was planned for the second half of 2026 in Baku. She said the forum was intended to turn the countries’ political cooperation into concrete opportunities for companies and workers, adding that energy was ‘not the only field’ of cooperation.

The two countries have also identified connectivity as an area for further cooperation. Italy has presented itself as a potential gateway for Azerbaijan to European and Mediterranean markets, while Baku has sought to strengthen its role as a transport and energy link between Europe and Asia.

(This article originally appeared on www.oc-media.org on September 29.)

Armenian Security Chief Sees No Threat From Turkey, As Pashinyan Meets with Erdogan in New York

MEETING, from page 1

There were no indications after Erdogan’s latest talks with Pashinyan that Ankara will drop these preconditions.

Contrary to reports in the Turkish press, Ankara refrained from implementing ahead of Armenia’s recent parliamentary elections a 2022 agreement to open the border for Armenian and Turkish diplomatic passport holders as well as citizens of third countries. It took instead other, largely symbolic steps, including a permission of Turkish-Armenian cargo shipments through Georgia’s rail link with Turkey.

Pashinyan telephoned Erdogan four days before the June 7 elections which were praised by the Turkish Foreign Ministry.

The next day, in Yerevan, Alen Simon-

yan, now the secretary of the Armenian government’s Security Council and a long-time political ally of Pashinyan, said Turkey poses no threat to Armenia’s national security.

“I do not see a threat to the sovereignty of the Republic of Armenia from Turkey. Starting from [the initialization of an Armenian-Azerbaijani peace accord on] August 8, 2025, I do not see any such threat whatsoever,” Simonyan told reporters, commenting on the future of Russian military presence in the country.

The Russian military base headquartered in Gyumri is facing an uncertain future amid a continuing deterioration of Russian-Armenian relations. Russian President Vladimir Putin publicly raised the possibil-

ity of its closure right after his September 1 talks with Pashinyan. He said Moscow is ready to do that “even tomorrow” if asked by the Armenian government.

Pashinyan responded by saying that he “will not object” if Russia decides to withdraw its troops. He repeated on September 17 that their presence is not of “vital importance” to his country.

Simonyan echoed Pashinyan’s remarks. But he declined to say why Yerevan is not demanding the withdrawal of the Russian troops. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said last week that Moscow will stick to a 2010 Russian-Armenian agreement that extended Russia’s basing rights by 25 years, until 2044.

Pashinyan and his political allies argue

that the Russian troops failed to intervene when Azerbaijan invaded Armenian border areas in 2021 and 2022. Armenian opposition leaders counter that the Russian base is first and foremost a deterrent against a perceived threat emanating from Turkey, Azerbaijan’s closest ally. They have expressed serious concern over its possible closure.

Samvel Karapetyan, a Russian-Armenian billionaire leading the main opposition Strong Armenia alliance, told 24news.am on Thursday that such a scenario would leave the South Caucasus nation defenseless against its biggest and most powerful traditional enemy. Karapetyan described the Russian military presence as a major “component of our national security system.”



Community News

Bipartisan Senators Call on Trump Admin. To Press for Release of Political Prisoners in Azerbaijan

WASHINGTON — U.S. Senator Peter Welch (D-Vt.) on September 25 joined U.S. Senators Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) and Tim Kaine (D-Va.) in leading a bipartisan effort calling on the Trump Administration to secure the release of more than 300 political prisoners currently held in Azerbaijan to advance the cause of peace in the region. In their letter to U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, the Senators express great concern with the pattern of arbitrary detentions and denial of due process under Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev's administration and emphasize that the success of the U.S.–Azerbaijan bilateral relationship is dependent on Azerbaijan making reciprocal good faith commitments, including the release of political prisoners.

The Senators underscore that for the U.S.–Azerbaijan partnership to thrive, it must be grounded in a commitment to strengthening democratic institutions, the rule of law, and protect fundamental rights: “There are more than 300 political prisoners in Azerbaijan, and the repression of independent journalists, opposition leaders, and civil society advocates continues throughout the country. We share the Administration's interest in advancing peace in the region and urge that the release of all political prisoners held in Azerbaijan be a condition of the Strategic Partnership. We have been encouraged by the Administration's success in obtaining the release of political prisoners in Belarus and urge the Administration to pursue a similar approach with Azerbaijan.”

The Senators emphasize that obtaining the release of political prisoners should start by prioritizing the release of the following individuals, who are emblematic of different sectors of Azerbaijani civil society that have been targets of longstanding repression: Ali Karimli, Alasgar Mammadli, Anar Mammadli, Dr. Gubad Ibadoghlu, Farid Mehralizada, Rufat Safarov, Tofiq Yagublu, and Ulviyya Guliyev.

The Senators highlight how the Republic of Azerbaijan's continued practice of wrongfully detaining individuals for political purposes undermines the credibility of its commitments to peace, the rule of law, and partnership with the United States: “All those wrongfully detained should have direct access to their families, legal counsel, and medical treatment. Ali Karimli, Dr. Gubad Ibadoghlu, Tofiq Yagublu, Farid Mehralizada, Ulviyya Guliyeva, Rufat Safarov, Alasgar Mammadli, and Anar Mammadli should be immediately released. All charges and travel bans against those who are released should be withdrawn.”

“The Administration's decision to waive Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act reflects a willingness to deepen engagement with Azerbaijan in pursuit of broader U.S. interests.

see LETTER, page 8



Professor Monica Toft, Professor of International Politics and Director of the Center for Strategic Studies at the Fletcher School (photo Aram Arkun)

New Cohort of Tavitian Scholars Arrive at Tufts's Fletcher School

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

MEDFORD, Mass. — A new cohort of 16 Tavitian Scholars from Armenia were welcomed at a reception organized by the Fletcher School at Tufts University on campus on September 14 to which faculty, students and interested Armenian community members were invited. The Aso O. Tavitian Scholars Program at the Fletcher School provides a one-semester, graduate-level program focusing on public policy, international law, macroeconomics, negotiation, security studies and leadership development for mid-career public servants in Armenia.

Dr. Kelly Sims Gallagher, dean of the Fletcher School, and Professor of Energy and Environmental Policy, was introduced by Christine Gonzalez, assistant

director of program management for the Tavitian Scholars Program. Gallagher welcomed the Tavitian Scholars and observed that the 25th anniversary of this program was celebrated last year. She said, “The Fletcher School and the Tavitian Foundation have really shared this commitment to investing in Armenia's future through this program. It reflects the belief that strong institutions and lasting progress begin with thoughtful, committed and very capable leaders – that being you, and what you will go on to do when you return to your own institutions.”

She said that this partnership has created a collaborative network of Fletcher School alumni, not just in Armenia but throughout the world, numbering at more than 12,000 strong in more than 146 countries.

Gallagher expressed the hope that the scholars will not only challenge themselves academically but also build meaningful relationships with other students and faculty members, while exploring new ideas and taking



Dr. Kelly Sims Gallagher, Dean of the Fletcher School, and Professor of Energy and Environmental Policy (photo Aram Arkun)

ing advantage of all that Boston has to offer as a city.

Prof. Monica Toft, professor of international politics and director of the Center for Strategic Studies at the Fletcher School, said in her remarks this marked the third year that she has been the faculty director for the Tavitian Scholars Program. She thanked the executive education team, especially Gonzalez, as well as the faculty involved, and expressed gratitude for the support of the Tavitian Foundation, with Joyce Barsam as its vice president, and the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA). She observed that Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian, who invited the group to visit a prison last year was an incredible host, was in the audience.

see TUFTS, page 8

Judge Maria Daghlia Hernandez Appointed Associate Justice of CA Court of Appeal

SANTA ANA, Calif. — Judge The Armenian Bar Association announced the appointment of Orange County Superior Court Judge Maria Daghlia Hernandez to serve as an Associate Justice of the California Court of Appeal, Fourth District, Division Three.

A respected member of the Armenian Bar Association, Judge Daghlia Hernandez has dedicated more than three decades to the legal profession and public service. Her career reflects extensive courtroom experience, judicial leadership, and a longstanding commitment to the administration of justice.

The Armenian Bar Association Judicial Evaluation Committee (JEC), comprised of experienced practitioners from the state and federal systems, conducts thorough, merit-based evaluations of judicial candidates, including professional vetting and interviews.

Daghlia Hernandez underwent the JEC's comprehensive evaluation process and was designated Extremely Well-Qualified,

reflecting the JEC's assessment of her extensive legal and judicial experience, professional accomplishments, and qualifications for appellate service.



Maria Daghlia Hernandez

Daghlia Hernandez has served on the Orange County Superior Court since 2009, following three years as a commissioner. During her judicial career, she has handled a broad range of matters and held significant leadership positions, including Assistant Presiding Judge and Presiding Judge. She also served as Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court from 2014 to 2018, overseeing juvenile justice and dependency matters and participating in initiatives addressing the needs of commercially sexually exploited children.

Her path to the bench was grounded in extensive trial and public-service experience. From 1995 to 2006, she served as a Senior Deputy Public Defender with the Orange County Public Defender's Office, following three years in private practice with the Law Offices of Patrick D. McNeal. Her career has been marked by a sustained commitment to public service and to the fair and effective administration of justice.

Her broad experience as a trial judge, former public defender, judicial leader, and member of the legal profession will bring valuable perspective to the appellate bench.

Governor Gavin Newsom announced Daghlia Hernandez's nomination on September 18. She has been nominated to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Justice Maurice Sanchez, effective October 2, 2026. The nomination is subject to confirmation by the California Commission on Judicial Appointments, consisting of Chief Justice Patricia Guerrero, Attorney General Rob Bonta, and Senior Presiding Justice Manuel Ramirez.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Vocalist Manet-Miriam and Founding Principal Melanya Geghamyan To Headline Program in Support of Avedisian School in Yerevan

By Christopher Abidian

PARAMUS, N.J. — The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) Boston Child Care Committee will present HYEMINDS, an evening benefiting the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School in Yerevan. The program will take place on Friday, November 13, at the Wellesley Country Club in Wellesley, Mass.

Established in 1998, the Avedisian School has become a beacon of educational excellence, providing tuition-free K–12 education on a modern, environmentally sustainable campus. Inspired by the vision and generosity of benefactors Edward and Pamela Avedisian, the school has transformed the lives of thousands of students in Yerevan’s Malatia-Sebastia district. Today, sustaining this mission—and ensuring

every child continues to receive an exceptional education regardless of financial means—remains more important than ever.

HYEMINDS celebrates the remarkable potential of Armenia’s next generation while raising critical support for the school’s future. Together, we can help ensure these talented young minds have every opportunity to grow into tomorrow’s leaders.

This year’s program, Co-Chaired by Jeanmarie Papelian and Grace Bottomley, will feature an exceptional lineup of guests. We are honored to welcome Manet-Miriam, acclaimed Armenian Canadian vocalist and star of La Voix (The Voice Canada), whose extraordinary talent has captivated audiences across North America and beyond. We are also privileged to welcome Melanya Geghamyan, founding Principal



Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School



Vocalist Manet-Miriam



Avedisian School Founding Principal Melanya Geghamyan

of the Avedisian School, who will share firsthand the school’s remarkable journey, its lasting impact on generations of students, and the difference that supporters continue to make.

Guests will enjoy an elegant evening featuring cocktails, dinner, live entertainment, and an exciting live auction.

The spirit of HYEMINDS is perfectly captured by a sentiment previously shared by AMAA CEO/Executive Director Serge D. Buchakjian: “The Armenian community of Boston is invited to take part in a unique opportunity to support the children of Armenia.

For decades, the Boston Child Care Program has been a model of success, positively impacting thousands of young lives. We invite you to join us in this important effort—your presence and partnership will help ensure that many more children are given the care, education, and hope they deserve.”

Reservations can be made through the AMAA website at <https://amaa.org/hyemindsboston2026/>.

All proceeds will directly benefit the Avedisian School, and contributions in excess of the value of goods and services received are tax-deductible.

New Cohort of Tavitian Scholars Arrive at Tufts’s Fletcher School

TUFTS, from page 7

Finally, Gayane Vardanyan, as a representative of the new students (and a project manager at the Central Bank of Armenia), expressed her thanks for the support of the foundation as well as Fletcher. She said that the Tavitian Scholarship Program has been central in shaping the careers of public sector employees in Armenia for 25 years. Everyone who graduated from Fletcher, she said, has contributed to Armenia’s growth in one way or another.

Vardanyan remarked that while all 16 of the cohort were from Armenia, they don’t often interact with each other there, so it is a unique place to come to know one another and build friendships. She and others have heard stories about how Fletcher graduates back in Armenia stay together for many years afterwards.

She declared that as professionals or academics, the cohort was happy to be present and to hear how professors speak about the uniqueness of Armenia as a country. Knowing its hardships, they also know that the scholars are working for a better future for Armenia, she said, and that is the central reason why they were here today.



Gayane Vardanyan, Project Manager in Sustainable Finance at the Financial System Development Centre of the Central Bank of Armenia, is a 2026 Tavitian Scholar at the Fletcher School at Tufts University (photo Aram Arkun)

The Tavitian program will conclude on December 28 of this year. For more information, see <https://fletcher.tufts.edu/academics/executive-education/aso-o-tavitian-scholars-program>.

Bipartisan Senators Call on Trump Admin to Press for Release of Political Prisoners in Azerbaijan

LETTER, from page 7

As the United States has taken this significant step in good faith, we urge the Administration to press the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan to demonstrate a similar commitment to strengthening bilateral relations,” the Senators conclude. “The immediate release of the above identified individuals, as well as all others unjustly detained, would represent a meaningful

demonstration of that commitment. Such action would underscore that an enduring U.S.-Azerbaijan partnership is strengthened by both shared strategic interests and respect for fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.”

No mention was made of the Armenian prisoners in Azerbaijan, who all at one point served in leadership positions in Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh).

