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HIGHLIGHTS

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EU Green-Lights Trade Talks With Armenia

HIGHLIGHT



Prime Minister Sargsyan with EU Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Fuele in December

Parliamentary
elections
scheduled for
May 6

President of Armenia
has signed a decree on set-
ting a date for Armenia's
forthcoming parliamentary
elections. According to the
decree, the regular election
of the National Assembly is
scheduled for May 6, 2012,
president's press service
told Noyan Tapan

The decree will enter
into force the next day of
the publication.

The carnival in Rio as a prologue to the election campaign in Armenia

by David Petrosyan

Armenia continues heading for the elections, with this process being accompanied by events and fights of local political significance forming a pre-election background. Speaking about these concomitant political processes, we should mention first of all the fact of former Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian's joining Prosperous Armenia Party (PAP). The head of the Civitas Foundation receiving more than generous Western aid in the form of various grants has suddenly become enamored of the PAP, which is an organization with a rather diluted ideology, a poor personnel pool, and the lack of any significant political and economic programs, but with well-developed infrastructure, considerable financial resources, and quite a high social rating. In this situation, we consider as interesting the circum-

stance that in terms of its foreign-policy orientation, the PAP is more closely connected with Moscow than with Washington and Brussels, whereas Vartan Oskanian is a former U.S. citizen and - according to WikiLeaks site - a proponent of Armenia's entry into NATO. It is still not clear how the PAP leader Gagik Tsarukian hopes to tie his friendship with Moscow and the PAP affiliation of a proponent of Armenia's entry into NATO. The PAP affiliation of V. Oskanian does not, however, mean that the ex-minister may be included in the list of the party candidates at the upcoming parliamentary elections.

We should also point out that V. Oskanian is certainly one of the figures most closely associated with ex-president Robert Kocharian. Oskanian is a minister who:

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EU Green-Lights Trade Talks With Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL)-The European Union has given the final green light for the launch of official negotiations with Armenia on a far-reaching free trade agreement that should significantly deepen the country's integration with the 27-nation bloc.

The EU's executive European Commission announced late on Monday, February 20 that EU member-states have authorized it to negotiate a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) with Armenia. "The parties will now engage in preparations for the first negotiating round to take place soon in 2012," the commission said in a statement.

"The opening of free trade negotiations mark a turning point in our trade relations with Armenia. We are entering a new phase that will bring our economic ties to a new level of depth and ambition," EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht was quoted as saying.

"This is a further sign of the strengthening of our political and economic ties," EU Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Fuele said for his part.

The creation of the DCFTA will be part of an "association agreement" which is already being negotiated by Brussels and Yerevan within the framework of the EU's Eastern Partnership programme. The programme offers

six former Soviet republics, including all three South Caucasus states, closer ties with the bloc in return for political and economic reforms.

That the DCFTA talks will be launched soon was announced by the Armenian Foreign Ministry late last month. The ministry said they would get underway in late March as part of the next round of broader Armenia-EU association

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Serzh Sargsyan received Ilka Laitinen, Head of the European Union's border agency Frontex



President Serzh Sargsyan received Ilka Laitinen on February 21, Head of the European Union's border agency Frontex - a specialized and independent body tasked to coordinate the operational cooperation between Member States in the field of border security.

The parties stressed the importance of the development of Armenia-EU cooperation, whose agenda, according to the parties, each year encompasses new areas. Noting that cooperation in the field of border security and border management is a priority for Armenia, the President stressed in that context the importance of the visit of the Head of Frontex to our country. Serzh Sargsyan underscored that in

the framework of the reforms undertaken in this area, Armenia this year will take up comprehensive reconstruction of infrastructure and conduct works aimed at technical modernization and training of the personnel. President Sargsyan expressed hope that through the assistance of Frontex, these works will be successfully completed.

The Executive Director of the EU border agency Frontex noted with satisfaction that in the framework of the visit, the RA National Security Council staff and Frontex will sign an agreement on operational cooperation which will be equally useful for Armenia, Frontex and EU states.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs received the delegation of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs



On February 21 Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian received the delegation of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs which is in Armenia on a regional visit.

Welcoming the guests, Minister Nalbandian expressed satisfaction about the high-level political dialogue with the EU and high-ranking reciprocal visits, as well as intensively developing interaction, and in this context, stressed the importance of inter-parliamentary format.

The sides mentioned with satisfaction that a considerable progress has been made in the negotiations over the Association Agreement since the start of the negotiations in July of 2010. It was stressed that so far 22 Chapters of future Agreement have been negotiated and temporarily

closed by the economic, sectoral and financial cooperation group, and a good progress has been achieved in the spheres of political dialogue and reforms, foreign and security policy, and justice.

The sides mutually stressed the importance of the EU's decision to start with Armenia the negotiations over the creation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. In this regard, it was noted that serious reforms were implemented in Armenia and considerable results were achieved in some areas.

Upon the request of the delegation of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs Minister Nalbandian presented in detail the current stage of the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. In this context it was mentioned that the EU fully supports the efforts being undertaken by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs which has an appropriate mandate and rich experience of mediation.

The sides discussed a number of regional issues of mutual interest.



Cooperation Agreement signed between Armenian NSC and Frontex



Cooperation Agreement was signed between the Armenian National Security Council (NSC) and Frontex - European Agency for

the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders on February 22.

"The agreement gives an oppor-

tunity to deepen cooperation between Armenia and the EU as well as exchange experience," Secretary of the National Security Council Artur Baghdasaryan said.

He noted that issues on training of staff, creation of regional infrastructures have been discussed.

Ilka Laitinen, executive director of Frontex added that the signing of the agreement was very operative and effective. "The signing of the agreement will be followed with the development of the program on exchange of experience, training and joint analyses," Laitinen said.

Tigran Sargsyan receives newly-appointed OSCE Ambassador

Prime Minister of Armenia Tigran Sargsyan received newly-appointed Ambassador Andrey Sorokin, the Head of the OSCE Office in Yerevan. Congratulating the ambassador on the appointment, the Prime Minister wished him success and fruitful work, government's press service told Noyan Tapan "I am sure we will manage to continue the traditions we have formed. Armenia's government is interested in expansion of our cooperation," said Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan.

For his part, Ambassador Sorokin highly assessed the productive activity of the OSCE Office in Yerevan and assured that together with the staff of the office



they will exert efforts in the direction of expansion and development of the cooperation between Armenia and OSCE.

The interlocutors exchanged ideas over the cooperation for improvement of the electoral process in Armenia. The head of

the Armenian government highly appreciated the activity of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in the projects implemented in the fields of reforms of the legislative field of Armenia, gender equality, human rights and democracy.

President of Armenia receives EP delegation

President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan received on February 22 the delegation of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament headed by the member of European Parliament Andrey Kovatchev, President's press office reported.

Serzh Sargsyan welcomed and stressed the importance of the delegation's visit to Armenia, considering the mission of the members of the Commission who will be assisting in the drafting of the report on Armenia and the region. According to President Sargsyan, visits and contacts of the kind provide an



excellent opportunity to see the situation first hand and shape an objective opinion.

The President of Armenia and members of the EP Foreign Relations Committee's delegation

discussed the process of negotiations on the Armenia-EU Association Agreement, which were launched in July, 2010 and relevant issues. They also spoke about the forthcoming report on Armenia and the region.

U.S.-Armenian high level dialogue has never been closer - Ambassador

The U.S. Ambassador to Armenia issued a statement on the occasion of 20th anniversary of partnership relations between Armenia and U.S.

In his statement Heffern stressed that relations between Armenia and the U.S. are strong and getting stronger.

"Our high level dialogue has never been closer, including at the level of President Sargsyan and President Obama," he said pointing out the 2010 visit of Secretary of State Hilary Clinton.

"In 2011 we kept up the pace of

high level visitors, our visitors routinely meet with government officials, parliamentarians from the majority parties and the opposition parties, business people, journalists and civil society," he added.

He described the relations between the two countries as "deep and broad" recalling that over 3,500 Armenians had visited the U.S. as part of exchange programs.

"Our development assistance and cooperation over the years amount to more than 2 billion dollars. Over 800 Americans have

come to Armenia as Peace Corps volunteers and worked with Armenian partners in every marz of the country. The U.S. and Armenia are working together towards common goals of democracy and prosperity, security and peace, both in Armenia and the region.

I am committed to working with all segments of the Armenian society to make this relationship even stronger and to build our partnership to help Armenia succeed. Our future together is bright," Heffern said.

Voting in lieu of someone else is neither crime nor misdemeanor - Armenian ruling party MP



The talk about a tension in relations between the ruling coalition's Republican Party of Armenia (RPA) and the Prosperous Armenia Party is artificial, RPA National Assembly (NA) Faction leader Galust Sahakyan said during a press conference on Thursday, and he added that a statement is issued to the fact that the coalition's agreement is still in force.

Sahakyan also commented on the fact that the Special Investigation Service did not hold to account the RPA MPs who voted

in place of their colleagues at NA and it solely sent a respective statement to NA Speaker Samvel Nikoyan, who likewise did not take any measures and simply made an appeal for not doing such thing anymore.

Galust Sahakyan stated that voting in lieu of someone else is neither a crime nor a misdemeanor. Furthermore, as per Sahakyan, the NA has no authority to punish. In his words, such thing occurs in all NA factions, and he has become a witness of this.

How will numbers change prior to Armenia's parliamentary elections? - surveys

The sociologists are quick to present to Armenia's body their predictions for the results of the upcoming parliamentary elections. And in this context, sociologists Aharon Adibekyan and Gevorg Poghosyan are more active.

In line with Adibekyan's recent predictions, as a result of the elections the political parties will rate as follows: the currently ruling coalition's Republican Party of Armenia (RPA): 16 percent; the coalition's Prosperous Armenia Party (PAP): 14.7 percent; the opposition bloc Armenian National Congress (ANC): 3.5 percent; parliamentary opposition ARF Dashnaktsutyun Party: 2.5 percent; the coalition's Rule of Law Party (RLP): 2.1 percent; parliamentary opposition Heritage Party: 2.1 percent, and the opposition Free Democrats Party: 0.1 percent. As per Adibekyan, RPA, PAP, ANC, ARF, Heritage, and RLP will gain parliamentary seats. And the results of the elections will be

determined by the result of the competition between the RPA and the PAP.

According to Gevorg Poghosyan, the RPA will occupy first place in the elections, the PAP will come in second, and the ANC will be third. And these three forces together will receive 75 percent of the total votes. Poghosyan, however, added that no political party will get more than 50 percent of the ballots. After the aforementioned political forces, the ARF and the Heritage plus the RLP will have a chance to receive parliamentary seats. In Gevorg Poghosyan's words, the voter turnout is usually more during the presidential elections than the parliamentary ones. Also, civic activism has now grown among Armenia's youth. According to him, the parliamentary elections will be difficult, with predictable results but with unexpected events. He added that the majority of the voters believe the elections will not



be fair. But at the same time, as per Poghosyan, Armenia's voters have become more demanding, and nowadays they are more critical toward the authorities.

And as for the RPA MP Karen Avagyan, "these numbers are close to the true picture, but they cannot be absolute numbers. The real numbers will come in."

The opposition members, on the other hand, do not consider these public opinion polls to be serious, and they note that these surveys are likewise tools in the hands of the authorities.

Armenian government: In case of state of emergency communication between armed forces and people should be nearly ruled out



Two core provisions of law on using armed forces in case of state of emergency underwent changes after revising the draft law "On Legal Regime of State of Emergency".

Presenting the draft law, the

Armenian Minister of Justice Hrayr Tovmasyan said today that during a state of emergency the armed forces can be involved only after special training in accord with the regulations of the domestic troops.

Besides, it has been defined for

what purposes the use of units of armed forces is allowed.

"Communication between the armed forces and people should nearly be ruled out", said the Minister.

Hrayr Tovmasyan added that the army should be engaged in eliminating the consequences of a state of emergency, take part in the measures of evacuation, ensure security of specially preserved objects and be involved in redeployment of cultural and other assets.

"These will be their most important tasks. That is - several concurrent limitations against using armed forces during states of emergency will be applied".

ARF to fight in all fronts at the parliamentary elections in Armenia

The elections in Armenia may be accompanied by change of generation, intended in the ARF as well, head of the ARF's parliamentary faction Vahan Hovhannesian said at the meeting with reporters February 24. He said the foreign political situation is agreed with country's domestic developments.