BAIKAR WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

SAVE *the* DATE

10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2026

ST LEON CHURCH HALL
FAIRLAWN, NEW JERSEY

Details to follow!

THANK YOU FOR 10 YEARS OF
SUPPORT, TRUST, AND COMMUNITY.

ADVERTISE IN THE MIRROR



COMMUNITY NEWS

‘Building a Safe Community: Understanding and Preventing Domestic Violence’ to Be held October 8 at Belmont Public Library

BELMONT, Mass.— Domestic violence affects people across every ZIP code, income level and background. It can happen in any home, often hidden from those closest to the people experiencing it. Recognizing the signs and knowing how to offer support can make a difference.

Last year, a tragedy in the Greater Boston area struck the Armenian community and made that reality impossible to ignore, leading to a panel program on domestic violence. For the second consecutive year, neighbors, families, educators, coaches, and colleagues from across the region are invited to deepen their understanding of domestic violence and the role each person can play in recognizing abuse and supporting survivors.

“Building a Safe Community: Understanding and Preventing Domestic Violence” will be held on Thursday, October 8, at Belmont Public Library, 336 Concord Avenue, in recognition of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. A reception begins at 6:30 p.m., followed by a panel discussion from 7 to 8:30 p.m. A Zoom link will be available for those who prefer to join online. The event is free and open to the public.

The event is presented by the Women’s Support Center – Armenia and co-sponsored by the Armenian Relief Society’s Cambridge Shushi, Lowell Lusintak and Watertown Leola Sassouni chapters; and



Last year’s panel, from left, Lenna Garibian, Wendy Murphy, Lauren Nackel, Peter Koutoujian and Rita Cleary (Knar Bedian photo)

olence Survey, more than one-third of women and more than one-sixth of men in the United States have experienced physical violence, contact sexual violence or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. The event continues a conversation that began last year about recognizing the signs of domestic violence, supporting those affected, and finding the words to speak up.

The panel brings together a personal story, a prevention educator, and a school wellness director who also coaches high school football. Sophie Pariseau, founder and president of The Sima & Dylan Pariseau Memorial Foundation, Inc., will share a personal story about how domestic violence forever changed her family. Her perspective will add a deeply

personal dimension to a discussion of awareness, prevention, and community support.

Joining Pariseau will be Sydney Carter, manager of prevention education programs at REACH Beyond Domestic Violence, and Scott Parseghian, K–12 wellness director and head football coach at Wayland High School. Lenna Garibian, board member of the Women’s Support Center – Armenia will moderate the conversation.

“Domestic violence does not belong to one community, one culture, or one kind of family, and neither does the responsibility to end it,” said Lenna Garibian of the Women’s Support Center – Armenia. “For years, the Women’s Support Center has worked on the front lines of domestic violence prevention and survivor support. Last year, we brought that work to our own community here in Massachusetts. By coming together again – with new voices joining the conversation – we hope to build on that foundation and help more people feel prepared to recognize the signs, listen without judgment, and support someone who may be experiencing

abuse. Most of all, we want anyone affected by this to know they are not alone.”

In-person and online attendees are asked to register by October 4 at: <https://forms.gle/AJREKqEuEs7WP9eX8>.

For event questions, contact Seda Aghamianz@gmail.com.

If you or someone you know needs help: REACH Beyond Domestic Violence has a 24-hour hotline, available for survivors, friends, family members, and concerned community members, at 1-800-899-4000. The National Domestic Violence Hotline can be reached at 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE).



Sima and Dylan Pariseau were murdered in 2024.

the Armenian International Women’s Association (AIWA) – New England.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s 2023/2024 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Vi-



Sophie Pariseau, founder and president of The Sima & Dylan Pariseau Memorial Foundation, Inc.

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Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles Chapter

Գինեձօն

Ցավերժական Հայաստան: Նորատուսի Խաչքարերը
Սուրբ Նշաններ, Մոռացված Ձայներ և Հավատքի Արձագանգներ
Eternal Armenia Khatchkars - The CrossStones of Noratus
Sacred Symbols, Forgotten Voices, and the Echoes of Faith

Գլխավոր բանախօս, հեղինակ և լուսանկարիչ
Դավիդ Քարամյան
DAVID KARAMIAN
Keynote speaker, author and photographer

David Karamian will present his newest book, *Eternal Armenia: Khatchkars – The CrossStones of Noratus*, a three-year project exploring the ancient cemetery of Noratus, home to the world’s largest surviving collection of Armenian khatchkars (cross-stones). Through photography, history, and cultural reflection, the presentation offers a journey into one of Armenia’s most extraordinary sacred landscapes and the enduring legacy of its Christian heritage.

Կիրակի, 4 Հոկտեմբեր 2026-ին,
կ.ե. ժամը 5:00-ին
Sunday, October 4, 2026, 5:00 PM
ԹՄՄ ՊԵՂԵՐԻՍԻՔԻԱՆ ԿԵԴՐՈՆԻՍ մէջ:
Tekeyan Cultural Association Beshgeturian Center
1901 N. Allen Avenue, Altadena, CA 91001
info@tekeyanla.org



COMMUNITY NEWS

TUMO Raises \$17m at 15th Anniversary Fundraising Gala

LOS ANGELES —TUMO supporters raised over \$17 million to support the organization’s continued growth in Armenia at a September fundraiser. The event was emceed by host of Nasdaq Listings Kristina Ayanian, with a moving performance by System of a Down’s Serj Tankian.

The guest list included Arman Tsarukyan, Mary Basmadjian, Michael Goorjian, Sona Movsesian, Dave Farina, Councilmember Adrin Nazarian and Katherine Sarafian.

Celebrating 15 years, the gala highlighted the organization’s mission to deliver life-changing learning experiences to young people on a global scale, reflecting on its impact and growth while looking



Sam and Sylva Simonian

ahead to the next generation of students empowered through technology, creativity and innovation. The evening raised \$17 million which will enable the organization’s continued growth and expansion in Armenia.

Taking place at Vibiana in Los Angeles on Sunday, September 20, guests were immersed in a striking visual light experience by People of Ar throughout the evening that brought the creativity of TUMO students to life. The installation was inspired



Marie Lou and Pegor Papazian

by student sketches alongside work from TUMO’s 3D scanning program, through which students digitally preserved Armenian monasteries and cultural landmarks in territories that have fallen outside Armenian control as a result of war. Blending art, technology and cultural preservation, the experience offered a powerful look at how TUMO students are using their skills to connect creativity with history and heritage.

“Fifteen years ago, TUMO began with a simple belief: that when young people have

the freedom to discover their talents, they have the power to shape not only their own futures, but the future of an entire nation,” said TUMO founders Sam and Sylva Simonian. “Since then, we’ve watched thousands of young people walk through TUMO’s doors and grow into confident young adults who know their ideas matter.”

The evening honored Vahe Kuzoyan, co-founder and President of ServiceTitan, Ara Mahdessian, co-founder and CEO of ServiceTitan, and Rev Lebedarian, Vice President of Physical AI Simulation at NVIDIA – who played a key role in launching Firebird, Armenia’s first high-performance AI computing cluster and establishing Armenia as a new strategic hub for artificial intelligence computing. Serj Tankian took the stage for a special performance, treating guests to several fan-favorites and offering an intimate glimpse into his latest work.

The live auction featured offerings including a private training session and lunch with UFC top lightweight contender Arman Tsarukyan, a private tennis lesson with top tennis player Andre Agassi, and a private chess lesson from grandmaster Levon Aronian, adding to the funds raised throughout the evening.

Throughout the evening, TUMO leadership spoke on the impact the organization has made throughout the world, with TUMO CEO Marie Lou Papazian sharing, “people often assume that TUMO is a place where young people discover their passions, figure out what they want to do with their lives and build the skills they need to pursue competitive careers. And, of course, that’s all true. But I’ve come to understand that the real magic happens when our students discover, often to their own surprise, the incredible capabilities they had within them all along.”

The gala featured the sale of a one-of-a-kind ARARAT brandy created from spirits dating to 1991 as a tribute to the 35th anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Armenia. Donated through TUMO’s strategic partnership with Yerevan Brandy Company, the bottle reflects their shared commitment to Armenian heritage, creativ-



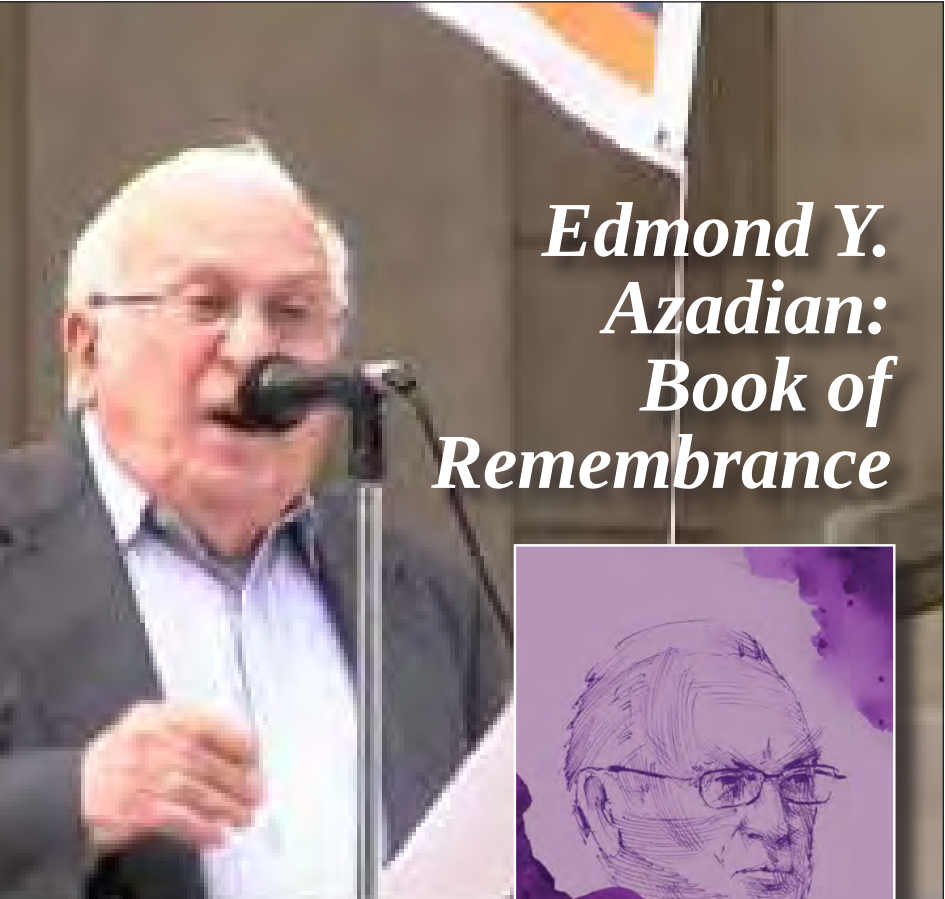
Serj Tankian

ity and future generations, with proceeds supporting TUMO’s continued expansion across Armenia.

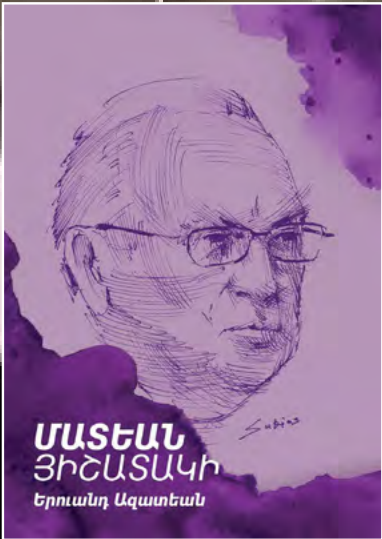
Founded in Armenia in 2011, TUMO is a free, innovative educational program empowering teens through hands-on tech and design workshops, now serving 35,000+ students across 14+ countries. In fall 2025, it expanded to LA with a North Hollywood center, launching with approximately 600 students, with plans to grow to 1,500 while connecting students to the region’s thriving entertainment and technology industries.



From left, Ara Mahdessian, Rev Lebedarian and Vahe Kuzoyan



Edmond Y. Azadian: Book of Remembrance



A bilingual Armenian and English commemorative volume dedicated to the writer, pundit and public figure Edmond Y. Azadian has been published by the Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada. For copies, email tcadirector@aol.com or write to Tekeyan Cultural Association, 755 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown MA 02472.

COMMUNITY NEWS

FAST Panel Explores AI And Armenia's Future

FAST, from page 1

The speakers, prominent voices from academia, technology and innovation, were Daron Acemoglu, Chris R. Glass, Harry Glorikian and Nicolò Fusi, with Dr. Armen Mkrtchyan and Suzanna Shamakhyan serving as moderators.

Mkrtchyan is a member of FAST's Board of Trustees and an origination partner at Flagship Pioneering, leading teams inventing, launching and building AI-native companies, while Shamakhyan, based in Yerevan, is the executive director of FAST.

The Nobel Prize-winning Acemoglu, an Armenian born in Turkey, is the Elizabeth and James Killian Professor of Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the author of seven books, one of which has been translated into Armenian. Glass is Professor of the Practice at Boston College, where he directs the Executive Doctor of Education in Higher Education Program. Glorikian, the author of four books on technology strategy and the future of business (the newest one, *The Invisible Interface*, came out on June 30), is a general partner at Scientia Ventures and a research affiliate at the MIT Media Lab. Fusi is vice president and Distinguished Scientist at Microsoft Research, where he leads the AI research teams on the East Coast.

FAST

Mkrtchyan at the start of the evening presented the example of Tigran Ishkhanyan, a FAST fellow around eight years ago, to show how the ecosystem of FAST works. Tigran grew up in Armenia, went to France to study computational sciences. He then returned to Armenia, but instead of settling in Yerevan, he moved to Vanadzor in the north. He works for Wolfram, a company which had created the software system Mathematica. He also teaches high school students AI in Armenia. He has been teaching the Armenian AI Olympiad high school team, which placed fifth this year out of 131 national teams globally. Mkrtchyan said that this encapsulates the ethos of what FAST does and is one indication of its impact.

Dr. Yelena Bisharyan, co-founder and CEO of Trillion Bio and of the Armenian Biotech Group, which was one of the co-organizers of the panel discussion, remarked that this evening was one of the rare occasions when four different Armenian organizations came together, along with Flagship Pioneering. She thanked the organizations, asked for support for FAST's work to build the next generation of leaders in AI in Armenia, and invited Shamakhyan to elaborate.



Suzanna Shamakhyan and Armen Mkrtchyan (photo courtesy FAST)

Shamakhyan observed that FAST's mission has been to help Armenia transform into an innovation and AI hub through entrepreneurial philanthropic organization. FAST imagines the type of future desired and tries to reverse engineer it and identify high-impact opportunities, she noted. It designs new models, tests them and if they work, spins them off or scale them, whether through partners, self-sustainability, or the government.



Panelists, from left, Daron Acemoglu, Chris Glass, Harry Glorikian, Nicolò Fusi, Suzanna Shamakhyan, Armen Mkrtchyan (photo courtesy FAST)



Yelena Bisharyan (photo courtesy FAST)

FAST was founded in 2017 by Armenians from the Republic and the diaspora, including Dr. Noubar Afeyan. From its beginnings, it began focusing on AI, based on Armenia's strong mathematical education legacy and a growing AI infrastructure. The global Armenian tech network helped Armenia create a thriving tech ecosystem, Shamakhyan said, and FAST decided a long time ago to focus on talent in this context. It developed the Generation AI program in 2023, creating a network of public schools with the government in all regions of Armenia, where every child who is interested in advanced mathematics and AI will have access to a high-end program. This has been operational for three years now but last year it was expanded to all medium and large cities in Armenia. About 1,500 students are engaged in the program.

The next task is to try to provide a competitive university education in Armenia so they afterwards could become AI innovators. Part of this, she said, was engaging with industry partnerships and providing research opportunities. The Armenian government is co-funding some of this process because it has recently announced that AI research is one of its top priorities.

Shamakhyan expressed the hope that many in the audience would become a partner with FAST in this process.

Panel Discussion: On Compute

Mkrtchyan's first question went to Glorikian about the impact the Firebird AI data center in Armenia might have on the country. Would it concentrate money, power

and influence in the hands of a few people? How would these things percolate down to the rest of the populace?

Glorikian replied that he does not know what deal the Armenian government made with the data center, but it was a for-profit enterprise, and it is estimated each megawatt would go for \$40 or \$50 million so it can be incredibly profitable if sold to the highest bidder — and there is an immediate global demand for it.

Mkrtchyan interjected that as far as he knew, a percentage of the compute (processing power or capacity) would go to the government and the country, and part of it will go to FAST as well. He then asked Acemoglu if there were any positive externalities that might come out of it.

Acemoglu said that while there is a lot of uncertainty about the current direction in general, the one thing that is for sure is

continued on next page





COMMUNITY NEWS

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that the demand for compute is still very high, especially outside of the US and China. The question is, he said, where are you going to be in what is sometimes called the AI stack (the hardware, software, data and tools necessary to run AI systems, ranging from foundational hardware to the user interface). Some countries in the future will just provide compute power to the rest, while others will build models or applications on top of that.

He noted that some think the mid-layer of the AI stack, where foundation models are, is where profits will be found, while others argue that it is at the highest level of the stack. In any case, he said the next step is to make sure that the investment in compute is turned into a more holistic AI infrastructure. For this, human capital, organizations and a holistic AI strategy for the country are necessary. Right now, because of the great demand, functioning data centers will make money, but in ten years' time, he said, the picture will be different.

Cultivating Good Judgment or Taste

Mkrtchyan asked Glass how one could teach good judgment or critical thinking when students will have access not just to on-demand information but intelligence itself.

Glass said that this problem is basically the question of how people should interact with systems more intelligent than humans. The answer is rather counterintuitive. He explained that cognition is a series of epistemic [knowledge-connected] communities which form judgment socially, in the sense of a different word that can be used as a synonym for judgment – taste.

Intelligent systems or super-intelligent systems are going to allow people to create an infinite number of outputs but humanity has to resolve which of them are worth creating. Universities must think about developing human agency, not just for cognition but to make sure humans feel they have the capacity to shape their own future. Human metacognition — the ability, he said, to think about thinking and know what and why we are thinking — must be cultivated.

Thirdly, people have to have a sense of aesthetics or taste to determine what is worth creating.

Mkrtchyan followed up by asking how scientific taste can be created when science itself is autonomous in that. Glass said that a person who has been trained in a discipline has a sense of what is a beautiful form, whether of an equation or a type of architecture. In other words, Glass said, it takes disciplinary knowledge in an epistemic community to be able to know what is important. While artificial intelligence can be instrumental, human intelligence has a sense of judgment of what is worth creating with that instrument.

Fusi cited an analogy made by mathematician Terence Tao of a hike to a waterfall with the process of scientific discovery. In science, the waterfall is the discovery, but



Chris Glass (photo courtesy FAST)

on the way, you can meander and look at various other things. AI basically takes a helicopter to the waterfall so the experiences learned from the trip are lost. Moreover, judgment is still necessary about which waterfall is worth visiting.

AI and Education

Shamakhyan declared this is where questions for educators come in, like whether it is still necessary to teach handwriting or

mathematics if AI can use all those things. But, she said, society actually needs that, and she asked the panelists how much hard knowledge to teach still, or whether the focus should be more on people using AI for ideation, the shaping of taste or challenging ideas.

Glorikian said that humans don't do well without friction. They don't learn much if they don't fall off a bike. If a machine suggests an experiment, he asked, how do you know you should run it if you have not played with it yourself. Therefore, he said, all major skills still must be taught, though that doesn't mean AI can't play a role. Education has to change fast, he said, because of how quickly technology is moving.

Glass concurred that social communities need to learn discipline and habits of mind, which can't be learned in an instant. Human cognition always exists within a context, he stressed. He referenced Howard Gardner's 2006 book, Five Minds for the Future, in which he said one can't think out of the box if there is no box. Disciplines provide that box so that one can have original thinking by breaking out of that box.

AI is a tool of perception, Glass said. Just like the microscope in a way invented new fields, this is a tool that gives us a new way to explore knowledge landscapes and reality. It helps change paradigms to reality, he added.

Acemoglu focused more on the importance of the human element, saying that the first imperative in changing educational systems is to save them from AI. Learning comes from exerting oneself and if institutions stop teaching hard sciences and math, he added. If AI progresses to artificial super intelligence (ASI), that should mean that it would also have creativity and judgment and be so much better than humans that there would be no need left for the latter.

The alternative, he said, is that perhaps this horizon is nowhere in the near future, and the AI models can't do everything. Instead you will need humans to work with AI models, and if so, humans need a lot of capabilities to navigate those models as well as hard and tacit knowledge that is so important for the creative process.

AI models at present lack the understanding of mechanisms, Acemoglu said, which are key for human understanding and are the process by which the generalizable part of knowledge is created.

Fusi disagreed, saying that there is mechanistic understanding from AI that you would expect from a scientist who is an expert in a particular discipline. However, these systems shoot out what he called spikes of competence, so that in between these spikes there is also what he called "not brilliance."

AI and Armenia

Shamakhyan redirected the conversation back to Armenia and a national strategy to make a small country be more competitive in this sphere.

Glass declared that he thought Armenia is very well positioned. He said that there is a multipolar world in terms of the fragmentation of geopolitics around the world, but it is also a technopolar world where nonstate actors like large technological companies have influence over geopolitics like a small state. Armenia, he said, should leverage what already exists, such as its strong global diaspora, its ability to have compute and infrastructure and its ability to attract talent.

Glass predicted that nations with the culture in which scientists can use the best tools to advance knowledge will attract talent, so that the compute strategy is the culture strategy. People are part of the scientific infrastructure.

He also declared that given the geopolitical situation, all kinds of mid-level powers will have to negotiate if there is pressure to

align with the models or philosophies offered by China or the US.

Shamakhyan wondered whether there were enough people in Armenia ready to leverage the compute that the Armenian government has purchased to be given to local startups. She said people are explor-



Daron Acemoglu (photo courtesy FAST)



Harry Glorikian (photo courtesy FAST)

ing how to enable the local scientists and students to be ready to take advantage of this.

Mkrtchyan asked Glass what ChatGPT or similar tools do to cultural sovereignty or independence when every young kid has access to ChatGPT and they perceive and interact with the world in this way.

Glass replied that that artificial intelligence aggregates whatever corpus these models have been trained on, and this risks creating a type of monoculture. As the Pope Leo XIV's encyclical noted, humanity needs to think about cultural preservation too. Glass said that countries should think about training or post-training their own models.

Glorikian agreed, stating that if everybody uses ChatGPT around the world, in one or two generations they will be like everybody here, because it influences the way people think, especially for children. That is why the US and China want their own models everywhere. He said that this situation will be problematic unless countries throughout the world have models contextualized to their culture.

An audience member questioned how teaching AI might make the life of average Armenians better and not just lead to further emigration, or brain drain. Shamakhyan replied that technical knowledge alone is not enough. FAST is teaching 15-year-old children a lot of skills but also agency.

She said that though excellence and hard work are extremely important, "the biggest change is going to come because these kids believe they can apply that knowledge for Armenia and be globally relevant, and not sacrifice their careers, lives, etc. ...That is the type of vision we are trying to build."

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OBITUARY

Masco Corporation Chairman Emeritus Richard Manoogian Dies

MANOOGIAN, from page 1

In his mid-20s, Richard developed and then oversaw the execution of a bold expansion plan that ushered in an era of rapid growth at Masco that has rarely been equaled in American industry. During the period 1960-1980, under Richard's leadership, Masco expanded its operations into the building and home improvement industries and acquired more than 100 companies.

Masco Corporation, originally known as Masco Screw Products Company, was founded by Richard's father, Alex Manoogian, an Armenian immigrant, just eight days before the U.S. stock market crash of 1929. In the early years, the Company's primary business was manufacturing machined automotive parts. In 1936, the Company's common stock was offered for public trade. In the 1950s, Alex revolutionized the faucet industry by perfecting the design of the single-lever hot and cold faucet.

The Delta® faucet was one of the first single-handle faucets on the market and quickly became the best-selling faucet brand in the United States. Its success was due in part to Masco's innovation in marketing and product distribution as the Company was the first to market faucets directly to mass market consumers via television advertisements. The result was a shift in distribution from plumbing wholesalers to retail outlets. By 1958, Delta Faucet Company

sales exceeded \$1 million. In 1958, Richard Manoogian, a recent Yale University graduate with a degree in economics, joined the Company to oversee the startup of a new faucet operation to address growing demand. From the very beginning, associates described Manoogian as a straightforward, strong and hard-working leader, the kind of person who would not stop working long enough to eat lunch.

The first 10 years of Richard's tenure with Masco were spent working with his father to increase the company's value. This goal was met primarily through mergers and acquisitions. In March of 1961, Richard led the completion of Masco's first acquisition, Peerless Industries. In his mid-twenties, Richard developed, and then oversaw the execution of, a bold expansion plan that ushered in an era of rapid growth at Masco that has rarely been equaled in American industry. From 1960-1980s, the company began expanded its operations into the building and home improvement industries. During that time, Masco acquired more than one hundred companies including Merillat cabinetry, Weiser Lock, Thermador appliances and Baldwin brass, to name a few. The strategy was to reinvest surplus earnings and create opportunities for new growth in different, but related, market sectors.

In 1985, Richard was named chairman

of the Board and Chief Executive Officer. In 2007, after almost 50 years with the Company, Richard stepped down as Chief Executive Officer and became Masco's Executive Chairman. When he joined Masco, Company sales were \$55 million. When he concluded his service as CEO in 2007, sales exceeded \$8 billion. In 2012, he was named Chairman Emeritus.

When Manoogian stepped down from his role as Chairman and CEO in 2012, his five decades of contributions to the Company were immeasurable. He had been a member of Masco's Board of Directors for 56 years and Chairman of the Board for over 27 years. During his tenure, he was the architect of the dramatic growth of Masco and navigated Masco through various phases of transformation and diversification, enabling the company to become a global leader in the design, manufacture and distribution of branded home improvement and building products. When he joined the Company in 1958, Company sales were \$55 million. When he stepped down in 2007, sales exceeded \$8 billion.

Business was not his only focus. He was a tireless art collector, focusing on 19th-century American paintings.

Manoogian joined the Detroit Institute of Art (DIA) board in 1968, a seat he described as a civic obligation and one that turned into a lifelong involvement with the museum.

"I joined (DIA) originally as a civic activity to help and be involved in the community, and being subsequently exposed to art, I started to become a personal collector as well," he told *Crain's* in 2015.

The *Crain's* story noted that the DIA dedicated its American art wing as the Manoogian Wing in 2007. Manoogian continued to call it the American Wing, saying what mattered was the art, not the name.

He also backed the founding of Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit and the Inn on Ferry Street, which restored six DIA-owned buildings east of Woodward Avenue into a bed-and-breakfast that opened in 2001.

Also in 2001, Manoogian joined with Josephine Ford and A. Alfred Taubman to pledge \$50 million toward the museum to kick off a capital campaign for museum renovation, expansion, endowment and operations. The trio four years later pledged an additional \$45 million to lead another capital campaign.

In 2013, when Detroit's municipal bankruptcy put the DIA's collection in play as an asset that creditors could claim, Manoogian was among the first prominent supporters to argue publicly against any sale, telling *Crain's* it would cost the museum the tri-county millage voters had just approved and dry up future gifts.

"I think the net effect of this would result in a closure of the museum," he said.