"The European establishments made Armenia clearly feel that they will not tolerate frauds at elections. Democracy is being manifested in

holding of fair elections," Hovhannesian said. He said mass media also has its role, they must be free and objective while presenting the campaigns of parties.

Referring to their participation in the coming parliamentary elections the head of the faction said they will struggle in all fronts. "The discussions over the list still continue. It is a full document, and it is not right to discuss it separately," Hovhannesian said.

Armenia, Korea to cooperate in different spheres

At the invitation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea Kim Sung-Hwan, Foreign Minister of Armenia Edward Nalbandian visited Korea.

On February 23 he met with the Prime Minister of Korea Kim Hwang-sik. The MFA press office reported that the interlocutors discussed works on preparation of second summit of Nuclear Security Affairs to be held in Seoul in March 26-27 of the running year, referred to the issues on organization of EXPO 2012 world exhibition and Armenia's participation in it.

The minister thanked Korean PM for the assistance to Armenia since its independence. In this respect the head of the Korean government noted that Korea is ready to continue technical assistance to Armenia through Korea's International Cooperation Agency.

The parties also referred to a wide-range of issues on bilateral relations, spoke about possible ways of political, economic and cultural cooperation.

On the same day the meeting of the foreign ministers of the two countries took place. Welcoming the Minister Nalbandian, Minister Sung-Hwan said the marking of the 20th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries is a good occasion to

sum up the way the two countries passed and discuss new steps.

Minister Nalbandian hailed the achievement of arrangements on expanding relations with Korea in different spheres.

Referring to the summit on Nuclear Security Affairs to be held in Seoul, the Korean minister said heads of more than 50 states and governments will participate in the event.

The two ministers touched upon a number of regional and international issues. Edward Nalbandian presented the main directions of Armenia's foreign policy and steps the country undertakes for establishing security in the region.

They also referred to the Karabakh conflict settlement issue and touched upon the recent developments over it.

The parties attached significance to the reinforcement of the legal-contractual field and reached arrangement to prepare documents on economic, cultural and customs cooperation.

Minister Nalbandian invited his Korean counterpart to visit Yerevan.

Edward Nalbandian also delivered speech at the Diplomatic Academy of Korea.

Wrapping up his visit to Seoul, Nalbandian departed for Vietnam.

Hopes of Armenian authorities and reality of the U.S.

Hopes of speaker Nikoyan and interests of the U.S.

The speaker of the Armenian Parliament, member of the ruling Republican Party of Armenia Samvel Nikoyan on February 20 received a delegation of U.S. congressmen. "As a member of the parliament, I would like the United States to take the same stance on the Karabakh problem as in case of Kosovo. But we are satisfied with the current approach of the United States, too", Nikoyan was quoted by the parliament press service as saying to the U.S. colleagues.

Devoid of any political implications for Nikoyan himself, this statement of the Armenian Parliament Speaker matches the current pro-American entourage of the Armenian political system as a whole. Apparently, the Speaker of the Armenian Parliament, who is the number two person under the

Constitution, did not bother to make a serious analysis of what would actually happen if the U.S. chose to take the same attitude to Karabakh as it took towards Kosovo.

We will make an attempt to do it instead of him and assess the viability of hopes expressed to Americans, to ascertain what is happening in reality and not according to parliamentary rhetoric. In order to do it, we need to find out how the situation in Transcaucasia should change for Washington to act in this region in the same way as in the Balkans, that is, to destroy Baku by military strikes and force half of the world to recognize the independence of Karabakh. After all, there is no other scenario to persuade Azerbaijan to resign itself to Washington's lop-sided approach (as in case of Kosovo), on which the Armenian Parliament speaker pins his hopes. *continued on page 6*

Germany should be the first to recognize the belated correction of historical injustices: Raffi K. Hovannisian

**Mr. Volker Kauder,
Parliamentary Leader
CDU/CSU**

The Bundestag, Berlin,
Federal Republic of Germany

Dear Colleague:

It has come to my attention that your parliamentary group - a partner of ours in the European People's Party - might shortly be releasing, or at least considering, a draft resolution about Mountainous Karabagh.

The freedom of your political expression is of utmost importance, but the truth is paramount.

The Republic of Mountainous Karabagh (Artsakh in Armenian) was constituted lawfully in 1991 in full compliance with Soviet legisla-

tion, controlling at the time, and the fundamental precepts of international law as codified by the Montevideo Convention relating to the formation and recognition of sovereign states.

None of us, neither your country nor ours, has any basis to curtail the basic right to liberty and self-determination of any other, old or new. This holds especially true for Mountainous Karabagh whose people, in parallel with the demolition of the Great Wall which divided your capital for too long, reversed the Stalinist legacy of "divide and rule," waged a constitutional and ultimately successful quest for freedom and independence, and defended their patrimony against

the failed aggression of Soviet and then Azerbaijani forces.

In view of its own unique track record in facing, atoning for, and surmounting the crimes against humanity committed by a predecessor regime - and with the resultant credentials of global leadership in terms of restoration of rights, democracy, and peace and security - postwar Germany should be the first to recognize the legitimate creation and territorial integrity of emerging state actors and the belated correction of historical injustices. Both domestically and in international relations, the rule of law - or rather the supremacy of rights - militates against artificial and partisan applications of the

archaic assertion of *sui generis*.

What is more, Germany's previous complicity in the Genocide of the Armenian Nation and the Dispossession of its Homeland, as duly evidenced in your own diplomatic and military archives, might and military archives, should, should best comprehend this imperative of mind, conscience, and public policy. To restitute you further cause officially to acknowledge that unprecedented precursor to the Holocaust and to undertake meaningful measures, in conjunction with the Republic of Turkey, to bring this shameful era of denialism to a close, to address the occupation of the western half of the Armenian Plateau, and to

restitute the rightful connection between the Armenian people and their homeland.

Real, not window-dressing normalization of relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan is crucial for Armenia, but never at the expense of historical memory, contemporary rights, and human dignity. Il faut assumer l'histoire.

Of all states and all parties, yours should best comprehend this imperative of values, conscience, and public policy.

*Respectfully yours,
Raffi K. Hovannisian, Chairman
and MP, Heritage Party
First Minister of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Armenia*

The carnival in Rio as a prologue to the election campaign in Armenia

from page 1

- did not take any steps so that the Nagorno Karabakh Republic would remain at the negotiating table in the Minsk process;

- began and virtually completed the work on the Madrid Principles;

- under Oskanian the negotiations on normalization of relations with Turkey were being conducted, as a result of which the Armenian-Turkish protocols were signed in Zurich on October 10, 2009.

We are not prepared yet to make far-reaching conclusions from the fact of V. Oskanian's PAP affiliation, but it is not ruled out that during the election campaign the opponents of G. Tsarukian may capitalize on this step because any direct or indirect ties of his party with ex-president R. Kocharian are the shortest path to reduce its social rating.

Armenia's environmental protection groups staged protests in downtown Yerevan to prevent the construction of large retail kiosks in the green area of Mashtots Avenue.

For more than ten days the protesters had blocked the construction of retail kiosks moved to Mashtots Avenue from Abovian Street, i.e. from one central street to another. To judge by reports of the newspapers, some of which can by no means be called opposition ones, almost all the kiosks registered through fictitious persons are actually owned by high-ranking officials or their close relatives. It is also noteworthy that violations of construction rules and regulations have become a regular occurrence in the center of Yerevan.

The protests of Armenian Greens took place at 10 degrees of frost, and some protesters intent on halting the construction had repeatedly blocked the way of vehicles and concrete mixers.

The protesters made the following demand: the city municipality should present documents confirming the legitimacy of the construction work that was just about to start. At first such documents were not presented, later they were presented but failed to satisfy the protesters. The participants of protests were joined by intellectuals, students of

the Linguistic University, and ordinary citizens. One of the protesters, freelance journalist Bayandur Poghosian went on a hunger strike. Both the extra-parliamentary opposition - the Armenian National Congress (ANC) - and the parliamentary opposition namely the ARF-Dashnaktsutyun and the Heritage Party gave political support to the protesters.

It should be mentioned that throughout the period of protest actions their participants were being attacked by the pro-government press, first of all, the electronic one, as well as by creative bohemia, one of whose representatives called the protesters "dregs".

Nevertheless, on the morning of February 22 Yerevan Mayor Taron Margarian announced the decision to suspend the construction. Apparently, that decision was made in the top echelons of power, and the mayor only voiced it. It is so very understandable: those in the top echelons of power evidently came to the conclusion that there is no need to stir up passions in the run-up to the elections, thus stimulating the emergence of yet another hotbed of social activity.

In general, it should be noted that the activity of the Armenian Greens have considerably increased in the last six months. They achieved the cessation of the construction of the small hydropower station on the Trchkan Waterfall (the one-month protest action involved about a thousand people); the Greens also staged mass protests in Teghut. In addition, thanks to efforts of the Greens supported by the opposition, the transfer of lands in the village of Kajaran in Syunik Marz (Province) to the Zangezur Copper and Molybdenum Combine has stopped.

Those in power claim that the Armenian Greens are all "grant-eaters," and that they do not express public opinion. In reality the Greens in Armenia have received grants for conducting ecological studies for no less than 15 years and during all these years they have been staging protests, seeking cessation of this or that construction work and conservation of this or that green area or

parkland. Yet in the last six months the protests of the Armenian Greens are becoming a more serious social factor, with hundreds of people participating in them, each protest action has become longer, and finally, the Greens have begun to gain the first, although small, victories in their confrontation with bureaucracy. On the whole, we do not rule out that in the foreseeable future the Green movement may assume greater social importance as the attitude of private business and monopolies towards Armenia's environment can only be described as predatory.

We should mention yet another point (in our opinion, quite an essential one) indirectly related to this episode: the 24th anniversary of the start of the Karabakh movement in Armenia was marked last week. Many have now forgotten that at first the Karabakh movement began as a green movement, the Greens staged the first rallies and posted the first pickets in Armenia in 1987, protesting against the operation of the chemical giant Nairit and the construction of a biochemical plant in the city of Abovian.

In advance of President Serzh Sargsyan's decree fixing the date of the regular parliamentary elections, the next background event that occurred last week was the attempt of political raiding against a traditional Armenian party. The matter concerns a group of persons expelled from the Social Democrat Hunchak Party (SDHP) two years ago who filed an application to the State Register, stating their intention to register a party under the same name. Not only did the competent bodies, namely, the Ministry of Justice accept the documents for registration of the party of the same name, but they also sent a letter to the chairwoman of the SDHP Board Lyudmila Sargsyan, informing her that another person (!?) would henceforth head the party. It turns out that the Ministry of Justice has appointed a new head of the party who was earlier expelled from it.

Let us remind the reader that the SDHP is the only traditional Armenian party that makes part of

the ANC and takes a tough stance on the domestic and foreign policies implemented by the Serzh Sargsyan administration. Interestingly, the SDHP received the letter from the Ministry of Justice after the leaders of that party had issued a statement (out of Armenia's political forces, they were the first to do it) calling on the compatriots living in Russia to vote for Vladimir Putin at the upcoming presidential election. Later Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan and the leaders of the PAP also expressed their support for the candidacy of V. Putin.

For the time being, a letter has been sent by the SDHP leaders to the Office of the Prosecutor General, with the request to institute criminal proceedings against officials of the Ministry of Justice and the former members of the SDHP who have committed forgery of documents. It should be mentioned that earlier the court had decided for Lyudmila Sargsyan and her current colleagues who lead the party. So it looks as if the Ministry of Justice did not carry out the court decision (!). It is still not clear what the upshot of the new attempt of political raiding against the SDHP will be, but it is obvious that this is one of the forms of pressure put on the ANC by those in power.

Yet, the most vivid and exotic element of the pre-election background in Armenia was the trip to Brazil made by Gyumri Mayor Vardan Ghukasian and eight officials of his administration. In a curious way, the trip coincided with the carnival in Rio de Janeiro. All the famous fighters against corruption in the government and the presidential administration have somehow overlooked this uncommon step of V. Ghukasian and his subordinates - a step, which certainly will not enhance the image of glorious Republicans (all the members of the delegation were members of the Republican Party of Armenia).