The collection was ultimately protected under the \$816 million "grand bargain," funded by foundations and the state, that helped Detroit exit bankruptcy in 2014 without selling city-owned art. Manoogian took part in an effort by the DIA itself to raise \$100 million as part of the bargain.

Manoogian chaired the Alex and Marie Manoogian Foundation, established by his parents. He and his wife, Jane, established the Richard and Jane Manoogian Foundation in 1984, which he oversaw without compensation.

"Richard Manoogian is very sensitive to that fine line between family and company," Eugene Gargaro Jr., then a Masco vice president and a foundation trustee, told *Crain's* in 2005.

Richard fully embraced his family's legacy by employing his skills, resources, and time to make the community a better place. In lieu of flowers and in his memory, he would be honored if donations were made to the following organizations: AGBU Alex & Marie Manoogian School, St. John's Armenian Church and Mackinac Island Community Foundation, specifically, the Richard and Jane Manoogian Fund for the Conservation and Preservation of Open Spaces.

Dorothy (Vartanian) Piligian

School Volunteer Who Loved Boston Sports Teams

NEEDHAM, Mass. — Dorothy (Vartanian) Piligian of Needham passed away peacefully on September 16, 2026, at the age of 99 in the home that she loved.

Dorothy was preceded in death by her husband of 52 years, Murad; brother Leo;

The first years of her marriage were spent in Worcester, while her husband attended Worcester Polytechnic Institute. After graduation they moved to Arlington, Va., for Murad's work where they started their family and built lifelong friendships in the community.

They moved back to Needham in 1956, to be close to family. Dot went on to work at General Binding Corporation and Culinet Software Corporation. She volunteered at schools, even starting Armenian classes at the local elementary school, volunteered for Meals on Wheels and was an active member of a number of Armenian organizations.

Dot reigned supreme over her favorite pastimes, from her talent for making hand-knit dishcloths, her skill with 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzles, card games, Bingo and her unbeatable luck with scratch tickets, to her endless love for Boston sports, especially her beloved Celtics.

She will be remembered for her warm hospitality, her baking, cooking, and friendships.

Funeral service was at Saint James Armenian Church, Watertown on September 22. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church, 38 Elton Avenue, Watertown MA, 02472 or St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church, 135 Goodwin Street, Indian Orchard, MA 01151.



sister-in-law, Elizabeth; and daughter Diane. She was the mother of Margaret Fuller and her husband James, Richard Piligian and his wife Kelli, Nancy Barmakian and her husband Edward. She was the grandmother of Alexandra, Stephanie (Matthew), Stephen (Kelsey) and Sarah.

She was born in Indian Orchard, Mass., to Seranoosh and Nigohos Vartanian. After high school she worked for the telephone company.



Sponsor a Teacher Program

Any inquiries for information about the Sponsor a Teacher Program or donations should be henceforth directed to the central office of the Tekeyan Cultural Association at 755 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown MA 02472, or emailed to Aram Arkun at tcadirector@aol.com.

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Arts & Culture

Armenian Cultural Days to Take Place In Stuttgart

STUTTGART, Germany — From October 15 to 25, Stuttgart will become a hub for Armenian art, literature and music. The Armenian Cultural Days Stuttgart is organized by the Armenian Community of Baden-Württemberg. It is one of the largest Armenian cultural initiatives in Germany. Twenty events will take place at leading cultural venues across Stuttgart, ranging from an exhibition and literary readings to theatre, concerts, a documentary film, workshops and the Divine Liturgy (Surb Patarag).

The festival's motto is taken from the Book of Revelation: "See, I am making all things new" (Revelation 21:5). The verse is the 2026 Annual Watchword (Jahreslosung), which accompanies Christian congregations in Germany throughout the year. The Armenian Cultural Days read it as a guiding principle for the program: not a ceremony of remembrance, but an encounter with Armenian culture as it lives today.

This year's festival also marks an important anniversary. Thirty-five years ago, on September 21, 1991, the citizens of Armenia voted in a referendum for the independence of their country. Tigran Paskevichyan's documentary, "Our Road to Indepen-



Tigran Paskevichyan

dence," to be screened on October 18 at the Lutherkirche in Bad Cannstatt, tells the story of the struggle between 1988 and 1991 and invites reflection on what that awakening means today.

"The name of the festival does not speak of a fresh coat of paint, but of transformation," says Rev. Dr. Diradur Sardaryan, pastor of the community and director of the festival. "Renewal begins with the individual, in the willingness to examine what has become habitual and to take on responsibility. It needs a country that fills its freedom with justice, education and hope. And it lives from relationships in which people listen to one another, dare to trust and meet each other anew."

The festival opens on October 15 at BW-Bank with the exhibition "Images Across Borders." Paintings and miniatures by André "Darvish" Sevruguin tell the story of a family of artists between Persia, Armenia and Stuttgart. The following day, Dr Yvette Tajarian (Armenia) shows how script, images and ornament turned old Armenian manuscripts into works of art and witnesses to see STUTTGART, page 15



Justine Rapaccioli

On Venice, Armenian Music and Interpreting Tradition

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN/VENICE — I met conductor and composer Justine Rapaccioli last August in Venice, after the Divine Liturgy held at the city's Armenian Church of the Holy Cross. Justine was born and raised in Britain and studied at Royal Holloway (University of London), the University of Pisa, the Venice Conservatoire, the Accademia Musicale Pescarese, and the Accademia Europea in Vicenza, earning a degree in music and diplomas in violin, piano, choral conducting and orchestral conducting.

Active in the field of contemporary music, Rapaccioli has conducted performances for both the Venice Biennale Musica and Biennale Arte. She is also regularly invited to work as a choral clinician at international workshops and seminars. As a composer, Justine writes principally for choir, and her music has been performed in Italy, England, and France. In 2019, The Tallis Scholars performed her motet for double choir, *Quae est ista*, in Rome, Florence and Genoa. In 2023, her *Da Pacem Domine*, written for five sackbuts (an early form of the trombone used during the Renaissance and Baroque eras) and choral drone (a sustained, continuous vocal note or chord sung by a group of singers to create a fixed harmonic foundation), received its premiere performance at the Royal Chapel of the Palace of Versailles.

She is the founder and director of the vocal group Edesse Ensemble, a recipient of the Komitas Medal, and one of the few vocal ensembles in Italy which actively programs and performs Armenian music.

She is Deputy Conductor (Maestro Sostituto) of the Cappella Marciana, the choir of St Mark's Basilica, Venice. Her work has also been featured in interviews on BBC Radio 3.

Dear Justine, you are active both as a conductor and a composer, with a particular focus on choral music. How do these two aspects of your musical life influence one another, and does your experience as a conductor change the way you write for voices?

These two aspects are certainly intertwined, although it's the conducting which mostly informs the composing. Being a conductor naturally involves immersing oneself in the music one has to perform, which, in its initial stages means making a thorough study of the score. This provides insights into the composer's distinctive compositional process and style. Then, the physical act of conducting itself reveals how the singers respond to what they read on the page, the places of ease or difficulty — in tuning, breathing, timbre, sustaining the line of the phrase and so on. This all becomes significant when I'm writing my own works. I'm inspired by the writing of other composers and also very mindful of what suits the voice best, what is possible at a practical level.

You are the first woman to hold the post of Deputy Conductor of the historic Cappella Marciana in Venice in the choir's 700-year history. You work within one of Europe's most remarkable musical traditions, while also being deeply involved in contemporary music. How do you balance these two worlds—the preservation of a great historical heritage and the search for new musical languages?

One of my first thoughts when I was appointed deputy conductor was that it was all very well being the first woman to hold the post, but I did not want to be the first deputy conductor who had *never* written anything for the choir! The idea of adding my contribution to the repertoire of the choir — which is immense and includes works by some very illustrious figures — Adrian Willaert, Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli, Claudio Monteverdi, to name but a few — was both a daunting and challenging prospect. Also, there were some practical considerations to

see RAPACCIOLI, page 14

Joe Manganiello's Tell-All Memoir *Bloodlines* Will Reveal A Life-Changing Health Ordeal

LOS ANGELES (*People*) — Actor Joe Manganiello is ready to share a life-changing ordeal with the release of his new memoir.

Bloodlines, due out October 13 from Avid Reader Press, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, traces the True Blood and Magic Mike actor's health ordeal "marked by multiple near-death experiences and medical crises that led him beyond medicine and into a remarkable, globe-spanning quest that revealed answers about his ancestry, inherited trauma and the deeper histories we carry," according to an official synopsis.

It all started with what Manganiello describes as a "a cascade of autoimmune-related illnesses" that attacked his skin, thyroid, eyes, lungs and digestive system, plunging him into a seven-year battle that was marked by "chronic pain, a life-saving organ amputation, existential crisis and a



prolonged fight for survival that left doctors with few answers and no clear explanation," the synopsis continues.

As Manganiello fought for answers in the face of traditional medicine's inability to provide them, he found an unorthodox path: "shamans, pagan rituals, ancient myths, long-lost family records and the rebirth of his own spirituality," the synopsis explains. Along the way, he delved into his own bloodline and discovered ancestors shaped by violence and displacement and others living with chronic illness.

"It was the most brutally difficult time of my life, one I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy, but also my greatest adventure," the author tells *PEOPLE* in an exclusive statement. "I hope that what I went through on this journey can give readers hope that answers and healing may lie for them on the other side of whatever they are fighting through. The process of writing this book gave me the gift of perspective that helped me to see that my suffering was a cocoon from which I would emerge forever changed."

The publisher calls *Bloodlines* "deeply personal and emotionally expansive" as it delves into "illness, inheritance, masculinity, faith, ambition and the identities we build to endure. More than a memoir of medical crisis, it is a searching account of what happens when the life you have constructed can no longer contain the truth of what you carry."

Manganiello has spoken in the past couple of years about his Armenian heritage, through his mother.

Bloodlines will hit shelves on October 13 and is now available for pre-order, wherever books are sold.



ARTS & CULTURE

Books

UCLA to Host Launch of English-language Edition Of Aram Andonian’s *The Great Crime*

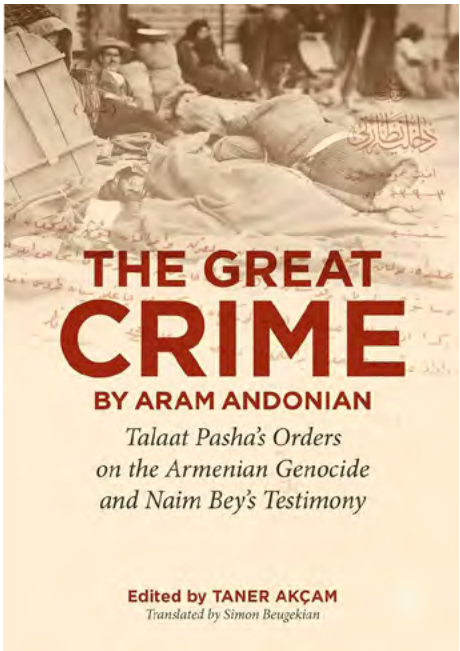
LOS ANGELES — The Armenian Genocide Research Program (AGRP) of UCLA’s Promise Armenian Institute will host the official launch of the English edition of Aram Andonian’s landmark work, *The Great Crime: Talaat Pasha’s Orders on the Armenian Genocide and Naim Bey’s Testimony*, on Thursday, October 22, at 6 p.m. (Pacific Time). The event will take place at UCLA’s Tannas



Aram Andonian

Alumni Suite in the Engineering VI building. Originally written in Armenian and published in 1921, *The Great Crime* was among the earliest systematic efforts to document the Armenian Genocide. The book presents the testimony of Naim Bey, an Ottoman bureaucrat, along with handwritten copies of approximately 52 Ottoman documents, including orders concerning the deportation and killing of Armenians. In 1983, the Turkish government challenged the authenticity of the materials presented in Andonian’s work, arguing that the documents were fraudulent. These claims contributed to the book and the Ottoman documents it reproduced being largely excluded from scholarly use for decades.

That interpretation was challenged by AGRP Director Dr. Taner Akçam in his 2018 book, *Killing Orders*. Drawing on archival and other evidence, Akçam addressed the longstanding questions surrounding the documents and argued for their historical value in the study of the Armenian Genocide. The new English edition of *The Great Crime* now makes Andonian’s work accessible to a much wider readership. It features a substantial introduction by Akçam that synthesizes the central findings of “Killing Orders” while incorporating new evidence and insights, as well as a specially prepared appendix. The publication marks an important step in expanding access to foundational sources on the Armenian Genocide and providing English-language readers with a key work in the history of its documentation and scholarship. Registration is required for this free event. To learn more and RSVP, visit bit.ly/AGRP10-22-26.



Justine Rapaccioli: On Venice, Armenian Music and Interpreting Tradition

RAPACCIOLI, from page 13
be made. The choir has to perform an entirely different programme of works each Sunday, therefore any new work must not be so technically demanding that it requires hours and hours of rehearsal time, as that time is simply not available. Also, the music serves a liturgical and spiritual purpose. It is a vessel, as it were, towards the divine, and should aid rather than hinder this journey. When I first set out to write for the choir, I was not searching for a new musical language per se. I was (and still am) channeling my response to the extraordinary acoustic space which is the basilica and everything that I have absorbed in the course of my work there, into a personal response. My aim has always been to create something which is both meaningful in terms of the text I am setting to music, and to the listener. My musical language is not new. It’s just personal.
You are the founder and conductor of Edesse Ensemble. Why Edesse? Does it have any connection to your Armenian ancestors?
My maternal grandparents were Armenian and the Edesse connection stems from my grandfather’s family. He was born in the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem, where his family had lived for many generations, but it’s believed his ancestors hailed from the ancient city of Edessa. My grandfather had an uncle who was awarded a scholarship to study piano at the Paris Conservatoire at the end of the 19th century. Unfortunately, all contact was eventually lost with this relative, but my grandfather was told that he established himself as a successful musician and performed under the name Gaspard Edesse (Edesse being the French for Edessa). When I founded my ensemble and was searching for a name, I decided to call it Edesse, both in recognition of my Armenian ancestry and my grandfather’s musician uncle.
Do you think that one day it might be possible that Cappella Marciana will also perform Armenian sacred music?
It already has! This is largely due to the presence of the Mekhitarist Congregation on the Island of San Lazzaro in the Venetian lagoon. In October 1977, for example, as part of the commemorative events organized by the Congregation to mark the 300th anniversary of the birth of its founder, Mekhitar of Sebaste, the Cappella Marciana performed a programme of sacred and secular music by Komitas, Yekmalian,

Mekhitar and Ganachian at the Doge’s Palace. The choir at that time was conducted by Don Alfredo Bravi, who himself made a four-voice arrangement of Mekhitar’s Hymn to St. Anthony. More recently, in December 2011, the choir performed a program of Armenian sacred music in St. Mark’s Basilica. This concert was organized as one of the events to mark the 500th anniversary of the printing of the first book in Armenian in Venice. I had the honor of conducting that performance. I might add that the choir has also performed two of my works on medieval Armenian texts during the Sunday mass — a setting of the hymn *Srbouhi Mariam sapor voski* (Holy Mary, Golden Jar”) by first Armenian female poet, Sahakdukht Syunetsi for four voices, and a setting of Arakel Syunetsi’s mystical poem *Ar Jshmarit Baghdzalin Kristos* (To the True Desirable Christ) for eight voices and cello. I don’t know whether they can be considered Armenian music, but it was important to me, in recognition of my Armenian heritage, to bring the Armenian word into St. Mark’s in my own personal way.
That is wonderful! How else you are familiar with Armenian music and musicians?
When I first founded Edesse Ensemble, one of my “missions” was to perform Armenian music, which, up until then, had been a repertoire I’d had very little opportunity to explore. Over the years we’ve performed many works by Armenian composers, particularly Komitas, and this has been a very significant and enriching experience for me personally. Thanks to the Mekhitarist Fathers on San Lazzaro, I’ve been able to obtain scores of Armenian music very easily. This is one of the benefits of living in Venice! In 2012, for the 500th anniversary of the printing of the first book in Armenian, which I’ve already mentioned, the Edesse Ensemble gave a theatrical performance which combined both Armenian music and poetry. The stage director was Marco Bellussi, a well-known Italian opera director. We called the theatre piece *Mia Nairi Luminosa* (My Radiant Nairi), which is a line from Vahan Teryan’s poem “Am I the Last Poet?” In recognition of the performance and our work in promoting Armenian culture, we were honored to be awarded the Komitas Medal by the then Minister of the Diaspora, Hranush Hakobyan.
I’ve had the opportunity to meet and work with several Armenian musicians, most notably Gevorg Dabaghyan, who per-

formed with Edesse Ensemble in 2017. I also had the rare honor of conducting Hover Chamber Choir virtually! This occurred in 2019 when the Cappella Marciana and Hover took part in a project which saw Venice and Yerevan connected with LoLa (low latency) audio-video transmission technology. Despite being some 3,400km apart, the two choirs sang together, with Sona Hovhannisyan conducting Komitas’s *Antsrevn Yegav* (The Rain Came), and myself directing Giovanni Croce’s *Ecce Panis* for two choirs. It was quite an experience!
You mentioned your grandfather was from Jerusalem. Could you tell me where your Armenian grandmother was from?
My grandmother was born in Albistan in Turkey, just two years before the Armenian

Genocide. Most of her immediate family was killed in 1915, but she survived along with her mother. They eventually settled in British Mandate Palestine, which is where my grandparents met and married. Incidentally, my grandfather was the first (and only) Armenian to be appointed a judge by the British Mandate authorities. He was working in Tiberias when fighting broke out there in 1948. He and my grandmother were displaced to Jordan initially, then they moved to Cyprus. Unfortunately, they were displaced yet again by the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 and had to rebuild their lives from scratch in England. I’ve always been fascinated by their history and I’m currently writing a book about them. I feel very strongly that these stories of resilience in the face of extreme adversity need to be told.

Tekeyan Cultural Association
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ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe Corner



by Christine
Vartanian Datian



No Bake Chocolate, Tahini, Oat and California Raisin Bars

FRESNO – “The story of California Raisins can be traced to the late 1800s when growers in the San Joaquin Valley began experimenting with drying grapes as a way to preserve their harvest. The first commercially successful raisin production was established in Fresno in 1873, and by the turn of the century, California was the largest producer of raisins in the world. Throughout the 20th century, California Raisins became an iconic symbol of the state’s agricultural heritage. In the 1980s, the California Raisins even became the stars of a popular animated television series, further cementing their place in American culture.”

“Fresno is widely recognized as the ‘Raisin Capital of the World’ due to its significant role in raisin production and its ideal climate for growing grapes, which are then dried into raisins. On approximately 100,000 acres, over 1,500 California Raisin growers produce 100% of the U.S. raisins in an area within a 60-mile radius of Fresno – known as the central San Joaquin Valley. Two-thirds of the U.S. raisin production is consumed in the U.S. and Canada, while one-third is exported to nearly 50 countries with Asia and Europe being the top two export markets.”

“California Raisins are inspected under the most rigid standards by both plant quality control technicians and USDA inspectors throughout the packaging process, thus assuring that California Raisins are the cleanest, highest quality in the world. After final inspections, raisins are automatically weighed and packed in a variety of bulk industrial and convenient retail sizes. California Raisins are then shipped throughout North America and the world for consumers to enjoy. Part of the crop is used to make raisin juice concentrate (a minimum of 70 percent natural fruit soluble solids) and raisin paste (made from 100 percent raisins), which are added to a variety of foods, including dairy, confectionery and bakery items.”

“California Raisins are 100% fruit and this little fruit has many benefits that help to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Raisins are enjoyed worldwide and are a staple ingredient in many cuisines. They are not only used in sweet dishes like desserts

and baked goods but also find their way into savory recipes, adding a unique depth of flavor. Raisins are frequently incorporated into fragrant rice dishes like pilafs (or pilav), biryani, and couscous. They add a bright contrast to earthy spices like cumin, cinnamon, and saffron.”

The history and origins of raisins have shaped their significance in culinary traditions, making them a very versatile and beloved ingredient in cooking, like in these delicious No Bake Chocolate, Tahini, Oat and California Raisin Bars. And don’t forget the chocolate drizzle.”

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 1/2 cups rolled oats
- 1/2 cup California Raisins
- 1/2 cup tahini
- 1/3 cup honey
- 3 tablespoons chia seeds*
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 cup sesame seeds, toasted
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

Chocolate Drizzle

- 1/2 cup dark chocolate (70 percent), more to taste
- 1 teaspoon coconut oil

PREPARATION:

Line an 8 by 8-inch baking pan with parchment paper.

In a large bowl, combine all ingredients for the bars until coated well. Place the batter in the prepared pan and using a spatula, make sure it is spread evenly and flat. Place pan in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes or longer.

For the Chocolate Drizzle:

Melt the chocolate and oil together over a double boiler until melted and smooth.

Assembly:

Pour the melted chocolate over the chilled oat bars and coat the whole top. Return the pan to the refrigerator and let cool again until the chocolate is fully set – about one hour.

When ready to slice, lift the parchment paper to remove the bars and lay flat on a cutting board. Slice into 8 bars for larger slices, or 16 squares for smaller pieces.

Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to one week.

* Chia seeds are high in fiber, but if you don’t like them, seeds like flax, sesame, quinoa, and nuts like almonds offer similar health benefits.

Raisin Administrative Committee
2445 Capitol Street, Suite 200
Fresno, CA 93721-2236
Phone: (559) 225-0520
Fax: (559) 225-0652
Website: <https://www.raisins.org/>

The Raisin Administrative Committee (RAC) is a federal marketing order, led by 47 growers, packers, and a public member. The RAC is directly overseen by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and was created in 1949 as a result of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937. The RAC meets regularly at their headquarters in downtown Fresno, collects and distributes delivery data weekly, shipment data monthly, publishes an annual report of industry statistics and policies, actively and directly markets into 19 foreign nations, and collaborates with the USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). For news and information, see:

<https://www.raisins.org/> or go to: <https://calraisins.org/about/the-raisin-industry/>
For more history, see: <https://www.mashed.com/1360968/untold-history-raisins/>

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Armenian Cultural Days to Take Place In Stuttgart

STUTTGART, from page 13

The literary program features Narine Abgaryan with her novel *Three Apples Fell from the Sky*; Nuran David Calis with his novel *Rausch* (Intoxication), a book about origin and belonging, followed by a conversation with SWR journalist Anna Koktsidou; and translator Susanna Yeghoyan, who presents the German translation of Mkrtich Armen’s long-forgotten novel *Yerevan*, set in the Armenian capital of the 1920s.

On October 22 at the Kleiner Kursaal, actress Narine Grigoryan will perform a one-woman play based on Hrant Matevosyan’s story “Gomesh” (The Water Buffalo). The music program includes the Dan Gharibian Trio, taking the audience on a musical journey between Armenia, the Balkans and Paris; piano trios by Rachmaninoff and Arno Babajanian performed by Diana Sahakyan, Anush Nikoghosyan and Vache Bagratuni; and a concert by the Yerevan in-

die rock band NEMRA in the Silcher Hall of the Liederhalle. On 16 October, Lilit Kärcher-Sargsyan gives a benefit concert in support of the restoration of Holy Cross Church (Surb Khach) in Göppingen-Bartenbach. The festival closes on October 25 at the Lutherkirche in Bad Cannstatt, where the Tübingen choir Camerata Vocalis, conducted by Philipp Amelung, performs works by Bach, Silcher and Vahram Sargsyan under the title “From Ancient Sound to New Light.”

The Armenian Cultural Days also make room for active participation. On October 17, at the Youth Day, young people meet prominent compatriots, share their experiences and jointly develop a concrete project for 2027. On the same day, the Family Day introduces children and parents to Armenian letters, dances and creative forms, while a walk through Stuttgart’s Main Cemetery (Hauptfriedhof) with Rev. Dr. Diradur

Sardaryan and Inge Nowak tells of flight, arrival and Armenian life in Stuttgart. On October 18, the Divine Liturgy is celebrated at the Lutherkirche; guests without knowledge of Armenian are warmly welcome.

In the workshops, composer Vahram Sargsyan invites participants to discover unusual sounds of the human voice, Elmira Torosian introduces Armenian cuisine and its customs in cooperation with VHS Stuttgart, and artist Tereza Sargsyan explains the language of Armenian ornament. On October 21 at the StadtPalais museum, guests from culture, media and society discuss how origin and identity shape our life together.

Bringing together artists from Armenia, creative voices from the diaspora and German cultural institutions, the festival builds bridges between Armenia and Germany, and between the Armenian community and Stuttgart’s wider public. It presents Armenian culture not only as a heritage of the



Actress Narine Grigoryan

past, but as a living, contemporary presence.

“The biblical word reminds us that what is new is not our work alone. It is promised. That is precisely why we may take part in it with courage,” Sardaryan emphasizes. “So that remembrance may become future.”

To see a list of the full program, visit www.armenische-kulturtage-stuttgart.de.



ARTS & CULTURE

CALENDAR
OF EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MASSACHUSETTS

OCTOBER 3 — Film Talk, a panel and questions and answers with local Armenian filmmakers. Talk about how cultural background informs art and the future of Armenian film. Hosted by Sharisse Zeroonian, with Roger Hagopian, Sevan Soukiasian, Alec Der-Sirakian and David Medzorian. 1.30 to 3.15 p.m. at Belmont Public Library. Free and open to the public.

OCTOBER 5 — St. James Men’s Club Dinner and Fellowship. Monday. Featuring Guest Speaker Pierre Terjanian: Director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Losh Kebab and Kheyma dinner. \$25 per person. Mezze at 6.15, dinner at 7 p.m. and speaker at 7.30. Terjanian joined the MFA in 2024 to oversee the conservation of the museum’s collection of more than 500,000 objects. Previously, Terjanian was a curator of arms and armor at the Metropolitan Museum of Art for ten years, and before that served a curator and acting head of the Department of European sculpture and Decorative Arts before 1700 at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

OCTOBER 8 — Building a Safe Community and Understanding and Preventing Domestic Violence. Featuring Sydney Carter, REACH; Sophie Pariseau, The Sima and Dylan Pariseau Memorial Foundation, Inc.; Scott Parseghian, Wayland High School. Moderated by Lenna Garibian of Women’s Support Center, Armenia. 6.30 p.m. reception, 7-8.30 p.m. panel. Belmont Public Library, 336 Concord Ave.

OCTOBER 16-17 — St. James Armenian Church 79th Annual Bazaar – Friday 12-8 pm, Saturday 11 am-7 pm. Delicious Armenian Food, Mezze, Pastries, and Baked Goods. Silent Auction, Raffle, Children’s Activities, Booths and Local Vendors. St. James Armenian Church – 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more information please visit www.stjameswatertown.org/bazaar.

OCTOBER 17 — Radius Ensemble will open its 28th season with a performance of Armenian-American composer Mary Kouyoumdjian’s *Studies on Rage for Each Day of the Week*. Kouyoumdjian is an acclaimed Armenian-American composer and was a 2024 Pulitzer Prize Finalist and 2025 Grammy nominee. 8 p.m., at the brand new Thomas Tull Concert Hall at MIT, 201 Amherst St., Cambridge. There’s a garage beneath the building (\$11) and it is a wheelchair accessible venue. Tickets are \$42 for general admission, \$37 for seniors, and \$15 for students. They can be purchased here: <https://radiusensemble.org/products/textures>

OCTOBER 21 — Film Screening & Mill Talk by filmmaker Roger Hagopian: *Destination Watertown- the Armenians of Hood Rubber*, Wednesday, 6:30 to 8 p.m. Charles River Museum of Industry and Innovation, 154 Moody St., Waltham. Free to the Public but registration required.