All this resembles very much a "feast in time of plague" when the Mayor of Armenia's second largest city, about 50% of whose inhabitants are poor (even according to official data), makes a trip coincid-

ing with the famous carnival in Rio and spends over a week in Brazil, together with his colleagues. Formally, the trip was explained by the fact that such a representative delegation of Gyumri travelled to Brazil at the invitation of Mayor of the city of Osasco (Sao Paulo State), which is a sister city of Gyumri. Osasco is situated 400 km from Rio de Janeiro.

Officially, it sounds convincing enough. But the question is: When will officials of international financial organizations, Russia, the United States, and the European Union, as well as the Armenian Diaspora, etc. finally realize what purposes their financial and welfare aid is actually spent for?

Nevertheless, we assess the support given to the Serzh Sargsyan administration by international organizations as total. For instance, it was announced that the OSCE ODIHR (the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) plans to send 250 short-term observers and 24 long-term ones to monitor the parliamentary elections in Armenia. So, this time the OSCE/ ODIHR sends considerably fewer observers as compared with the 2007 parliamentary elections (411 and 29 respectively) and the 2008 presidential election (333 and 28 respectively). The extra-parliamentary opposition insisted on the presence of 2,000 short-term OSCE observers, taking into account the conduct of the last presidential election and the fact that the post-election events left ten people dead. The ODIHR, however, decided not to attach much importance to the opposition's requests and, quite the opposite, to reduce the contingent of international observers. Based on this fact, a conclusion can be made that S. Sargsyan has not only total, but also almost absolute support of the West, especially when one takes into consideration the opinion of authoritative international human rights organizations such as Freedom House and Human Rights Watch, which believe that no conditions for democratic elections have been created in Armenia.



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- ♦ **1459. Baghramyan Avenue**, 5/3, 55 sq.m., 2 rooms, capitally repaired, h-3.8 m, balcony, iron door, permanent hot and cold water, telephone, furniture and techniques. Price: 49. 000.000 AMD
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- ♦ **2474. Koryun Street**, 5/3, 100 sq.m., 3 turned into 4, euro repair , euro windows, permanent gas, balcony, 2 AC, opportunity. Price 160.000 USD
- ♦ **2454. Moskovyan str.**, 5/2, 180sqm, normal state, 3 bedrooms, lavatory, permanent water, gas. Price 370.000USD
- ♦ **2453. Koryun str.**, 6/4, 100sqm, 4 rooms, euro repaired, 2 lavatories. Price negotiable
- ♦ **2429.** Ekmalyan street, 10/9, 178sqm, 3bed-rooms, 3lavatories, capitally repaired, AC, parking. Price-360.000USD
- ♦ **2393. Moskovyan street**, 5/3. 110 sq.m., euro repair, logha balcony 17 sq.m., permanent hot and cold water, cube 700 l, electric heating system, natural gas, Ariston, 2AC, satellite. Price: 400 000 USD
- ♦ **Tumanyan str**, 5/3, 170 sqm, 4 rooms, 2 garages for 3 cars, capitally repaired, furnished, equipped, permanent water, gas, heating system, 3 balconies. Price: 1100 USD
- ♦ **2335. Mashtots Avenue**, 4/4, 95 sq.m., 3 rooms, 2 bedrooms, stone building, euro repaire, euro doors and windows, open balcony, permanent hot and cold water, concrete cover, beech parquetry, h 3 m, closed attic. Price 125000 USD
- ♦ **2348. Abovyan Street**, 4/2, 177.8 sq/m, euro repaired, concreted, laminate furniture in the bedroom, cupboards in the kitchen, tiled, Baxi system, Price: 250000 USD preliminary
- ♦ **2395.** North Avenue. 130 sq.m., newly built, h-3 m, a view to Abovyan street. Price: 1 sq.m.-1600 USD

PREMISES

- ♦ **1710. Sayat - Nova str.**, 1st floor, 420sqm, 2 rooms, 2 lavatories, entrance from street. Price 1.000.000USD
- ♦ **1727. Baghramyan str.**, 2 storied, 230sqm, capitally repaired, entrance from street, garage. Price 350.000USD
- ♦ **1725. Hanrapetutyun str.**, 1storied, 171sqm, 2 entrances, capitally repaired, permanent hot and cold water. Price 500.000USD
- ♦ **1703. Northern Avenue**, 9/7, 66sqm, capitally repaired, heating, lavatory, 30000AMD service rent, view to Teryan street. Price 220.000USD
- ♦ **1553. Kasryan street**, 170sq.m., working fashion saloon, large windows, facade-15m, 1room+foye, h=2.80 m, cellar 30 sq.m. Price 500 000 USD preliminary
- ♦ **1598. Nairy Zaryan street**, 180 sq.m., 1st floor, a working restaurant, hall-100 sq.m. 1st line, repaired, tonir. Price: negotiable
- ♦ **1383. Nalbandian St**, cellar + 1 story, 30 sq. m. cellar, 90 sq. m. story, Euro repair, hall, kitchen, lavatory, 24-hour hot and colds water, gas supply, suitable for a bar or restaurant. Price: 512.000USD
- ♦ **Tumanyan str.**, 3/1, 100 sqm, office space, not repaired, entrance from the street, windows looking at the yard. Price: 115.000 USD
- ♦ **1603. North avenue**, 159 sq.m., 1st floor.

Entrance on ground floor also, construction is in process, suitable for a shop. Price: 1 sq.m. 10 000 USD

- ♦ **1588. Tigran Mec street**, 256 sq.m, 5/1.2 , trade area, stone building, euro repair, 1st floor trade area - 210 sq.m., 2nd floor 46 sq.m. residential Area. Price: 600 000 USD

LANDS

- ♦ **2122. Davitashen**, 1800sqm, water, gas, electricity, possible to sell separately 600sqm, 1200sqm. Price-150USD per sqm.
- ♦ **1869. Kaskade**, 720 sq.m. 1st line, permission for construction, suitable for a new building or a business. Price: negotiable
- ♦ **2121. Centre**, land-1338sqm, 1100sqm has permission for building. Price-2million USD
- ♦ **2107 Monument**, 2400sqm, permission for building, 2 projects to build 3 storied building, possibility of water, gas, electricity, beautiful view of city and Ararat. Price-500USD per sqm.
- ♦ **2033. Tsakhkadzor**, New Quarter, 600 sq.m., 1st line, asphalted road, premises, designed for construction of residential house, with all communal conveniences. Price: 120 USD for 1 sq.m.
- ♦ **1939. Kotayk region**, Aghavnadzor district. Land 5000 sq.m., suitable for building a resort place. Price negotiable
- ♦ **2011. Proshyan street**. Land 400 sq.m. for building a house, privatized, 2nd line/ near the garden/. Price 1 sq.m. beginning from 700 USD
- ♦ **2013. Cascade**. Land 1000 sq.m. For public construction needs, First line, gas, water and electricity possibilities. Price 2800USD
- ♦ **2028. District of Erebuni**, Arin-Berd street. Land 2 acr. With a 2 storied partially built building, water, electricity plastered.h=4.20m. Price 1 sq.m, 50 USD
- ♦ **Avan, Ayntapi str.**, near Star Supermarket, 1st line, 528 sqm, land attached to a house, water, canalization, front-25m. Price: 60.000 USD
- ♦ **1402. Hr. Kochar St**, 1,100 sq. m, personal plot, front -25 m, privatized, empty, possibility for building communications. Price negotiable.
- ♦ **1351. Monument**, 2,000 sq. m, privatized, front - 17 m, APZ permission, for social purposes: suitable for a restaurant, hotel. Price negotiable.

PRIVATE HOUSES

- ♦ **2725. Nork-Marash**, building - 733.25sqm, land-620sqm, semi-basement +2floors, euro repaired, semi-basement is sport room, sauna, summer room, pool, fireplace, 1st floor- sitting room, 1 bedroom, cabinet, kitchen, lavatory, 2nd floor - 4 bedrooms, permanent hot and cold water, gas, Spanish tiles, 2 AC. Price - 500.000USD
- ♦ **3063. Komitas A.** Avetisyan street, 3storied+cellar, total-500sqm, 3 bedrooms, 3 lavatories, capitally repaired, cabinet, possible to sell with furniture. Price-negotiable
- ♦ **3059. Vahagni community**, total-1500sqm, building-280sqm, 2.5 storied, newly built, not lived in, 1st floor-living room-44sqm, kitchen, family room-24sqm, 2nd floor-3bedrooms, 3 lavatories, garage for 2 cars, cellar, security system, possible to sell with furniture. Price-negotiable.
- ♦ **3210 Aygestan community**, 2 stories, land: 480 sq.m, building: 310 sq.m, 1st floor is not repaired, garage, 2nd floor: repaired, kitchen, lavatory-tiled, permanent hot and cold water, Baxi system, a place for barbeque, garden, trees Price: 270.000 USD
- ♦ **3103. Ajapnyak community**, Miraqyan street. 1 storey, land -264.8 sq.m., building 110 sq.m., euro repair, euro windows, 5 rooms, 1 lavatory , Baxi system, kitchen, book , ramparted. Price: 90 000 USD
- ♦ **3105. Kaskad, Antarain**. 4 stories, land 1800 sq.m., building 1000 sq.m., newly built, need of cosmetic repair, windows, permanent hot and cold water, heating system, 4 bedrooms, ramparted, solar lamps, security system, cameras, external lighting. Price: 1. 300.000 USD
- ♦ **3054. Blur, Kharkovyan street**. 3 storied building, land 400 sq.m., building 450 sq.m., new, euro repair, ramparted, 4 bedrooms, 5 lavatories inside, 2 lavatories outside, Baxi system. Price 800 000 USD
- ♦ **2916. Ashtarak highway**, village Nazrvan. 3 storied building. Land 3500 sq.m., building 760 sq.m., euro repair, 3 tiled lavatories, a sauna, billiard, permanent hot and cold water, gas, heating system, garden, pool, garage.The building is ramparted. Price 50000 USD

NEWLY BUILT

- ♦ **87. Sayat-Nova street**, newly built building Given to the operation in December 2012. Climate control, gas, the fasad sector has 3 bedrooms-188 sq.m, 199 sq.m, 1 sq.m- 1900 USD, 2 bedrooms have a beautiful sight- 117 sq.m, 120 sq.m, 124 sq.m, 1 sq.m-1700 USD Price: 1 sq.m-1900-1700 USD
- ♦ **90. Main avenue**. Newly built, 2 buildings, 14 stories. Ready for habitation/ at the end of 2013, at the beginning of 2014. Commercial areas on the 1st and on the 2nd floors, flats on the higher floors. Price: 1 sq.m.- 1150 USD 1 sq.m.- 1300 USD
- ♦ **91. Main Avenue**, Park, near Malibu cafe, 16storied newly building, Capitally repaired, heating and security system, 2 lavatories. Price: 1 sq.m.- 2.000 USD

- ♦ **93. Kievyan street**, newly built building Given to the operation in October 2011, gajats, windows, exterior doors, h -3, 15 m, gas supply, the second floor has a parking lot, parking is possible for sale. Price 12 000 USD



possible with mortgage, for 13 years term

- ♦ **94. Masiv**. Newly built, , coupling, 8 flats, in each cottage 4 flats, totall-2000 sq.m, each flat has 2 stories, 3 bedrooms, 210 sq.m., parking: 80 sq.m. Price: 160 000 USD

FOR RENT

1 ROOMS

- ♦ **1031. Byuzand street**. 1 room, 34 sq.m, capitally repair, newly built, furniture, techniques, heating, AC, cabin. Price 600 USD
- ♦ **1009. Teryan str.**, 4/3, 1room changed into 2, 50sqm, euro repaired, furnished, permanent hot and cold water, gas, AC, spanish tiles, technique, ariston heating system. Price 800USD per month, 60USD per day
- ♦ **1057. Argishti str.**, 14/9, 1 room, furnished, heating system, permanent hot and cold water, AC
- ♦ **1005. Lalayanc str.**, 11/5, 1room changed into 2, euro repaired, furniture, permanent hot and cold water, gas, AC, spanish tiles, technique. Price 600USD per month, 40USD per day
- ♦ **1024. Amiryan street**. 12/3, 1turned into 2, 50 sq.m, euro repair, techniques. Price: 1 day 60 USD
- ♦ **853. Amiryan street**, 10/7. 1 turned into 2, 50 sq.m., euro repair, Italian furniture, bed, utensil, techniques, permanent water, gas, antenna, Baxy system. Price 700 USD, 50 USD per day

2 ROOMS

- ♦ **1024. Amiryan street**. 12/3. 2 rooms, 50 sq.m, euro repaire, furniture, techniques. Price: 1 day -50 USD, a month: 700 USD
- ♦ **2064. Aygedzor**, 7/1. 2 rooms, 60 sq .m, capital repair, euro windows, Baxi system, AC, heating floor, camera, cabin. Price 800 USD
- ♦ **2037. Baghramyan str.**, 5/2, 60sqm, 1 bedroom, euro repaired, modern furniture, spanish tiles, permanent hot and cold water, gas, baxi, AC, technique. Price 100USD per day
- ♦ **2022. Amiryan street**, 4/3. 74 sq.m., 2 turned into 3, newly repaired, Spanish tiles, jakoozi, permanent hot and cold water, furniture, techniques. Price 1500 USD, 1 day 100 USD
- ♦ **2057. Sayat-Nova**. 11/4, 2 turned into 3, 78 sq.m., capitally repaired, Baxi system, furniture, techniques, AC, satellite. Price: 1 day- 80 USD, a month- 900 USD
- ♦ **1961. Tumanian street**, 4/2, 86sq.m., 1 bedroom, Euro repair, Euro windows, Furnished, permanent hot and cold water. Price: 1200 USD, 1day: 70USD
- ♦ **115. Buzand str. Building 7, /near Republic Square/, 9/4, 75 sq.m, 2 rooms, newly built, capitally and euro repaired, furnished, equipped, permanent water, gas, heating system, AC, open balcony. Price: 1100 USD long-term, 1500 USD short-term.**
- ♦ **2119. Argishti/Glendale Hills I**, 7th floor , 2 rooms, 46 sq.m, capitally repaired, new furniture, tiled bathroom, equipped, water, gas, Baxi heating system, refrigerator, TV, balcony for storage. Price: 450 USD , 50 USD per day
- ♦ **2108. Amiryan str. /City center/, 2 rooms, AC, washing machine, TV, refrigerator, satellite, bed sheets, utensil, all the conveniences. Price: 600 USD , 60 USD per day**
- ♦ **2099. Sayat-Nova Ave.**, 12/6, 2 rooms, all the conveniences, repaired, furnished, water, gas, Baxi heating system, AC, washing machine. Price: 550 USD
- ♦ **1137. Moskovyan str.**, 6/1, 2 bedrooms, lavatory, pool, normal state, furnished, technique, DVD, AC, permanent hot and cold water. Price 1100USD, possible daily rent.
- ♦ **1950 Crossroad of Khanjyan**, Mashtoc/8 2 bedrooms, New stored , 163 sq.m , absolutely repaired, 2 bathrooms, furniture, heating condition, Climate control, looks to the garden, including exploiting costs. Price 2500\$
- ♦ **1856 Abovyan str.** 5/4 floor 3 rooms, 95 sqm, euro repaired, 2 bathrooms,heating system, AC, furnished, equipped, satellite. Price: 750USD, 70-75 USD per day.
- ♦ **1951 Crossroad of Khanjyan**, Mashtoc /13 2 bedrooms, New stored 122 sq.m absolutely

3 ROOMS AND MORE

repaired, 2 bathrooms, furniture, heating, Climate control, including exploiting costs . Price 2000\$

- ♦ **1874 Amiryan str.** 14/5 floor 120 sqm, capitally repaired, 2 bathrooms, 2 AC, heating system, parking, looking at the boulevard Price: 2000USD
- ♦ **1406. Sayat-Nova str.**, 7/3, 110sqm, 2 bedrooms, euro repaired, gas, furnished, technique, permanent hot and cold water , baxi. Pric negotiable
- ♦ **1790. Byuzand street**, close to Abovyan st., 7/5, newly built, 2bedrooms, euro repaired, 2 balconies, furnished, baxi, technique, 2 lavatories, garage. Price 1600USD per month.
- ♦ **1810. North Avenue**, /5, 2bedrooms, newly built, euro repaired, beautiful view, refrigerator, washing machine, permanent hot and cold water, heating system, garage, TV, lavatory, Price negotiable.
- ♦ **1787. Koghbaci street**, 13/6, 2bedrooms, newly built, euro repaired, furnished, 2 lavatories, central heating. Price 1700USD per month, 100USD per day.
- ♦ **1793. Teryan street**. 260 sq.m, 3 bedrooms, 3 lavatories, capital repair, climat control, parking, unfurnished (possible to furnish), newly built Price: 3500 USD
- ♦ **1564. Tumanyan street**, 7/4. 110 sq.m., euro repaire, 2 lavatories, Spanish tyles, permanent hot and cold water, gas, Baxi system, satellite, modern furniture, techniques, garage. Price 1200 USD.
- ♦ **1720. Amirian Street.**, 3 bedrooms, 190 sq/m, newly built, euro windows, permanent hot and cold water, gas, central heating, 2 open balcony, nice view to the city, possible with or without furniture, parking for 3 cars. Price 3000USD per month negotiable, for long term-6 months and more.

PRIVATE HOUSES

- ♦ **1094. Noy block**, 2 storied building - 400sqm, garden, permanent hot and cold water, furniture, technique, 1 lavatory, gas. Price 2000USD
- ♦ **1095. Aygestan**, 1 storied building - 105sqm, 3bedrooms newly built repaired, furniture, technique 1 lavatory, garden. Price 1000USD per month, 100USD per day.
- ♦ **1808. Amiryan**, 4/3 3 rooms, 64 sq.m, capi-



tally repaired, Venetian style, furnished, equipped, Spanish tiles, permanent hot and cold water, gas, baxi, no balcony. Price: 800-900 USD, 50 USD per day

- ♦ **971. Norq-Marash community** The gardens of Norq Ground 620sq.m, basement +2f. con 733.15 sq.m, basement: the sport hall, sauna, room for summer, swimming pool, fireplace, 1st floor: leaving room, bedroom, kitchen, office, corridor, bathroom, 2nd floor 4 bedrooms, 2 bathroom(Spanish), always running cold and hot water, natural gas, 2 conditioner, baxi. Price 1500\$
- ♦ **1096. Blur**, 4 storied building, each floor-160sqm, total-400sqm, euro repaired, 1st floor-garage, sport room, swimming pool, 4 bedrooms, summer kitchen, 3 lavatories, capitally repaired, furnished, gas, permanent hot and cold water. Price 4000USD
- ♦ **455. Norq**, 3 storied building-150sqm, total - 600sqm, 3bedrooms, lavatory, capitally repaired, furnished, technique, gas, permanent hot and cold water. Price 2000USD
- ♦ **1135. Monument V.** Papazyan street, 2floors, total-375sqm, stone building-210sqm, cellar, euro repaired, baxi, AC, garage-14sqm. Price 2000 USD per month.
- ♦ **1164. Arabkir, Monument**. 1 storied, land-300 sq.m, building-150 sq.m., capitally repaired, 3 bedrooms, 2 lavatories, pool. Price: 1200 USD
- ♦ **211.** Ajgedzor. 2 storied, 3 bedrooms, permanent water, capitally repaired, beutifull view. Price: 1300-1500 USD
- ♦ **721. Blur Qery street**, land 150 sq.m., 2 stories+ a cellar, 200 sq.m., newly built, telephone, refrigerator, washing machine, 3 bedrooms, garage, 2 lavatories, a pool, camin, permanent hot and cold water, a cellar is used as a sport hall. Price : 3000 USD
- ♦ **1117. Aygestan**, land-420 sq.m., building 646 sq.m., 3 storied, 4 bedrooms, open kitchen, euro repair, new tiles, furnished, techniques. Price* 5000 USD
- ♦ **1121. Vahagni community**. 2 stories, building 402 sq.m.(including garage and cellar) euro repair, 3 bedrooms, hall, permanent hot and cold water, gas, heating system, heating floor, kitchen and dining room are furnished. Price: 3000 USD
- ♦ **1142. Djirvej**, Bagrevand community. 3 storied, land-1000 sq.m., building-700 sq.m., 1st floor-cellar, pantry, playing room, kitchen, lavatory, 2nd floor- a big hall, kitchen, dining room, 4 bedrooms, 3rd floor- resting room, 1 bedroom repaired, each bedroom has its lavatory, no furniture/ can be furnished, if necessary/garage for 2 cars, parquet,

Spanish tiles. Price: 4 000 USD.

- ♦ **1114. Gulakyan street**. 3 storied building 500 sq.m., euro repair, 1st floor: sauna, a pool, kitchen, 2nd floor: kitchen, dining room, 3rd floor 3 bedrooms, lavatories in each floor. Price: 3300 USD
- ♦ **1109. Blur**, 3 storied building, land 400 sq.m., building 450 sq.m., new, euro repair, ramparted, 4 bedrooms, 5 lavatories inside, 2 lavatories outside, Baxi system. Price 3800 USD
- ♦ **662. Norq gardens**, Amaranocayin street. 2 storied stone building.Land 1000 sq.m., building 300 sq.m., ramparted, 3 lavatories, 3 bedrooms, hall, camin, gas, heating system, stained glasses. Price 3000USD negotiable
- ♦ **1071. Noy block**. 2.5 storied, land 400 sq.m., building 500 sq.m., garden 250sq.m., 4 bedrooms, 5 lavatories, 2 kitchen, a hall. Price 3000 USD priliminary
- ♦ **1085. Aygestan district**. 2 storied stone building, land 500 sq.m., each floor 12 X 14, 3 bedrooms, a cabinet, 3 lavatories, a cellar, a sauna, kitchen with cupboards, Baxi system, AC. Price 3000 USD
- ♦ **1139. Komitas, Sundukyan street**, 2 stories, stone building, land : 700 sq.m, each floor 185 sq.m, 4 bedrooms, cellar 185 sq.m, , capital repair, Baxi system, swimming pool, a place for barbeque, 2 lavatories, garden, 1 cabinet. Price: 3000 USD
- ♦ **333. Nork**, 3 storied, 250sq.m, euro repair, 4 bedrooms,7 lavatory, permanent hot and cold water, central heating, natural gas, garden, pool. Price negotiable.
- ♦ **1014. Norq Marsh district**. 2 storied, a cellar, capitally repaired, land 567sq.m., building 551 sq.m., 3 bedrooms, 1 cabinet, furnished, a heating system. Price 2500 USD primary.
- ♦ **1076. Nork**, 2 storied, 220 sq.m., euro repair, in the 1st floor 2 rooms, kitchen, lavatory, in the second floor, separate entrance, open kitchen, 3 bedrooms, lavatory, furnished, view to city, garage, garden. Price: 2000USD
- ♦ **990. In Monument, Papazian street**, 2 storied stone building + half-cellar, has mansard,5bedrooms, 2 kitchens, 2bathrooms, laundry, permanent hot and cold water, gas, plot of land 250sq.m, the size of whole construction is 370 sq.m. Price 2500USD
- ♦ **1019. Nork**, 2 storied, separate structure, 700 sq.m. land, 350 sq.m. construction, capital euro repaired, fimished, garage with remote control, pool, 3 bedrooms, one with bathroom, and 2 separate bathrooms. In the first floor sitting-room, gas, permanent hot and cold water, Baxi System, fire-place, view to town, walled. Price: Negotiable