OCTOBER 24 — The New England Couples Ministry, Saturday, at 5 p.m., will hold a special program, titled “Willing the Good of the Other: Marriage Through Every Season,” which will offer encouragement, practical wisdom, and Christ-centered teaching for building stronger, healthier relationships. Beautiful evening of dinner, music, fellowship, and inspiring teaching with Rev. Nareg Terterian. Whether you are married, engaged, dating, or single, all are welcome. Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church, 200 Lexington St., Belmont. \$50 per person. To RSVP or more info, call 617-229-9294.

OCTOBER 25 — “Voices Across Time: Armenian Piano Music: A Homage to Robert Mirak,” Piano Recital and CD Launch by Alessandra Pompili. Works by Stephen Minas, Alan Hovhaness, Emanuel Melik-Aslanian, Loris Tjeknavorian, Komitas, George Gurdjieff, Diane Goolkasian Rahbee, Aram Khachaturian, and Koharik Gazarossian. Armenian Cultural Foundation, Arlington, Sunday at 5 p.m. Free and Open to the Public - Reception to follow.

OCTOBER 28 — The Boston chapter of the Tekeyan Cultural Association is sponsoring an Armenian pickling demo with master chef Betty Arouyan. Various vegetables will be made into fermented tuttoo. Enjoy wine, cheese and dessert and take home a bottle of your own pickled veggies. 7 p.m. Baikar Building, 755 Mount Auburn St. RSVP to Sossy at 617-281-1647 or syogurtian@comcast.net. Tickets \$25 per person, including reception and bottle of tuttoo. Series coordinated by Rita Balyozian.

NOVEMBER 12 — An enchanting evening to benefit children in Armenia with cancer, hosted by City of Smile USA. Special performance by illusionist Joel Acevedo from Boston’s Hit Show “Four-Handed Illusions.” Thursday, 7 p.m., at Oakley Country Club, Watertown. Cocktails, hors d’oeuvres, live performance. Tickets \$150 per person. For tickets: call Cynthia (339-222-9900) or online see QR code in Mystical Illusions Flyer.

NOVEMBER 14 — Annual Fall Bazaar 12-5 PM Lamb, chicken & Losh Kebab Dinners, Cuisine Table, Pastries, Hayastan Table & Farmer’s Market. Holy Archangels Armenian Church 1280 Boston Rd. Haverhill.

NOVEMBER 13 —Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) Boston’s Child Care Committee presents an evening in support of the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School in Yerevan. The event will feature Manet-Miriam, star of “La Voix” (The Voice) Canada, with special guest Melanya Geghamyan, founding principal of the Avedisian School. 6 p.m. Dinner and live auction. Wellesley Country Club, Wellesley Hills. For more info and reservations visit: <https://amaa.org/hyeminds2026/>

NOVEMBER 15 — GIVING THANKS! TOGETHER IN CELEBRATION. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Sunday at 2pm./Meet & Greet. Share the Warmth: Bring a Winter Hat, Scarf or Gloves for the ABCD Winter Drive, Seasonal Refreshments. RSVP appreciated hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

NOVEMBER 21 and 22: Save the Date. America’s oldest Armenian Church Celebrates 135 years. Banquet November 21. Divine Liturgy November 22. Details to follow.

DECEMBER 6 — CANDLELIT LABYRINTH WALK: IN PEACE & HARMONY Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Sunday at 4:45pm. Meet & Greet. Walk the Candlelit Labyrinth Walk. Enjoy Hot Chocolate & Sweet Treats. RSVP appreciated. hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

RHODE ISLAND

OCTOBER 24 — The Cultural committee presents Dinner Dance Honoring the 1st Anniversary of Rev. Fr. Sahak Gabrielyan, Priest of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church. Featuring the music of; Ken Kalajian (guitar), Charles Kalaijan (percussion), Leon Janikian (clarinet), Harry Bedrossian (oud & vocal). Cocktail Hour 6-7 p.m., Dinner 7 p.m., Dance 8-11 p.m. Saturday, Egavian Cultural Center, 70 Jefferson St., Providence. For tickets please call: Zara Vartanian (401) 439 -5971, Elvira Hovagimian (860) 462- 3610. Tickets \$ 60 (\$ 75 after October 18).

To send Calendar items email alin@mirrorspectator.com or alin.gregorian@gmail.com. You can also visit our website, www.mirrorspectator.com, and find the “calendar” section under the heading “More” or mail them to the Armenian Mirror-Spectator, 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472. All calendar entries must be received by noon on Monday before publication.

Author David Karamian to Discuss His New Book on *Khatchars*

FRESNO — Author David Karamian will discuss his new book, *Eternal Armenia: Khatchkars-The Cross Stones of Noratus*, on Friday, October 9, at 7 p.m., in the Grosse Industrial Technology Building, Room 101 (2255 E. Barstow Ave.) on the Fresno State campus. The lecture is The Grace and Paul Shahinian Armenian Christian Art and Culture Lecture of the Armenian Studies Program.

The culmination of nearly three years of photography, research, writing, and design, the 264-page large-format bilingual English-Armenian volume features nearly 200 photographs, including expansive panoramic views of the cemetery, intimate studies of individual *khatchkars*, carved grave monuments, and the landscape in which these centuries-old stones have endured. Noratus is home to the world’s largest surviving collection of Armenian *khatchkars*, or cross-stones –intricately carved monuments that embody centuries of Armenian Christian faith, artistry, memory, and craftsmanship. Yet despite its extraordinary significance, Noratus remains surprisingly unfamiliar to many people, including within the Armenian diaspora.

The book combines photography with historical and cultural narrative. It examines the development of Christi-

anity in Armenia, the origins and evolution of the *khatchkar*, the symbolism and visual language carved into the stones, the master artisans who created them, and the graves and human stories found throughout the cemetery.

Karamian is an Armenian-American photographer, author, designer and publisher whose work focuses on documenting and presenting Armenian history, culture, landscape, and heritage. Through photography, writing, publishing, and public presentations, his work seeks to connect audiences with Armenia while drawing attention to the importance of cultural preservation. He is the author and photographer of *Armenia – The Lone Stone*, and *Armenia – The Lone Stone, A Traveler’s Guide*.

Admission to the presentation is free and free parking is available in Fresno State Lot P23 or P20, near the Industrial Technology building. Parking permits are not required for Friday night presentations.

Copies of *Eternal Armenia: Khatchkars* will be on sale at the event.

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



Author David Karamian and his books

THE ARMENIAN MIRROR SPECTATOR

SINCE 1932



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COMMENTARY

Why Is Azerbaijan Increasing Pressure on Armenia?

By Suren Sargsyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Armenian-Azerbaijani relations have taken on a rather interesting turn. Relations can be characterized as a “neither war nor peace” situation, which seem to be not leaning more toward peace, at least judging by Azerbaijani statements and actions.

It is understandable that the sides do not have a signed peace agreement, and it seems that the signing of such an agreement is not a particularly realistic possibility in the near future. On the other hand, the sides are not engaged in military hostilities and are not shooting at each other. The hostilities, as such, seem to have moved into the public sphere, in the form of statements and political rhetoric, and are usually one-sided. Statements made at the highest levels are often unfriendly in nature and primarily come from the Azerbaijani leadership. Although there is no military confrontation, the confrontation in the political and information spheres against Armenia continues.

Relations that have not reached their logical conclusion are temporary in nature, and sooner or later, the sides will have to reach peace. However, the fact remains that, at this point, such a possibility does not yet seem realistic in the short term, and this issue is being pushed into the medium-term perspective.

Most likely, this will happen after a referendum is held in Armenia, which will satisfy the preconditions put forward by Azerbaijan. Such a situation primarily serves Azerbaijan’s interests because, as the victorious side and the more powerful state, Azerbaijan is able to resolve several important issues. First, it has strengthened its position in the region and is able to act as a more powerful regional player than the other states in the region. At the same time, Azerbaijan is able to obtain significant concessions from Armenia. In other words, Armenia is making preliminary concessions in accordance with Azerbaijan’s demands, which, of course, creates a favorable environment for Azerbaijan not to sign the peace agreement, or to put forward maximum demands and sign it as late as possible. Therefore, even if the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP) is implemented, it still does not constitute a guarantee that Azerbaijan will sign the peace agreement.



The United States also does not want to directly link the implementation of TRIPP with the signing of the peace agreement. This raises the question of why Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has recently been speaking about Armenia in such an aggressive manner, displaying overt hostility. There could be several reasons for this. For example, it cannot be ruled out that Armenian President Nikol Pashinyan promised him something but, for some reason, has not yet been able to implement it.

It is possible this aggressiveness is due to Azerbaijan needing to create a link between itself and its exclave, Nakhichevan, as quickly as possible, and the Azerbaijani government understands that the biggest problem lies with the railway. Therefore, perhaps it is exerting pressure so that Armenia resolves this issue in Moscow as quickly as possible during Pashinyan’s upcoming visit. Otherwise, a number of problems could once again arise in relations between the two sides and in the peace process.

It is particularly noteworthy that US President Donald Trump has also recently been speaking relatively little about peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan, because, in fact, the process is currently at a standstill.

It is a fact that the full implementation of TRIPP is currently hindered by the Iran-US war, as well as by the fact that the railway located in Armenia is under a concession agreement with Russia. If Armenia has no control or influence over the issue related to Iran, then in Baku they believe that Yerevan

should resolve the railway issue with Moscow as soon as possible, so that Russia withdraws from its management and thus establish the connection between Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan.

Most likely, Baku wants Armenia to satisfy all of Russia’s conditions in order to take back control of the railway, whatever the actual cost of doing this may be.

(Suren Sargsyan is an expert on US foreign policy, researcher and author. He is a graduate of Yerevan State University, American University of Armenia and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Suren Sargsyan is a founder of the Armenian Center for American Studies, a research center based in Yerevan.)

Armenia’s Independence Day: A Time for Reflection, Responsibility, and Resolve

By Taleen Babayan

Earlier this month, I was walking my toddler toward the United Nations when he pointed to Armenia’s flag in the distance.

“Հայկական դրոշակ,” he said.

We passed through Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, and I thought of the Artsakh rallies that had filled those same streets years ago. By the time we reached the flagpoles, a UN security officer was lowering the flags for the evening, one by one.

The scene returned me to an earlier memory: watching Armenia’s flag raised at the United Nations in 1992. After the September 21, 1991 referendum affirmed Armenia’s independence, UN membership gave that new sovereignty international visibility and presence. For a people shaped by dispossession, genocide, Soviet rule, and a long struggle for self-determination, seeing the tricolor among the flags of the world carried enormous meaning.

For many in the Diaspora, those early years were marked by a particular kind of hope. Armenia was no longer only an inherited homeland of stories, photographs, songs, family memories, and longing. It was a living republic: fragile, imperfect, full of possibility, and newly responsible for its own future.

In diasporan homes, Mount Ararat paintings and Armenian alphabet plaques were more than decorations. They connected us to a homeland that had often felt emotionally close but physically distant. Armenia’s

independence brought new possibilities: pilgrimages, humanitarian and community-service programs, philanthropy, entrepreneurship, and educational initiatives. It also strengthened the conviction that the homeland’s future was inseparable from our own in the Diaspora.

That is why Independence Day is not, for many Armenians, a simple holiday. It is a day to take stock.

What We Must Confront

An independent Armenia remains an achievement worth recognizing. It is also an unfinished responsibility.

This Independence Day, it is impossible not to think of Armenians still held captive in Azerbaijan; the families who continue to wait for them; the people displaced from Artsakh; and those who have lost children, spouses, parents, siblings, homes, livelihoods, and entire communities. It is also impossible to ignore the uncertainty faced by a nation living in a volatile region.

The continued detention of Armenians in Azerbaijan raises grave legal and human-rights concerns, including questions about due-process guarantees, access to counsel and family contact, and protection from torture and ill-treatment.

Nor can we overlook the human consequences of displacement from Artsakh. Many displaced Artsakh Armenians have begun rebuilding their lives in Armenia, enrolling children in school, finding work, and forming new communities. Yet the trauma of war, loss, displacement, and

separation from ancestral homes remains. Resettlement, housing, employment, education, mental-health care, and long-term integration are not temporary concerns - they are national responsibilities.

Independence has meaning only if it is matched by a commitment to the dignity, safety and future of all Armenian people.

Peace Without Erasure

Supporting peace and normalization does not require forgetting history, compromising fundamental rights, or silencing legitimate concerns.

Armenia’s geography and economic circumstances impose genuine constraints. Armenia is a small, landlocked country in a complicated region, and its leaders must navigate security threats, regional powers, closed borders, economic needs, and diplomatic pressures that are often beyond their control.

But realism cannot become resignation.

A durable peace requires more than signed documents, smiling photographs, or language about “moving on.” It requires security, reciprocity, lawful treatment of detainees, protection of cultural heritage, meaningful support for displaced people, and the assurance that Armenians are not being asked to relinquish their identity, rights, or future in exchange for one-sided concessions.

There is a difference between diplomacy and humiliation. There is a difference between economic opportunity and dependency. There is a difference between

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COMMENTARY

Strategic Depth and National Security: Is Armenia Headed in the Right Direction?

By Vahan Zanoian

Strategic depth is a measure of a country’s ability to absorb, repel and recover from an invasion. Traditionally, it has mainly referred to geographic or territorial depth. The defensibility of a country depends, among other things, on the distance between its vulnerable borders and its critical nerve centers, such as economic, military, demographic and logistical centers of gravity. Geographic depth, which in its core is a notion of “space,” is closely and directly correlated with the notion of “time,” because the larger the space from a border to a central nerve center, the more time the invaded party will have to organize and respond.