PREMISES

- ♦ **1869. Kaskade**, 720 sq.m., 1st line, building permission, suitable for new building or a business center. Price: negotiable
- ♦ **1461. Sayat - Nova str.**, 1st floor 95sqm, capitally repaired, 2 halls - 32sqm and 46sqm, kitchen, lavatory, 1 line, 2 entrances. Price 3000USD
- ♦ **1821. Argishti** 14/7 3rooms,-87sq.m repaired.- modern stile ,non populated ,2bathroom.heating /furniture ,technique satellite, when renting for the long time also internet, b. looks to the country. Price 800\$, 1day 20.000AM dram
- ♦ **1438. Komitas**, Hr. Qochar str., 6storied building + cellar + cockloft, total-960sqm, each floor-120sqm, needs to be repaired, plastered, permanent hot and cold water, gas, parking for 15 cars. Price negotiable.
- ♦ **1525. Hanrapetutyun street**, 1st floor, 3steps up, h-3.20m, repaired, 1 large hall+3 rooms, 2 entrances, kithen, lavatory. Price 1400USD per month, negotiable.
- ♦ **1526. Byuzand street**, 5/semi-basement, 170sqm, 4-5 step down. cellar-50sqm, has 6 rooms, the largest is 30sqm, 2 entrances, 2 lavatories, 6 windows from street side. Price 2000USD per month, negotiable.
- ♦ **1528. North Avenue**, 9/1, 2 floors, total area 159sqm, 1st floor-66sqm, 2nd floor 93sqm, newly built, euro repaired, has the entrance from the street, security system, heating system. Price 7500USD per month.
- ♦ **1482. North Avenue**, 210 sq.m., 1st floor, with 2 floors, h=8m. Price 10.000 USD
- ♦ **1113. Abovyan Koryun district**, 2 storied, 400 sq.m., 2 separate entrances, capital euro repair, convenient for restaurant or shop, has a possibility for open air café. Price: Negotiable
- ♦ **1408.Zarobyan street**, parallel to Baghramyan, 2 storied, 300sq.m.construction, 600 sq.m. land, in a first floor hall and kitchen, in a second floor 5 rooms, bathroom, open balcony, capital euro repair, gas, baxi system, permanent hot and cold water, telephone, garage, fruit garden. Price: Negotiable.
- ♦ **1438. Komitas**, 6 floors, cellar, mansard. Each floor is 120 sq.m., hasa need for cosmetic repair, walls are plastered, floor is leveled, hanging ceilings, permanent hot and cold water, gas, parking for 15 cars. Price: Negotiable
- ♦ **1429. Nalbandian St**, 2 stories - 78 sq. m, each story - 38 sq. m, hall, lavatory, 2 show windows, door, two-way entrance, 24-hour water, gas, suitable for any activity. Price: 23000USD
- ♦ **1461. Amiryan** (down-town), 1st circle, 5 stored building, 300sq.m is renovated, the rest is under renovation, central heating, climate-control, parking. (tax included) . The price is available for 5 and more years, 2500sq. Price: 1sqm - 400USD
- ♦ **1462. Teryan street**, 3 stored, capital repaired, AC, capital repaired, parking, 800sq. Price: 10.000USD

Happy (50th) Birthday, Gourgen!



On March 2nd, The Highlights Chief Correspondent Gourgen James Khazhakian celebrates his half-centennial jubilee.

Those who have been reading Khazhakian's articles, especially those published in The Highlights since 2004, cannot avoid noticing that "they are informative, passionate and above all seem to truly speak to the reader", as Robert Fogel,

Principal Education Architect of the Intel World Ahead Program wrote.

Khazhakian's stories' themes have been ranging from diplomacy to ICT, from charitable events to cultural essays, from "hot" reports to "thoughts spoken aloud".

An experienced journalist and publicist, he started his professional career writing down inspiring speeches of the Karabakh

Movement leaders at the several hundred thousand-strong rallies in 1988. Gourgen belongs to the first generation of media people of independent Armenia, and was a founding member both of the Azg, Armenia's very first Western-style newspaper, and Armenian International Magazine (AIM, California-based monthly) Yerevan Bureau.

In the first half of the 1990s, Gourgen Khazhakian was a stringer for the world's leading news services, such as BBC, UPI, others, - with his reports from blockaded and freezing Armenia as well as the Nagorno-Karabakh battlefield.

Within his almost quarter-century career, G. Khazhakian met and interviewed world celebrities such as former US President George Bush (1991, Oval Office, the White House), first

President of Georgia Zviad Gamsakhurdia, first President of Russia Boris Yeltsin, legendary British rock-musician Rick Wakeman, our compatriots Charles Aznavour and Cher (Cherilin Sarkissian), and several others.

Between 1994 and 1999, Mr Khazhakian worked at Armenia's MFA, including postings in the RA Embassies in Brussels and Paris.

Gourgen Khazhakian has authored two books on the legendary undercover agents of the Soviet intelligence of the Armenian descent - Hero of the Soviet Union Gevorg Vardanyan (1924-2012) and the Knight of the Order of the Red Banner Gohar Vardanyan, - "TOUCHING THE LEGEND" - Undercover Intelligence Agents Gevorg and Gohar Vardanyan" (2010, in Russian) and "Heroes of Undercover Intelligence Gevorg and

Gohar Vardanyan: "TOUCHING THE LEGEND" Part II" (2011, in Armenian) which have become real bestsellers both inside and outside Armenia.

On January 8th, Mr Khazhakian, with other mass media heads/representatives, was awarded "The RA Armed Forces: 20 Years" Medal.

Those who have known Gourgen Khazhakian for a long time already can testify that he is still full of energy, - going after his (unaccountable and endless) stories, to a no lesser extent than some twenty years ago.

We wholeheartedly congratulate our dear colleague on the occasion of his (first!) half-centennial jubilee and wish him many happy returns of the day!

*The Noyan Tapan
Media Holding Staff*

Hopes of Armenian authorities and reality of United States

from page 2

In general, why would the Americans need to do such a thing? We doubt whether the Armenian parliament speaker actually believes that the U.S. recognized Kosovo out of solidarity with Kosovo Albanians fighting against Serbs and authorities in Belgrade. We should remind the reader that a U.S. military base Camp Bondsteel is located in Kosovo. It was set up as long ago as 1999, immediately after the bombing of Yugoslavia and the entry of troops into Kosovo and Metokhia. This is currently one of the largest U.S. military bases in Europe; it has an area of a thousand hectares in southeastern Serbia. According to expert Ljiljana Bulatovic, in a matter of three years the campsite Bondsteel was turned into an autonomous base equipped with state-of-art equipment, with 7,000 troops stationed there, which makes up three-fourths of the total number of U.S. troops stationed in Kosovo. "The experience of Bondsteel is now being used in Afghanistan and also for provision of the necessary facilities to the U.S. bases in post-Soviet territory," Bulatovic wrote.

Perhaps, Nikoyan dreams of such a prospect for Nagorno Karabakh. Especially, as we take into account the fact that the Americans plan to disperse their troops by dividing their large contingents in Afghanistan and Iraq into mobile groupings in neighboring regions. In case of Afghanistan, it will be Central Asia. The U.S. is already making such efforts in that region. To all appearances, in case of Iraq some groupings will be stationed in countries and regions bordering on it. For example, The Wall Street Journal reported on January 27, 2011 that Pentagon intends to set up a new military base in Turkey, in addition to the air base Incirlik. According to a high-ranking source in U.S. military circles, U.S. Department of Defense plans to set up a base in Turkey's region bordering on Iraq, i.e. at the border of Iraqi Kurdistan. The Americans are sure to take the same stance in this region as they did in Kosovo if, of course, Turkey fails to carry out the mission entrusted to it.

It is, however, doubtful whether the Armenian speaker gave long consideration to the matter. He made a reservation that he wishes the U.S. to take an approach similar to that in Kosovo "as a parliamentarian rather than a politician", possibly appealing to the "Kosovo precedent". No doubt Samvel Nikoyan "as a parliamentarian" could also have wished Russia to take the same stance on the Karabakh problem as it did in case of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, that is, to recognize the independence of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic. However, Nikoyan did not voice such a wish, most likely, for fear of a peremptory shout from Tbilisi. According to Georgia's official position, Russia "occupied" Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Official Yerevan prefers not to remember that so as not to anger Georgia, through the territory of which the main transit artery runs to blockaded Armenia. For that reason Armenia is not afraid of peremptory shouts from Serbia, Russia, Spain, Romania, Slovakia, Cyprus, Greece, China and other states which have not recognized Kosovo's independence.

But what about Kosovo? There is every reason to believe that the Armenian authorities are prepared to recognize the independence of the former Serbian province if they know exactly what dividends they will receive from the U.S. in that case. A relevant information signal was sent by official Armenian bodies on October 7, 2011. To all appearances, Yerevan has not so far evaluated the dividends so Kosoco remains unrecognized by Armenia. Maybe Nikoyan wants to get support of the United States in Karabakh in return for Kosovo's recognition by Armenia. Washington attaches value to recognition of the former Serbian region by Armenia to the extent, to which this circumstance may damage relations between Yerevan and Moscow. Is Yerevan afraid of this prospect? To answer this question, one needs to examine the current situation in Transcaucasia and to sum up some results of Armenian-Russian cooperation under President of Russia Dmitry Medvedev and President of Armenia Serzh

Sargsyan.

Will destabilization of Iran undermine Russia's positions in Transcaucasia?

"The destabilization of the situation in Iran will be followed by destabilization of all the countries in the South Caucasian region. The influence of the Russian Federation will decline throughout the Caucasus. Russia is a guarantor of security, notably in the Karabakh conflict, while Iran is one of the major allies of isolated Armenia and the Nagorno Karabakh Republic," said Mateus Piskorsky, President of the European Center for Geopolitical Analysis (Poland), when delivering a speech at the conference entitled "The 20th Anniversary of the Independence of the NKR: Realities and Prospects" in Stepanakert on February 18, 2012. In his words, following the emergence of a chaos zone in Iran, Azerbaijan's potential will increase. "The implementation of the Big Middle East project is related to the division of the Iranian state and the foundation of a big Azerbaijan, including the so-called South Azerbaijan situated in the territory of Iran," Piskorsky said.

This opinion of the Polish expert would have seemed too bold only a few months ago, but not today when Azerbaijani-Iranian relations are going through a period of undulating escalation, not today when Siavush Novruzov, deputy executive secretary of Azerbaijan's ruling Eni Azerbaijan Party, proposed renaming the Republic of Azerbaijan "North Azerbaijan" in his speech at the first plenary sitting of the spring session of the Azerbaijani parliament on January 1. "There are numerous examples, such as North Korea and South Korea. I can give several such examples. Part of Iran is considered South Azerbaijan so I deem it necessary to rename Azerbaijan "North Azerbaijan". It is a crucial issue," Novruzov stressed. The issue is certainly crucial especially if we take into account the character of relations between South Korea and North Korea and the role of the United States in that region.

Meanwhile the Arab Spring is approaching Turkey and Iran, slowly but surely degenerating into an

unprecedented inter-confessional slaughter. The complexity of the task facing Washington in Transcaucasia now is related not to the problem of reducing Russia's influence in Armenia, but to that of tearing the thread between Armenia and Iran. According to reliable information, the U.S. already demands that Yerevan should stop effecting any transactions with Iranian Central Bank, which places Armenia is a complex position.

So it seems reasonable to say that the sanctions and the threat of Iran's destabilization are already affecting the balance of forces in Transcaucasia. Iran is currently an alternative artery feeding Armenia and bypassing Georgia. By destroying it, the U.S. will get a carte blanche in Transcaucasia and an opportunity to exert more influence on the security in the whole Black Sea-Caspian region. The important thing is that there is no need for the U.S. to recognize Nagorno Karabakh, quite the opposite, it would be better for the U.S. not to do it for the time being in order to encourage Azerbaijan to perform further anti-Iranian "feats".

During a confidential meeting with Russian representatives a few years ago, the then president of Armenia Robert Kocharian outlined Transcaucasia's actual political dilemma, without mincing his words, in the following way: either Russia will ride roughshod over Georgia or Armenia will "lie" under the U.S. (By the way, the Russian media has recently reported that in the opinion of experts, in case of Iran's being attacked, Moscow will have to cut a corridor through Georgia to its military base in Armenia). The viewpoint of ex-president Kocharian proved prophetic, although somewhat simplified. The present political situation in the territory extending from Syria to Afghanistan presents more dangerous prospects. It may also happen that the Americans will ask Armenia to prove its loyalty in practice, for example, by supporting Saakashvili's idea about the "United Caucasus". Why not? All the more so because the Americans have already launched a mechanism for integrated manage-

ment of the Armenian-Georgian border.

But in this case too, the hopes of Samvel Nikoyan will never be realized. At the best, Armenia will be assigned the same function in this system as it performs now - the function of a side tower, from which the owners of Azerbaijan-Europe transport corridor will watch over the safety of their investments. At the worst, the Americans will achieve a situation similar to that in the Middle East: a chaos and massacres. Under such conditions, it would be more convenient for them to destabilize Russia's North Caucasus. These risks are increasing in parallel with the process of Vladimir Putin's Kremlin comeback. If elected, Putin will receive from Medvedev a multitude of problems caused by the "reset" (perezagruzka) to the imitation of intense mediation in Karabakh instead of real reinforcing the commanding heights in the face of aggression against Iran, which was announced long ago.

"The independence of South Sudan and Kosovo was recognized (V.H: by Americans) for business purposes, for further destruction of Serbia, for fighting against Chinese influence in Sudan, and so on. Russia recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia for security purposes, not for business ones," the editor-in-chief of the Regnum news agency Modest Kolerov stated at the conference "The 20th Anniversary of the Independence of the NKR: Realities and Prospects". In his opinion, "as long as Armenia does not recognize Karabakh's independence, it is no use demanding that the world should recognize its independence. The recognition of Karabakh independence should take place first of all in Armenia's political class," he underlined. But the political class of Armenia relies on the U.S. and the "Kosovo precedent" established by it. Does it mean that Armenia is ready to make Karabakh part of the American business? To all appearances, Armenia has no choice. This only brings closer the war at the Iranian door.

Vigen Hakobian

Book festival in Yerevan

Thanks to efforts of the Writers' Union of Armenia, last week Yerevan hosted a book festival. For four years in a row, an all-Armenian festival "Present Books" is held in the country on February 19. By tradition, a book exhibition was organized this year too. Edit Print Publishing House also displayed a wide range of books of various genres, including books for children and

travelers. The final stage of the First Republican Contest "Don't Waste Time, Read" organized by Edit Print took place last week. Among the participants were children of two age groups: fifth-seventh graders competed on February 20, while second-fourth graders - on February 21.

The final stage of the contest involved several sub-stages: during the first sub-stage the partici-

pants were given written tests on works of the great Armenian poet Hovhannes Tumanian. The written test consisted of ten questions, each of ten points. The contest organizers formulated questions based on the list of literary works assigned to the participants beforehand.

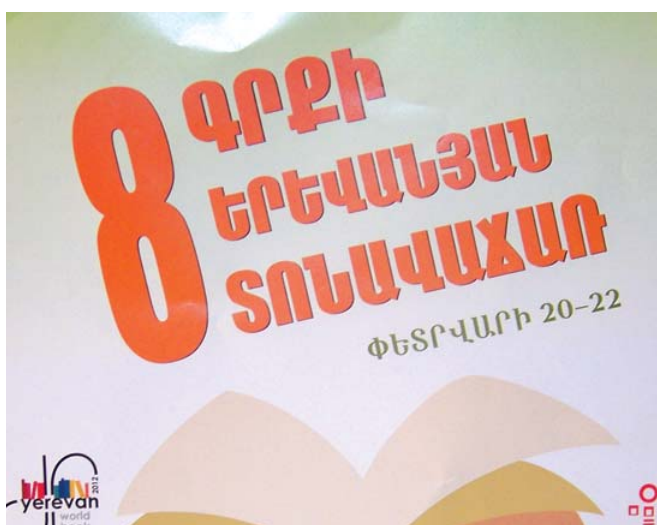
After the first sub-stage the commission checked the written tests and announced the results:

all the participants were admitted to the next sub-phase. The commission was headed by Lilit Ter-Grigorian and composed of 5 members, including 3 employees of the city municipality and 2 representatives of the Edit Print Publishing House.

The second sub-phase was held in the form of a quiz. Each participant was asked ten questions (each of one point). Prior to

this sub-phase, the participants were required to familiarize themselves with articles of some headings of magazines "Merry Train" (1st and 2nd age groups) and "My Planet" (2nd age group), based on which the questions were prepared. The quiz took place in the presence of parents and the commission members. The participants drew their test

continued on page 11






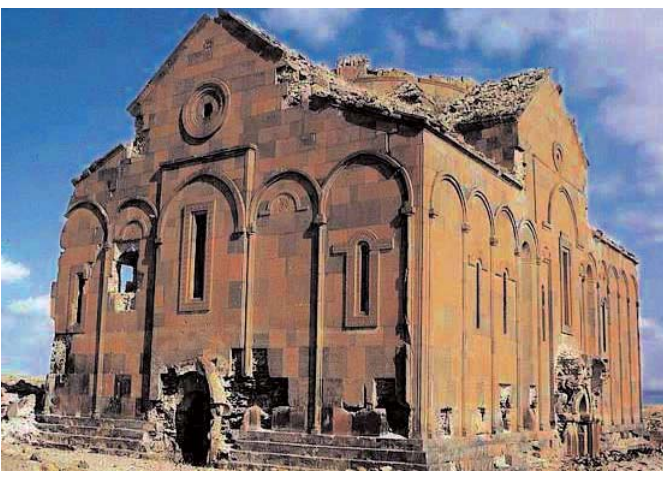
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World Bank supports water supply improvement for 133,000 residents in Armenia



The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors today approved a US\$15 million loan for the Municipal Water Project for Armenia. The Project will support improvement of the quality and availability of water supply in selected service areas of the Armenian Water and Sewerage Company (AWSC).

The activities proposed under the Project will directly benefit over 133,000 residents in the cities of Ashtarak (Aragatsotn region), Masis (Ararat region) and Echmiadzin (Armavir region) and 15 neighboring rural settlements. The investments will increase average daily supply of drinking water service from 12 hours to 17 hours, improve water quality, decrease water pollution risks and improve customer service. About 21,000 residents will also benefit from installation of new meters. The Project will generate multiple benefits for the public and private sectors by creating a more conducive environment for service delivery to users and stimulating economic activities.

"This Project supports the Government's strategy aiming at

promoting access to quality potable water across the country, including in small and medium-size towns and rural areas. This is an important part of the World Bank's Country Partnership Strategy for Armenia," said Asad Alam, World Bank Regional Director for the South Caucasus.

The proposed Project is a repeater operation, building on the success of the Municipal Water and Wastewater Project (MWWP) and its Additional Financing, and expanding it to new towns and rural settlements. Over the project implementation period of 2004-2011, the MWWP achieved good results benefiting 264,000 households: the average daily supply of drinking water increased from 6 hours to 15 hours/day, cities with minimal daily hours of water supply increased from 68 percent to 94 percent; revenue collection increased from 47.9 percent to almost 94 percent; billing on the basis of metered consumption increased from 40 percent to 81.2 percent, and bacteriological safety compliance increased from 93 to 98.2 percent.

"We are particularly pleased to continue supporting improved access to sustainable water supply services in rural Armenia given its strong linkages to health and environment," said Jean-Michel Happi, World Bank Country Manager for Armenia. "The goals of the proposed investments are to drastically improve physical infrastructure in a technically sound, cost effective, and reliable manner."

The project includes three components. The first component

(Investments in water supply systems) finances the design, construction, and supervision of priority reconstruction and rehabilitation works; the second component (AWSC investments) will fund water metering program, and facility automation; and the third component ((AWSC management strengthening) finances the enhanced management contract and technical studies, as well as the financial and technical audits.

"Over the past decade, the Government has succeeded in improving access, reliability and quality of drinking water with increased use of public-private partnerships (PPP), which have brought about higher efficiency and improvements in quality of service to customers," said Ahmed Eiweida, head of the World Bank team designing the project. "With the World Bank support, the Government also competitively selected an international water operator to manage the AWSC under a Management Contract. Significant amount of investments are still needed to reduce the high level of commercial and technical losses, and to rehabilitate the water and wastewater infrastructure."

The total financing of the project is USD18 million, of which the Government of Armenia will finance USD3 million. The IBRD loan in the amount of USD15 million carries a maturity of 25 years including a grace period of 10 years.

Since joining the World Bank in 1992 and IDA in 1993, the total IDA and IBRD commitments to Armenia amount to US\$1, 612 million.

Travel to EU to become easier: Armenia and EU start negotiations on Visa Facilitation Agreement

In Yerevan, on 27 February 2012, Armenia and the European Union will start negotiations on a Visa Facilitation and a Readmission Agreements, Press and Information Department of EU Delegation to Armenia told Armenpress.

In September 2011, the European Commission proposed opening negotiations on visa facilitation and readmission agreements with Armenia. After all requirements for visa facilitation are in place, such a regime will be feasible. Once negotiated, the agreements on visa facilitation and readmission can only enter into force simultaneously.

Visa facilitation does not mean visa liberalization. The conclusion of the visa facilitation agreement would not lead to an immediate visa-free travel. Nevertheless, it is an important and necessary step within the process that can lead Armenia to visa liberalisation.

The EU's visa policy is aimed at achieving a proper balance between internal security and external stabilisation, acceptable to all sides. One of the EU's foreign policy instruments for achieving this aim are the visa facilitation and readmission agree-

ments. So far, the EU has concluded visa facilitation agreements with nine non-EU countries, three of which are our Eastern partners Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova. Based on these agreements, both EU and non-EU citizens benefit from facilitated procedures for issuing visas.

The agreements will be based on reciprocity and provide visa facilitation for Armenian citizens. The list of suggested visa facilitations include the simplification of documentary evidence in support of the visa application, the possibility of issuing multiple-entry visas with a long period of validity, the waiving/reducing of the handling fees for specific categories of travellers, set deadlines for processing visa applications, as well as a possible exemption from the visa obligation for holders of diplomatic passports.

At the same time, the agreements will combine the easing of visa requirements for travellers from Armenia with agreed mechanisms for the readmission of irregular migrants. The negotiation of readmission agreements will provide for the return of nationals staying without authorisation on the territory of the EU or Armenia.

Armenia, Jordan to cooperate in the tourism sphere

Cooperation agreement in the sphere of tourism will be signed between Armenia and Jordan. Economy Minister Tigran Davtyan said at the cabinet sitting today that the goal of the agreement is to promote closer bilateral cooperation in the sphere of tourism which on its turn will make the people of the two countries get to know each other better.

In the sidelines of the agreement investments in the tourism

fields of the two countries will be made, exchange of information and experience will be ensured. It is also intended to organize reciprocal familiarizing visits of tour operators and reporters of the two countries.

The parties will also exchange different professional groups which will participate in sport, music, theatrical events and national festivals, tourism exhibitions, symposiums, seminars.

EU Green-Lights Trade Talks With Armenia

From page 1

negotiations to be held in Yerevan.

The DCFTA envisages not only mutual lifting of all trade barriers but also harmonization of Armenian economic laws and regulations with those existing in the EU. The European Commission emphasized this fact in its statement.

"Armenia needs to continue its work towards reaching a stable, transparent and predictable economic environment," the statement said. "This is essential to attract foreign direct investment inflows, leading to job creation and long-term growth. The most important gains for Armenia lie therefore behind the border, in regulatory reforms, and as such will impact on its long-term development perspective."

The European Commission had made the start of the free trade talks conditional on the

elimination of a controversial mechanism for import valuation applied by Armenia's customs service. It has also pressed Yerevan to stop discriminating against importers of alcoholic beverages.

Visiting Brussels in December, Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan told De Gucht and Fuele that his government has complied with these preconditions and expects them to speed up the start of the DCFTA talks.

The EU statement spoke of "substantial reforms" carried out by the authorities in Yerevan but made no specific mention of the Armenian customs administration. It pointed instead to "the fields of technical regulations, sanitary and phytosanitary measures and the protection of intellectual property."

The EU has been Armenia's largest trading partner for the past decade. Official Armenian statis-

tics show trade with the EU rising by 16 percent to about \$1.8 billion and accounting for almost one-third of the country's overall foreign trade last year.

"The free trade area is expected to diversify and strengthen Armenia's export capacity and effectively open the way to access the EU market of 500 million consumers," the European Commission said.

Armenia already enjoys a preferential trading regime with the EU states through the EU's Generalized System of Preferences (GSP+) for some developing nations. The arrangement has entitled Armenian companies to selling virtually all products in the European market with significant discounts on import duty or no duty at all. According to the Armenian Ministry of Economy, GSP+ covered 96 percent of Armenian exports to the EU in 2010.

Tehran ready for construction of Armenia-Iran railway



The Iranian side is ready for the construction of Iran-Armenia railway and expects necessary financing, Ambassador to Armenia Seyed Ali Saqqaiyan said.

Addressing the Yerevan University students, Ambassador recalled the recent meeting of the working group with the participa-

tion of the Russian, Iranian and Armenian deputy ministers of transport.

"Head of the Russian Railways also expressed positive attitude to the project during his recent visit to Yerevan. The project is expensive and the experts determine figures amounting to several billion dollars. However, we are determined to participate in it," he said.

According to preliminary assessment, the project was estimated at \$1.5-2 billion. In 2010 Armenia submitted an application on construction to the EurAsEC Anti-Crisis Fund. The possibility of China's participation was discussed as well.