Over time, the concept of strategic depth has evolved significantly, partly due to changes in warfare technology, and partly due to attempts to make it more relevant and applicable to countries of different sizes and resources. In modern security conditions, technology, especially long-range precision targeting, and speed, materially change the notion of space and time in defense strategy.

Regional and country-specific discussions are also interesting in order to understand and analyze the case of Armenia. What the discourse by military theorists and practitioners focuses on is basically the expansion of the concept of strategic depth into several layers.

The most relevant of these for Armenia today include the following.

Geographic depth: The distance between a country’s vital centers and potential points of attack. Greater distance can provide time to mobilize and defend.

Military depth: The ability to maintain multiple layers of defense, preserve and mobilize reserve as needed, disperse forces, and continue operations even, and especially after, initial setbacks.

Societal depth: The resilience of both the political leadership and the Armenian public, the will to struggle, resilience of institutions to withstand disruption, casualties, economic pressure, disinformation, and other forms of coercion. In the case of Armenia, closely related to societal depth is —

depth of sense of national identity. Aside from military discipline and carrying out orders, a soldier needs to know what he or she is fighting for and defending in order to sustain his or her resilience, especially in distressed circumstances.

Institutional depth: especially in the armed forces and the military establishment, to remain functional and cohesive under attack, and the State’s capacity to continue to function under attack.

Logistical depth: Alternative roads, railways, supply routes, fuel sources, ammunition production. In Armenia, this is intimately tied to geographic depth.

Temporal depth: How much warning and decision time/mobilization time Armenia has before an adversary can create a strategic fait accompli: i.e., The amount of time available to detect a threat, mobilize resources, adapt, and make decisions before the threat becomes decisive.

Economic/industrial depth: The capacity to sustain a prolonged conflict by financing operations, maintaining supply chains, and absorbing economic disruption.

Geopolitical and diplomatic depth: Alliances, international support, diplomatic options and avoidance of strategic isolation. This can be also viewed as strategic breadth, if it involves military assistance, albeit without security guarantees.

Armenia’s Scorecard on these Measures

Armenia scores concerningly poor in all these measures. The latest and deadliest blow to its geographic depth came with the loss of Artsakh in September of 2023. (It is noteworthy that a similar blow had also come pre-independence, with the loss of Nakh-ijevan, which, like Artsakh, had its origins in Soviet-era decisions in the early 1920s).

Consequently, today, Armenia has virtually no geographic depth, even without surrendering the so-called enclaves (Tigranashen, Verin Voskepar, Sofulu and Barkhudar-lu). Geographically, it is one of the “shallowest” of the small countries in the world, landlocked and surrounded by two strategically aligned enemies. Surrendering the “enclaves,” especially Tigranashen, will be a new and fatal blow to the geographic depth of Armenia (more on this below).

The same is true for military depth. Despite a number of new military cooperation agreements and purchases of weapons systems, Armenia’s military capabilities have not improved sufficiently since the 2020 war, and some of the institutional cohesion within the armed forces has even deteriorated. Institutional depth, both in the armed forces and in the government apparatus in general has not improved and is certainly not “war ready.”

Societal depth, as defined above, has improved in certain areas. Armenia’s economic and industrial depth has registered a marked improvement, and the prospects are good for further advances in this area. Furthermore, in certain areas, forms of disinformation have been exposed, even though Azerbaijani influence in forming Armenian public opinion remains a major concern. However, Armenia has suffered a major blow in its will to struggle and fight for a just cause. Armenian society displayed a much higher degree of resilience at the beginning of the 2020 war than in its aftermath. Defeat-ism and fear of further war permeated society, largely preached and encouraged by the government itself. There has also been considerable doubt and confusion spread about Armenian national identity, largely through driving a wedge between the Armenian Republic and the Armenian nation at large, and through marginalizing the significance of historic Armenia in the “Real Armenia Ideology” propagated by the Administration.

Logistical depth has suffered in conjunction with geographic depth and will suffer further to critical levels if the so-called enclaves are surrendered. By the same token, temporal depth is virtually non-existent in Armenia.

Finally, geopolitical and diplomatic depth has improved. The diversification of Armenia’s foreign relations through an accord with Europe and the USA is a wel-come development, for economic and trade reasons, as well as some of the security cooperation agreements. It is also commendable in that this was done without burn-ing bridges with Iran, even though the deterioration of relations with Russia was not avoided. The economic and trade consequences of that deterioration have not yet fully materialized.

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Separation of Church and State Is Not Negotiable

By Bishop Abgar Hovakimyan
Primate of the Armenian Diocese of Canada

On September 24, 2026, a report circulated online discussing the “crisis” facing the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church, its “appropriation,” and the need for Church reform, while simultaneously raising the issue of the removal of the Catholicos of All Armenians and the election of a new Catholicos.

However, the issue is no longer merely about the person of Catholicos Karekin II.

The question is where does the authority of the state end and where do the Church’s rights begin?

According to Article 17 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, “Religious organizations are separate from the state.”

This means that the Church is not a body attached to the government and is not governed by secular authority. In other words, the parliament is not the Church Synod, and the prime minister is not the catholicos of the Church.

Of course everyone is equal before the law and the law must be applied to everyone. If crimes have been committed, they must be adjudicated in court. If there are financial irregularities, the procedures prescribed by law must be followed. However, if there are ecclesiastical and canonical issues, their resolution falls exclusively within the competence of the Church’s authorized bodies.

Restructuring the Church’s internal life by government decree is a different matter.

Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights protects freedom of conscience and religion.

The European Court, especially in the case of Hasan and Chaush v. Bulgaria, has emphasized that state inter-

ference in the internal organization and leadership matters of a religious community can violate freedom of religion.

Therefore, the issue is very clear. On what legal grounds does the state authority arrogate to itself the right to determine who should lead the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church?

If some declare that the Catholicos of All Armenians must step down and subsequently initiate a new election process, a natural question arises: to what extent would such an election represent an expression of the free and independent will of the Church?

Church reform must originate from within the Church through its canonical and conciliar systems rather than through a political decision in collaboration with a group of immoral individuals, thieves, bandits, drunkards, and extortionists, as well as the excommunicated Koryun and the degenerate Khoren.

No one is demanding that the Church be placed above the law. The demand is much clearer: the authorities themselves must remain within the bounds of the law.

One may demand accountability, raise issues, and call for reforms. However, none of this makes the prime minister a canonical body of the Church.

The words of our Lord Jesus Christ apply to all times: “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

This is not a call against the state, but a reminder regarding the limits of its authority. The prime minister is the last person who could interfere in the Church’s internal affairs, as he is neither a member of a parish council, a diocesan council, nor any other body associated with the Church.

The Church is not the enemy of the state. But the state is not the Church’s superior, either.

The state is accountable before the law.

And here lies the fundamental issue. If you declare that the state does not appoint the Catholicos, then why is the government demanding the Supreme Patriarch’s departure?

If the election of the head of the Church is an internal Church matter, why does the government decide in advance who should step down and who should undertake the “reform”?

And finally, which law of the Republic of Armenia grants the government the authority to alter the Church’s internal canonical structure?

These questions must be answered not with political slogans, but by means of the Constitution and the law.

The Holy Apostolic Church of Armenia predates modern political parties and current state institutions.

This does not mean that the Church is above the law. However, it does mean that no political authority has the right to alter the Church’s sacred course, established over centuries. Therefore, the state is not the Church, nor is the Church the state. And neither of them should undertake the responsibility to replace the other.

Let matters concerning the Church be resolved within the Church, through canonical and conciliar processes.

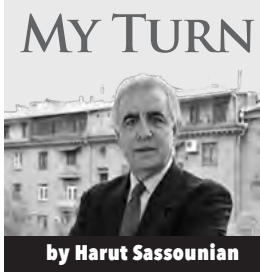
Let crimes be investigated in the courts. Let the authorities respect the Constitution. “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:22).

Montreal, September 25, 2026

(Translated from the original in Armenian, which will appear in the Armenian press in the coming week.)



COMMENTARY



by Harut Sassounian

Did Pashinyan Come to NY to Address the UN or Split Up Armenian University Students?

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has made himself such a controversial figure that his appearances in Armenia and overseas often generate major backlash.

Outside of his expected meetings with foreign dignitaries at the UN, Pashinyan decided to meet in New York City on September 23 with a handful of Armenian-American university students who are members of the All-Armenian Student Association (ASA). This is actually the job of Zareh Sinanyan, the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs for the Republic of Armenia, who was not asked to accompany the Prime Minister during his trip to the U.S.

Given Pashinyan's problematic positions on Armenian issues, the ASA Board not only violated its organization's policy of remaining "apolitical," but also failed to inform and consult with the leaders of ASA's various chapters in the United States about the meeting with the Prime Minister.

The Pashinyan meeting ended up sowing discord among the members of the All-Armenian Student Association. Tamara G. Nahapetyan, Deputy Director of the Eastern Region All-Armenian Student Association, objecting to the meeting, submitted her resignation. She told me that she wrote a lengthy statement titled, "The 'Apolitical' All-ASA Enters Political Territory," expressing her regret that Pashinyan managed to destabilize and split a nonpartisan and apolitical Armenian group in the Diaspora. Another Board member also resigned from the All-ASA Board. At least three ASA chapters issued statements distancing themselves from the All-ASA decision to meet with Pashinyan. While ASA members are free to choose their individual political views, the ASA is an independent umbrella organization. It is very damaging to fracture a group of young men and women who will become the future leaders of the Armenian-American community.

There is a much bigger problem than simply internal ASA dissension or Pashinyan's wish to score a propaganda coup with Diaspora Armenians. It is the continuation of the Armenian government's eight-year-long policy of alienating the Diaspora, many of whose members are opposed to Pashinyan's submissive positions and multiple concessions to Armenia's enemies. It started with the dissolution of the Diaspora Ministry after Pashinyan came to power in 2018; followed by repeated statements rejecting humanitarian assistance from the Diaspora; blocking Armenian citizens who had come to Armenia to cast their ballots on election day; making it more difficult for Diaspora Armenians to obtain Armenian citizenship; encouraging non-Armenians to immigrate to Armenia in order to reduce the "mono-ethnic" nature of the population of Armenia; questioning the facts of the Armenian Genocide; dis-

missing the historic significance of Mount Ararat and other sacred Armenian symbols; and handing over Artsakh to Azerbaijan, as well as parts of the Republic of Armenia's territory.

In previous meetings with Armenian communities in other countries, the Prime Minister demanded that those attending hand over their cell phones until the end of the meeting. Pashinyan would then post very brief excerpts of his remarks on his Facebook page, excluding any of the guests' questions. The attendees were preselected to ensure that no one raised any controversial issues that might contradict the Prime Minister.

ASA's leaders had initially asked the students to submit their questions in writing in advance. Later on, due to complaints, they decided to allow the students to ask their questions. After the meeting, the ASA's leaders issued a statement making the excuse that "after hearing some of the feedback from the community, we realize in hindsight that some of our internal communication could have improved for transparency." The ASA's statement has so far garnered 172 comments on its Instagram page, mostly critical. There were many complaints that the students' negative comments were deleted. Some called for the resignation of the ASA Board.

If Pashinyan really intended to meet with Armenian-Americans in New York City, why did he not reserve a large hall and allow hundreds of members of the community to hear him and be given the chance to question and challenge his anti-Armenian policies?

The government of Armenia has a contradictory position on the Diaspora's involvement in Armenia. We are being told that we have no right to comment on matters involving the Republic of Armenia. Those who say such nonsense forget that Armenia is the homeland of all Armenians, regardless of their place of residence. The real reason why Diaspora Armenians are told not to comment on Armenia-related issues is that Pashinyan's intolerant supporters do not like Diaspora's opposing views. I am certain that if a Diasporan were to praise Pashinyan rather than criticize him, no one from Armenia would dare to say, "You have no right to comment." Besides, regardless of the nature of the comment, people everywhere have the right to express themselves. Not tolerating any dissenting views is a violation of the basic principles of democracy that the Prime Minister claims to uphold.

Pashinyan cannot take such anti-Diaspora positions and then invite the members of the ASA to meet with him. Furthermore, since Pashinyan repeatedly states that the Armenian government is fully capable of meeting the needs of its population and does not need any aid from outside, why does it organize an annual fundraiser by the Hayastan All-Armenia Fund in dozens of countries? The Board of the Armenia-headquartered Fund is headed by the President of the Republic of Armenia, followed by the Prime Minister and several other high-ranking officials. As Tamara G. Nahapetyan wrote in her complaint, "The Diaspora cannot be simultaneously waved off as irrelevant to Armenia's politics and recruited as an audience for them."

The students who objected to Pashinyan's anti-Armenian policies and rejected the ASA Board members' decision to meet with him should be commended.

Armenia's Independence Day: A Time for Reflection, Responsibility, and Resolve

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making compromises for peace and being asked to diminish one's history and culture, or remain silent about what has been lost.

The Armenian people have survived not by forgetting, but by creating: schools, churches, books, music, art, businesses, community institutions, and families that carried language and memory across continents. That cultural resilience is not an obstacle to peace. It is the foundation from which a healthy, self-respecting peace must be built.

Artsakh Must Be Remembered

I have seen how deeply Artsakh Armenians loved their homeland.

During work on a documentary in Artsakh, I met people who spoke about their towns, mountains, churches, schools and family histories with profound pride and emotion. We drove through its streets, sat in its mountains, visited homes, and watched children participate in community life. At Ghazanchetsots Cathedral, sacred hymns filled a space that carried both faith and collective memory.

Artsakh was never simply a political issue to the people who lived there. It was home.

The displacement and loss of Artsakh as a lived Armenian homeland cannot be reduced to a geopolitical headline or a closed chapter. It represents the loss of homes, gravesites, schools, churches, and a centuries-old relationship between a people and their land. Whatever political realities prevail today, the cultural, spiritual, and personal meaning of Artsakh cannot be erased.

For a new generation, Artsakh must re-

main known.