Yasin Al-Haj Saleh: "Armenians of Syria not in danger"

Exclusive interview of one of the leaders of the Syrian opposition to Mediamax

Yasin Al-Haj Saleh- is a Syrian writer and political dissident. He writes on political, social and cultural subjects relating to Syria and the Arab world. In 1980 he spent time in prison in Syria for his membership in a communist party. He was arrested while he was studying medicine in Aleppo and spent sixteen years in Tadmur prison.

Today he lives in Damascus and supports the Syrian opposition. His articles about the developments in this country are published in The New York Times, Lebanese The Daily Star and Middle East Jadaliyya.

- What has brought the Arab Spring to Syria?

- You must have already noticed that revolutions happen in countries whose leaders are tyrants, who have been ruling the country for decades and want to pass the power on to their children after their death. For many years people thought this is how things should be. It found its reflection in the style of leadership of these countries' leaders: pressure on the opposition, royal lifestyle and lack of freedom for media.

Syria has been a country where the family power was very strong. After coming to power, Bashar al Assad continued the tough security system created by his father, eliminated the opposition and began the so-called policy of "liberalization of the economy". As a result, during 11 years the public resources, media and communication means became a monopoly in the hands of private individuals.

As a result of this policy the small towns, unlike the big ones, were deprived of attention. The alienation between the elite and the ordinary population keeps growing... This is why the revolutionary movement began about a year ago.

We can say that the Syrians were inspired by the positive outcome of revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt. The countries of the Arab world are strongly interconnected from the emotional and cultural points of view, and this was the reason that the Arab spring easily moved from Tunisia to Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain and Syria.

- Do you really think that after the change of the regime Syria will become a more democratic country? Aren't you afraid of Egypt's example? The revolution was over a year ago there but the instability still continues and again forces people to come to Tahrir Square.

- It's naïve to think that after 50 years of ruling of "Baas" Party and 42 years of dictatorship of the Assad family, Syria can quickly become a country which is guided by democratic principles. There is a huge watershed between social classes; there are religious and separatist forces, a weak production. The public masses, which fight against dictatorship and want the country's society to be freer, participate in democracy building. I think the revolution in Syria will lead to more freedom, pluralism will prevail and good opportunities for discussing social, political, legal issues

will be created, but nevertheless stable democracy is a harder process.

For reaching democracy it's not enough to change the regime only. It is necessary to spiritually escape from the reign of the Assad in Syria, which has brought the political environment to a physical and spiritual crisis. If the revolution does occur, the public will face serious challenges: it is necessary to make a reconstruction for the first time in country's history, expand the contacts between various layers of the society trying to reconcile them. This is the essence of the nearest future and the actions of the Syrian people who want to take the path of democratization.

I also think that the current situation in Egypt is anyhow better and more stable than during Mubarak's reign. The Islamists, who make a majority of the Egyptian political system today, have lost their status of a "victim" and seem to succeed trying to identify social and economic tasks of Egypt and searching for relevant solutions. Today, Egypt already has a good chance for political debates and big political freedoms. This story is full of problems which are not "eternal" and will not turn into a swamp.

- In one of your interviews in 2005, you made the following forecast: "...the scenario I prefer is the full change of the regime. More pressure on the current regime from outside is necessary so that more and more Syrians become engaged in social activities. And the bigger the number of such Syrians is, the better future Syria will have..." Is this scenario possible today or Assad must leave in any case?

- Things were different in 2005. What disturbed the public order in the country at that time was an external pressure, and there was a need to cause big public interest of Syrians towards political processes. It was done because there were fears the regime will collapse and the Syrian public will be politically inactive. Today the situation is quite different. We are watching a revolution, rallies attended by active Syrians in various regions, which will certainly lead to the collapse of the regime. Assad, who as of 17 February 2012 killed 8.280 people, must leave.

- On 7 December 2011, in an interview to one of U.S. TV channels, Assad said: "...we have never said that we are a democratic country, but at the same time we are not what we were before, we are moving forward... thanks to reforms. We have registered big progress during last 9 months. It will take a long time to become a democratic country, but we are on that way. Everything I do is based on the will of my nation..." It seems that the President of Syria needs more time to conduct reforms and he asks for it. Why doesn't the opposition agree to give a chance to Assad?

- You are talking about a man who came to power 11 years ago. At first he said economic reforms are a priority, then he passed to administrative reforms, allegedly in the name of provision of security in the country. I don't know examples from history

when such tyrants as Bashar al Assad - the lovers of power and money - ever changed and became the adherents of democratic values. The new text of the Constitution will be put on vote in the days to come. This is another proof that the regime doesn't intend to pass to democracy. This Constitution gives unlimited power to Assad and a chance to nominate his candidacy at presidential elections in 2014. It gives nothing to an ordinary Syrian... Hundreds of Syrians have died during the period of adoption of this Constitution. According to new Constitution, Assad doesn't bear responsibility for everything he is doing within his authorities, and the only exception is "treason". Thus, according to a new Constitution, Assad is not responsible for the death of thousands of people murdered by his order. The new Constitution suggests minimal damage to the family and the possibilities of the President.

- The supporters of Assad accuse the opposition of becoming a toy in the hands of the West. What can you say about this?

- Well, the system is always right in criticizing its rivals... The revolution in Syria began without the assistance of any Western country and a year before that the relations between these Western countries and the Assad regime have improved more and more, and nobody spoke about the Syrian people or the opposition at that time. Yes, many people link this revolution with the West. In any case, I believe these forces will try to influence the opposition in the nearest future and do everything possible so that this revolution served their interests. We will see it very soon.

- What do you think, how likely is it that the Libyan scenario will repeat itself in Syria?

- Nobody seems to wish such a repetition. Neither Syria nor the West, nor other Arab countries... But we will probably see a slightly altered variant of the Libyan scenario if the regime continues the mass killings. In any case, the situation gradually stops being merely Syrian and becomes more international.

- The Syrian opposition is heterogeneous; it acts mainly outside the country. Isn't there a misunderstanding between various oppositional parties?

- When the activity of oppositional "Muslim Brothers" was banned in Syria, the Syrian dissidents had many problems in the country. Unfortunately, many people left the country after the revolution. The Syrian National Council was set up last year, which united the Islamists, the secularists and the liberals... The Syrian National Council also enjoys support inside the country. I myself don't represent any political force but support the revolution by my articles and works.

- Turkey has actually failed the Assad regime. The Central office of the Syrian National Council is located in the center of Ankara. Turkey has recently compared Assad with Milosevic. Does the Syrian opposition indeed trust Turkey and hope for future cooperation?

- I think we don't have any rea-

sons not to trust each other. Turkey is a country which plays a vital role on international arena, it's a good example of an Islamic country, a civil country, which grants numerous civil privileges to its citizens as compared to our country and many other Arab states. Today, the Syrian opposition is not in the state to doubt Turkey's every step. On the contrary, Syria has to trust Turkey and other countries. After the revolution, the new government is expected to act in the national interests of Syria and in this context the cooperation with local and various international political forces would be desirable.

- Will the Arab States League try to legitimize the decision on military actions against Syria?

- It's quite possible, especially if the process of opening a safety corridor fails. But the Arab States League cannot adopt such a decision alone, other international forces should back it. Nobody seems to be willing to talk about hostilities yet. Only the growing number of crimes and new casualties will force the West and the Arab States League to move to more drastic measures.

- And why does Russia disagree to meet with representatives of Syrian opposition on an official level?

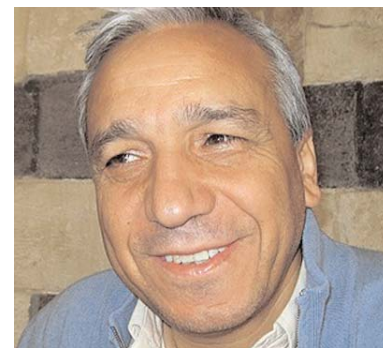
- The Russians want to make cosmetic changes only and to preserve the regime. They back the regime and think the opposition is responsible for the violence in the country. This is a rough distortion of reality. I think Russia is guided by the motive that the regime in this country doesn't significantly differ from Assad's regime. The other reason is that the Russians are offended by the West and do everything possible to get maximum advantages from the given situation.

- What developments are possible after the closure of the U.S. Embassy in Damascus and the exile of some western diplomats from the country? What consequences will economic sanctions entail?

- I think, the recall of ambassadors is not so crucial, it is merely a strategy which will lead to the collapse of the regime in the future. It also leads to economic sanctions. The sanctions will naturally influence the regime, but they cause more damage to ordinary people. One thing is clear- the longer the regime survives, the harder it will be from political, economic and humanitarian viewpoints.

- What plans does Al-Qaeda have for Syria? A few days ago, Ayman Al Zawahiri urged upon the Muslims to fight with their Syrian brothers for freedom and against the Assad regime. "Wounded Syria still bleeds day after day, while the butcher is not deterred to stop." Many have doubts that the Syrian opposition has ties with Al-Qaeda.

- Al-Qaeda is isolated both on the international and local arena, and today it seeks ways to prove that it still exists. But Al-Qaeda did not welcome the revolution in Syria, which cannot be said about Egypt and Tunisia... Zawahiri's words are the first mentioning of the Syrian revolution and I don't think it's something strange or suspicious. We deal with a



terrorist group which is trying to pave its way by means of an imaginary support to the Syrian people's fight.

There is an information that the head of Al-Qaeda Mustafa Setmariam Naser (Abu Musab al-Suri), who was handed to Syria by USA, was released early this year. .. It's also very strange.

The revolution is an evidence of the healthy state of our society: representatives of various generations, Muslims and non-Muslims, men and women took part in this process... Freedom is the basic value of revolutions, whereas Al-Qaeda's actions are based on revenge.

I can assure you that the Syrian opposition is not connected with Al-Qaeda. The other question is whether there are some people who have contacts with this organization.

- You spent 16 years in Syrian prison. What does it mean to be deprived of freedom for so many years. Why were you arrested?

- I can't describe this feeling - you fully lose control over yourself, you don't know when it will end, you go out of control and get into the hands of the unknown. I spent 11 years and 4 months in prison without trial. When 15 years of imprisonment ended, they not only did not release me but made me take part in the works for the destruction of that scary prison: there is only one reason - they wanted to keep me in custody as long as possible. It is a bright characteristic feature of this regime- not to leave prisoners even after their sentence expires.

I was 19 years old when I was arrested. I was a University student, a member of an oppositional communist party and tried to do my best for the democratization of the country. This is why I was sent to prison...

- What's going on in Damascus today? They say people don't even leave their houses.

- Everything is normal. But in any case you feel the heavy shadow of control on the streets. The night traffic is reduced. Yes, people prefer not to go to streets. The suburbs are more active and they are the seat of the revolution.

- Armenia is concerned about the fate of thousands of Armenians living in Syria. If the revolution wins, will there be pressure on Armenians of Syria?

- What may happen to Armenians? I don't understand the anxiety that Armenians will be under pressure. I think this anxiety is excessive. Nobody blames Armenians for anything... At least I haven't heard anything of the kind. The Armenians have lived here after the World War I. They are fully integrated and make part of the Syrian society.

Yasin Al-Haj Saleh was interviewed by Narine Daneghyan

Harut Sassounian: "Egemen Bagish: Turkey's Minister of Genocide Denial"



By Harut Sassounian
Publisher, The California Courier

Even though all Turkish government officials routinely deny the Armenian Genocide, one particular minister has turned denial into a full-time job.. Ironically, as Minister for European Union Affairs, Egemen Bagish has harmed Turkey's prospects for EU membership more than any of its critics!

Although Bagish has been making zany statements ever since his ministerial appointment two years ago, his recent blunder in Zurich made headlines around the world. The Turkish Minister arrogantly dared Swiss authorities to arrest him after boasting that "the events of 1915 were not genocide!" Switzerland has a law that penalizes genocide denial, similar to the law now pending in France. A Swiss prosecutor is investigating Bagish's words and his diplomatic status to

see if charges could be filed against him for genocide denial.

Of course, it does not take much courage to hide behind the cover of diplomatic immunity and make Don Quixotic statements, challenging the laws of other countries. If Minister Bagish were truly a macho man, he would waive his immunity, go to Switzerland, and publicly deny the Armenian Genocide. However, it appears that the feisty Minister has chickened out! After boasting that he would gladly return to Switzerland to deny the Armenian Genocide again, he facetiously declared that he would not go to Switzerland, since he has no money in Swiss banks! The real reason for the Minister's abrupt change of heart is his fear of getting arrested should the Swiss prosecutor rule that his diplomatic immunity does not protect him from the crime of genocide denial.