It must be taught through family stories, literature, music, film, maps, language, food, art and the voices of those who lived there. This inheritance must be actively preserved and passed on - not reduced to a symbol or invoked only for political or ceremonial purposes.

Artsakh may now occupy a place in our consciousness similar to Mount Ararat: a presence that is physically beyond reach for many Armenians, yet impossible to remove from the Armenian imagination.

Who We Should Honor

If Independence Day is to have meaning at a time when many Armenians fear for the future of our national identity, let us honor those whose lives, sacrifices, and work shape Armenia and Armenian life.

Prisoners and detainees, whose freedom, safety, and rights must remain a public concern and be defended with urgency.

Displaced Artsakh Armenians, who carry immense loss while rebuilding lives, families, and communities under difficult circumstances.

Families of the fallen, who deserve lasting respect, care, and meaningful support.

Donors, whose generosity has built medical clinics, educational and cultural institutions, technology programs, youth centers, churches, scholarship funds, and social services across Armenia and the Diaspora.

Teachers, who keep Armenian language, history, literature, and cultural memory alive in classrooms around the world.

Artists, writers, musicians, filmmakers,

actors, scholars and cultural workers, who preserve what political upheaval cannot be allowed to destroy.

Diasporans and repatriates who invest time, labor, resources, expertise, and hope in Armenia - not as spectators, but as participants in its future.

Young Armenians, who deserve a country where history is respected, public service is accountable and a future can be imagined with confidence.

These are the people whose work makes independence meaningful.

But honoring them also requires accountability. Donors should ask how their funds are used. Community organizations should be held to standards of effectiveness, transparency, professionalism, and responsiveness to the people they claim to serve. Long-standing leaders should make room for capable new voices. Institutions and public officials should be judged not by their titles, photo opportunities, or polished rhetoric, but by the tangible results they deliver for Armenia and Armenian communities.

Love for Armenia should not demand silence. Quite the opposite: love requires rigor. It requires asking hard questions, refusing complacency, and recognizing that honest criticism is a form of duty to one another and to our homeland.

What Independence Must Mean

By the time we reached the UN's flagpoles, Armenia's flag had already been lowered. I told the security officer that my son had hoped to see it.

"Tomorrow is another day to see the Ar-

menian flag," he said.

I thought to myself: perhaps. But tomorrow is not promised - not for the flag, nor for the independent Armenia it represents. Its future depends on whether we are willing to meet the responsibilities before us today.

The Armenian flag must stand for more than survival or symbolism. It must represent a country that respects and protects its people, in Armenia and across the Diaspora; learns from its failures; preserves its history and identity; and gives its children reason to believe in the future.

That future is built through remembrance, principled leadership, disciplined institutions, courageous civic participation, and an unshakable commitment to the Armenian people - wherever they live and whatever they have endured.

On this Independence Day, we can recognize the miracle of an independent Armenia while refusing to look away from its wounds. We can honor the flag while demanding that it stand for a country worthy of the sacrifices made in its name. We can teach the next generation that remembering who we are, protecting what remains, and building what comes next are the cornerstones of Armenian survival.

(Taleen Babayan is an Armenian-American author, journalist, filmmaker, and cultural educator. She is the author of *A Is for Armenia*, an alphabet board book. Her forthcoming book, *A Is for Artsakh*, introduces young readers to Artsakh through its people, places, sites, and symbols. Visit hyekidsclub.com to learn more.)



Strategic Depth and National Security: Is Armenia Headed in the Right Direction?

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Armenia's Current Course

The course that the Armenian government has charted since 2023 can be described as an attempt to compensate for the loss of geographic depth with gains in political and diplomatic depth. Giving up Artsakh entirely, even refusing to talk about the right of return of the Artsakh population, and tolerating the many Azerbaijani transgressions, from the occupied territories inside Armenia to the illegal political prisoners in Baku, to the often humiliating official discourse from Baku, to the re-writing of history in Artsakh for the benefit of foreign diplomats, has been viewed as the price of keeping even a tenuous peace process alive, and consequently being more easily acceptable by Europe and the US. But peace has not yet been achieved, and there is no evidence so far that American and European interest in achieving peace in the southern Caucasus is a long-term strategic objective, or just a tactical move aimed at reducing Russia's role as arbiter and power broker in the region. Nevertheless, August 8, 2025, and TRIPP became a major trump card that the Administration used to sell the idea that it had delivered peace to a war-weary public during the June 7 elections of this year.

The next potential blow to strategic depth in Armenia is tied to the issue of the so-called enclaves. According to cartologist Rouben Galichian, it was a deliberate Soviet policy to give control of critical Armenian transportation routes to Azerbaijan, by establishing "enclaves" such as Tigranashen, which sits right over the critical M2 route on the North-South freeway. The other enclaves also serve that purpose. Galichian, who questions the legality of the claim that Armenia's legal area is 29,743 sq. kms., views these enclaves as arbitrarily and illegally created zones by the Soviet command, with no due process even by Soviet standards. So, to surrender the enclaves today is to reinforce both the diminishing state of geographic depth as well as abdicating any tangible capacity of developing logistical depth.

Armenia will not achieve the peace that it seeks by continuously acting weak and desperate for peace. As I have argued in the past, the August 8, 2025, White House event was triggered by a presumed imminent Azerbaijani invasion of Syunik in the spring of 2025, and the Armenian government's presumed inability to repel such an invasion. Had Armenia been in a position to repel such an invasion, August 8 may either not have happened, or it would have brought much more tangible and positive gains to Armenia than merely the removal of a threat.

Mitigating the loss of strategic depth will be extremely difficult for Armenia. The country will never fully recover from the loss of Artsakh. Surrendering the so-called enclaves, especially Tigranashen, will create further critical erosion in the country's logistical, military and temporal depth, from which it will not be able to recover in the foreseeable future. Alternative routes may address the transportation setbacks of that surrender, but they will not resolve the strategic depth issue, because it will in effect mean giving Azerbaijan a base north of Nakhijevan inside Armenia.

The Armenian government is counting on the improvement in its diplomatic/geopolitical depth to compensate for all the other losses. But, at best, that can serve as a short-term and temporary deterrent for Armenia's enemies, and not as a defense architecture or a security guarantee.

The largest fly in the ointment of Armenia's improved diplomatic relations with the West lies in the fact that the success of that policy depends much less on the West itself and much more on the "good faith" of Azerbaijan to achieve peace. And so far, Azerbaijan has not only failed to display that good faith, but it has done everything in the opposite direction. Baku's "Western Azerbaijan" rhetoric, its denial of the millennia old Armenian presence in the south Caucasus as the region's indigenous people, its refusal to reciprocate every concession made by Armenia (for example, while the Prime Minister of Armenia publicly called the enclaves by their Azerbaijani names, Aliyev is yet to call Artsvashen by its Armenian name and acknowledge that it is not part of Azerbaijan), its violation of every tenet of the November 9, 2020 ceasefire agreement, including the release of all POWs, which Armenia did right away, are all the moral equivalent of a declara-

tion of war.

Thus, it has been Armenia's one-sided and unconditional compliance and patience that has kept the "peace process" alive. Peace with Armenia is not on Ilham Aliyev's agenda. Furthermore, a strong and prosperous Armenia is not part of either Turkey's or Azerbaijan's vision of the future of the southern Caucasus.

The Administration in Yerevan acts as if the slightest pushback would give Azerbaijan plausible cause to resume hostilities, which emboldens Baku even more, since has its reasons to retard Armenia's growth. The expansion of diplomatic/geopolitical depth through better diplomatic and economic relations with Europe and the United States is not a reliable long-term deterrent, because, without the proactive push-back from the Armenian government itself, it alone will not be able to counter the threat of an emboldened Azerbaijan.

All this should be understood in the context of the changing global order. We have already moved from a post-Cold War unipolar world (when a country was either closely aligned with the United States or it was not), to a multipolar, highly networked international system, in which states cooperate in some areas, compete in others, and avoid becoming dependent on any single power. In this world, the same country can simultaneously have good working relations with Russia, the USA, China and European countries. Countries as small as the Arab States in the Persian Gulf and as large as India have successfully followed this path.

In this world, dependence itself can be, and often is, used as a weapon, and preserving strategic autonomy in a highly complex networked system has become a preferred geostrategic goal.

The Need to Change Course

This is particularly relevant for small countries like Armenia. Invulnerability is not a realistic option for Armenia. Armenia is vulnerable, period. And, as stressed above, with virtually no strategic depth. The strategic goal therefore should be resilience, not invulnerability: i.e., to become very difficult to coerce.

This entails building multiple layers of defense, with the intention of making an invasion prohibitively expensive. Aside from the classic and well-known remedies, such as air defense, drones, mines, coastal defense, cyber capabilities, dispersed logistics and hardened infrastructure which act as a deterrent, this means using the new diplomatic relationships with Europe and the US to the fullest to find effective support in avoiding further territorial concessions such as surrendering the enclaves. Otherwise, those relationships have little tangible strategic benefit.

It also involves reversing the severe erosion in societal resilience since the 2020 war, which, first and foremost, starts with a fundamental change in the government's own approach and rhetoric. The government must realize a complete reversal of its policy of the past six years by casting aside the policy of fear and fear-based negotiations with an enemy who has shown no good faith whatsoever in the pursuit peace. It also means distancing itself from most of the tenets of the widely publicized "Real Armenia Ideology," which in essence is little more than a retrospective attempt to justify the losses of the past six years. Otherwise, to repeat, the expansion of the diplomatic/political depth would have no practical significance.

One direct and immediate implication of this is to make full use of international courts like the International Criminal Court (ICC), International Court of Justice (ICJ) and The European Court of Human Right (ECHR). The cases that Armenia has at the ICJ and ECHR are not being pursued with any meaningful rigor. In fact, the top lawyer representing Armenian interests at these courts, Yeghishe Kirakosian, resigned last year, after the prime minister offered to withdraw the cases as part of the peace process. Even though the cases have not yet been withdrawn, they are not being pursued either. Reversal of this policy and even filing new cases against Azerbaijan's "Western Azerbaijan" rhetoric, is a perfect example of non-violent push-back that the Armenian government can exercise.

Economic diversification is another component of this strategy — from avoiding reliance on a single supplier for imports and single market for exports, to building significant strategic reserves of all essential products, including food, fuel and ammunition.

Cyber resilience is another key component of the strategy, especially applicable to small countries like Arme-

nia, where digital defense could be a more viable security strategy than conventional defense.

The capacity to quickly import, absorb and adapt to the latest military technologies is another dimension of the same overall defense strategy.

A small country like Armenia must also learn how to matter. Today, given the Strategic Partnership with the US, with the EU opening its markets to Armenia, with Armenia on its way to become an AI hub in the region and with new access to advanced US technology, Armenia is on its way to matter more. But that position needs to be turned into a more binding relationship. To matter in a binding way, aside from being confident and independent, Armenia must above all be useful. It must learn to position itself in such a way that it solves problems for larger countries — as a diplomatic intermediary or mediator, logistical hub, technology center and provider, key loop in a supply chain, intelligence partner, and host for foreign investments. All these factors imply a much higher and more engaged level of connectivity than what Armenia has today: the kind of connectivity that it builds and controls and that transcends geographic borders and can at least partially mitigate the lack of geographic depth of the country.

An important change that must enter the mindset of both the Armenian government and the Armenian public is in the perception of the long-term relative strengths and weaknesses of Azerbaijan and Armenia. Armenians spent 26 years (from the 1994 Bishkek Ceasefire agreement to the 2020 war), overestimating their own strength and largely oblivious to how Azerbaijan was changing. Today, Armenians risk the opposite miscalculation, namely, overestimating Azerbaijan's long-term strength and underestimating their own potential. Both miscalculations are very costly. The former's costs are now obvious. The latter's costs are already materializing and will increase further due to irreversible, unnecessary and largely futile concessions made by Yerevan to keep the peace process alive.

As political analyst Eric Hacopian has often stressed, Azerbaijan, as we know it today, has an "expiration date." In the long-term — 15-20 years — today's Azerbaijan will be a different state. Neither its existing political system nor its current economic and financial foundations are sustainable. A brutal, family-run dictatorship, with declining oil and gas revenues and per capita incomes, is not sustainable. World Bank projections show that Armenia's economy will continue to grow much faster than that of Azerbaijan. The IMF has similar projections, where Armenia's real per capita GDP growth through 2031 is projected to be 5.3 percent per year, while Azerbaijan's only 2.5 percent per year. In a decade or two, Azerbaijan will be considerably weaker economically; and, hopefully, for the sake of both the Azerbaijani people and the stability of the region, it will also be more a democratic and peaceful country.

Of course, Baku knows this, and it will do its best to prevent Armenia from getting stronger in this period. That in part explains the constant demands for additional concessions from Yerevan and the pre-conditions before signing a peace agreement.

This is further reason why Armenia should change its overly conciliatory policy in pursuit of an elusive peace. For Armenia, a strategy of surviving the short-term with the assumption that Azerbaijan will indefinitely be stronger is fundamentally different from a strategy of surviving the short-term while recognizing today's Azerbaijan's expiration date. The former is a strategy of perpetual defeat. The latter is a calculated waiting strategy, without surrender and without unnecessary concessions. The most dangerous aspect of the former is that it will cause irreversible damage to the Armenian's strategic position both in the world and in the region. As stated above, the demands for concessions on Armenia intend to cause that irreversible damage. The strategy of perpetual defeat cannot possibly lead to a stronger Armenia in any time frame.

Finally, we should never lose sight of the fact that the ultimate virtual strategic depth of the Armenian state is the Armenian nation. There can be no Armenian Republic (either Third or "Fourth"), without the Armenian nation. Thus, de-nationalizing the state agenda, which is the basic accomplishment of the "Real Armenia Ideology," is in effect neutralizing its most important virtual strategic depth. That realization alone should provide adequate reason to revise both the mindset and the policy.