How much longer can Prime Minister Erdogan tolerate Mr. Bagish's clownish antics that make Turkey look like a rogue state in the eyes of the world? Admiring his fluency in English, the Prime Minister had offered this 41-year-old former

New York college student a top ministerial post, not realizing what a liability his loose tongue would prove to be!

Just as Pres. George W. Bush's nonsensical statements became known as "Bushisms," the world now has a rich collection of "Bagishisms!" Here is a sampling of his preposterous remarks:

- "What happened in 1915 can't be classified as genocide as far as I'm concerned, but I was not around in 1915!"

- "I'm a politician. My job is to determine the future, not the past!"

- "In recent years, every one has seen that more Europeans are moving to Turkey than vice versa."

- During a recent conference in Qatar, Minister Bagish became the laughing stock of the audience, when he proudly announced that "Europe" is a Turkish word! The Greek Ambassador to Qatar angrily responded: "Europa was one of the lovers of Zeus in Greek mythology, everyone knows that!"

- Minister Bagish does not seem to realize that he is contradicting himself by asking other countries to

open their archives to see if there was an Armenian genocide, while concluding that there was no genocide! The least he could do is have the decency to keep his mouth shut until the Ottoman archives are fully open. Meanwhile, the archives of other countries have been open for decades.

Rattling off the witty Americanisms he picked up in the streets of New York, such as "a day late and a dollar short," Bagish told Euronews: "This is execution without trial. Calling the 1915 events a genocide based solely on information we have right now comes from a lobby that nurtures malicious hatred."

- "Germany was a strong ally of the Armenians in 1915, so the Germans should open their archives and give documents to historians for examination," Bagish told EU Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Fule, according to Hurriyet newspaper. Bagis made two factual errors in one sentence: Germany was the ally of the Ottoman Empire, not Armenians; and the German archives have been open for years!

- "There's no force that could bring about the arrest of any Turkish Minister," Bagish bragged to journalists. Why is he then afraid to waive his diplomatic immunity and then deny the Armenian Genocide in Switzerland?

- Bagish keeps on repeating the falsehood that the Armenian government "did not have the courage to respond to Prime Minister Erdogan's letter requesting the formation of a commission of historians to study the Armenian Genocide." In fact, the then Pres. Kocharian did answer, suggesting that all outstanding issues between the two countries be resolved in the larger context of government to government relations. It was the Turkish Prime Minister that did not respond to Armenia's President.

While Minister Bagish has diplomatic immunity, the rest of Turkey's population does not enjoy such a privilege. It may be a good idea to accord immunity to all 72 million Turks in order to shield them from prosecution, when they utter the words "Armenian Genocide" in Turkey!

Michel Rocard: Don't Blame it on Rio

Michel Rocard is a former prime minister of France and a former leader of the French Socialist Party.

PARIS - We are little more than a decade into the twenty-first century, but a terrible precedent has already been set: all of the major international negotiations and cooperative efforts initiated in this century thus far have ended in failure.

With regard to the environment, the fight against global warming has come to a standstill, with the United Nations' last three annual climate-change conferences, in Copenhagen, Cancún, and Durban, failing to renew the Kyoto Protocol.

Similarly, although last year's conference in Paris to review the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and subsequent nuclear-disarmament talks between US President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitri Medvedev in New York, made positive inroads, the results were a far cry from ensuring a future free of nuclear arms.

The list goes on: events in the Middle East have killed all prospects for peace in the region; the measures taken to aid global recovery - including regulatory improvements, such as separation of retail and investment banking, elimination of tax havens, and cracking down on rating agencies' conflicts of interest - have been feeble; and the last two G-20 meetings have been gross failures.

The causes and parties responsible for these failures are diverse, but there is one constant: in recent years, nationalistic, even xenophobic, rhetoric has intensified dramatically. Patriotism and sovereignty are now stressed ever more insistently, while expressions of distrust of "others" have appeared everywhere - even in the Arctic Ocean, where Canada and Russia are engaged in what one expert has called "Cold War lite."

The consequence of the international

community's increasing balkanization is that consensus-oriented conferences tend to end in impasses. These failures do not mean that most people around the world do not see eye-to-eye on these issues, or that they are unprepared to make timely, even courageous, decisions. Unfortunately, ordinary people's sentiments rarely triumph when governments meet.

The conclusion is unavoidable: it is the quest for absolute consensus - unanimity - that is undermining progress on major global concerns. Consensus-oriented negotiations can work when a treaty is being struck between victors and vanquished - the strong and the weak.. After World War I, the Allied Powers tried to promote international peace by creating the League of Nations. But the League's unanimity requirement effectively gave all members veto power, and the United States Senate's refusal to ratify its Covenant condemned the effort to a premature death.

The League's abject failure to prevent World War II resulted in a second effort to build international comity after the fighting ended. The new UN was much better structured than its predecessor, and the world gained an institution that fosters debate and deliberative decision-making much more vigorously than is possible in consensus-driven organizations.

But a shift that contradicts the UN Charter's spirit has occurred. In an effort to avoid resolutions or measures that expose their disagreements, the world's great powers have adopted the habit of organizing worldwide debates and conferences that revert to decision-making by consensus.

According to the UN Charter, the primary focus of the General Assembly and the Security Council is to promote international security. But the UN has become the "general operator" for glob-

al conferences, acting as administrator and furnisher of services and facilities (such as locations and interpreters) for events that are not officially part of its core operations. As a result, the UN is increasingly taking the blame for these conferences' failures, which not only leave the issues unresolved, but also undermine the UN's authority.

The Rio+20 conference, which will examine the progress made since the first "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro 20 years ago, will take place there this June. Designed with a wide range of objectives, including a focus on both the green economy and sustainable development, the conference seems destined to fail. Without consensus, no action can be taken, and consensus will be impossible.

Of course, there is a chance that the world will recognize its quandary at Rio. If a majority of the countries present dares to declare that demanding consensus is equivalent to enforcing paralysis, and if they insist upon following the voting procedures enshrined in the UN Charter, we could see enormous progress.

Global warming and economic crisis are threatening international security. This alone justifies referring these issues to the UN General Assembly, which, unlike the Security Council, knows no veto power. A strong declaration and a call for binding measures to address these issues would then be possible.

The economic and environmental crises before us are too urgent to play games that give the appearance of international unanimity. It is past time to address not only global warming and the economic crisis, but also the international decision-making process. Why not start with Rio?

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Book festival in Yerevan

from page 7

papers by casting lots. Those present in the hall also had the opportunity to see the questions of the test papers. The contestants were required to answer one question within 30-60 seconds. After summing up the results of the first and second sub-stages, the commission announced that only 6 out of the 26 participants reached the final sub-stage.

At the third sub-stage, 6 contestants participated in a quick quiz on H. Tumanian's works: "The Dog and the Cat", "The End of the Evil", and "The Brother Lambkin." The three participants who managed to give correct answers to the greatest number of questions within 2-3 minutes took first, second, and third places.

Marketing Director of Edit Print Publishing House Vanush Harutyunian said: "I highly appreciate the organization of such events since they help deal with the problem of encouraging reading among children. We should arouse a passion for reading in children from early childhood, and this contest is a striking example of this".

"Don't Waste Time, Read" is one of those rare contests, which involve book-loving children from marzes

(provinces). The aim of the contest organizers was to increase access to books for residents of provinces as it would be difficult to transport so many children to Yerevan.

At first, contests were held in marzes to select the best book-loving pupils with the help of teachers.

According to Vanush Harutyunian, children in marzes are well-read because of their limited access to computer. The publications of Edit Print publishing house are available in marzes as well and enable children to receive information.

The closing ceremony of the contest and the award ceremony were held at Arno Babajanian Concert Hall on February 22 - the day after the final phase. All the participants of the final phase received a literary series released by Edit Print, as well as consolation prizes. The three winners in each age group were given a computer, a notebook, and a DVD, respectively.

In the words of Gayane Soghomonian, Head of the Education Department of the Municipality Staff, the city municipality welcomes such events and will continue assisting with their organization.

The award ceremony was followed by a concert for children.

US Embassy in Armenia donates equipment to police educational complex

U.S. Ambassador to Armenia John Heffern visited and toured Armenia's Police Educational Complex on Tuesday, where he met its director, Lieutenant-General Hovhannes Varyan, and donated approximately \$50,000 of classroom computer equipment. The equipment will be used for the education and training of police personnel.

Donated by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement Affairs, the equipment is intended to enhance the educational and training

resources in the Police Educational Complex. The equipment includes desktop computers, printers, projectors and scanners.

This current donation is part of the U.S. Government's comprehensive law enforcement assistance program that aims to strengthen the ability of Armenian law enforcement structures to combat crime effectively and to administer criminal justice fairly.

Previous assistance provided to the Armenian Police has included the renovation of the Police Induction Center, equipment donations to the Police Academy, and

cooperation in the establishment of a nationwide computer network. Computer equipment has previously been donated to the anti-illegal migration, anti-trafficking in persons, anti-narcotics, and anti-cyber-crime units of the Police. Training and capacity-building in the combating and prevention of transnational crimes has also been regularly provided.

The U.S. Government annually provides approximately \$3 million in law enforcement and criminal justice assistance to Armenia.

Armenian businessman receives gold medal

YEREVAN. - Businessman and benefactor Vahagn Hovnanian was awarded the Armenian Ministry of Economy's gold medal for his contribution to tourism development in Armenia

on the occasion of his 80th anniversary.

Armenia's Ministry of Economy Tigran Davtyan thanked the businessman for his work wishing success.



Armenian Education and Science Ministry program rated "best example" by European Commission

In 2010-2011, Armenia's Education and Science Ministry implemented five programs within the framework of the TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument) project of the European

Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) in Armenia, the Ministry informs.

And in 2011, the Ministry, together with the National Information Center for Academic Recognition and Mobility, organized

a workshop, entitled "Introduction of the 'Europass' System in the Domain of Specialized Education," which was rated as "best example" by the European Commission, and it is envisioned to be included in TAIEX 2011 Report.

Tbilisi apartment of Tumanian to turn into cultural center named after the great poet

The Tbilisi apartment of all-Armenian poet Hovhannes Tumanian finally belongs to the Armenian side, the purchase document and the keys of the apartment are in our hands. The historic purchase contract has been signed between the owner of the apartment Archil Lejava and the All-Armenian Foundation of Writers. Speaking to reporters Friday, Chairman of the Writers Union of Armenia Levon Ananyan said the issue has been resolved, it united all Armenians.

The chairman of the union noted that the apartment is in a quite good condition as the owner made certain reconstruction works. The apartment issue of great granddaughter of Tumanian Alyena Kolesnikova has not been solved yet. She agreed to live there, participate in the solution of issues of the cultural center. In case a philanthropist will appear who will help her find place for living the great granddaughter will move.

The transaction has been conducted and after a while it will be

clear what function the territory will have. "Of course, it will be Tumanian Cultural Center," Levon Ananyan said.

The Chairman of the union congratulated on the fulfilment of the transaction and convinced that it is a new beginning on the way to the implementation of further transactions.

Georgian owner of the apartment Archil Lejava demanded 145 thousand USD for the apartment. The money was paid by Ghukasyan brothers.

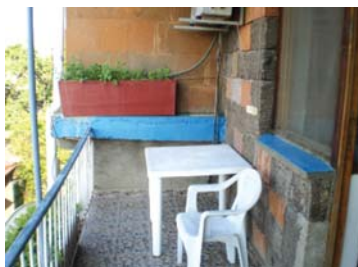
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DID YOU KNOW?



Heading by
Marina Harutiunyan
marina@nt.am
Comments are
welcomed!

Mona Lisa copy goes on show
in Prado

including The Lady with the Ermine and Saint John the Baptist.

The Prado's copy of the Mona Lisa had been overpainted black. The high quality of the materials used in the creation of the Madrid version suggests that it was an important commission.

The Prado's Mona Lisa has been in the museum since it was opened in 1819. The newly-revealed painting will be on display there until 13 March.

There are dozens of surviving Mona Lisa replicas from the 16th and 17th Centuries - when copying famous artworks was a thriving business.

The original painting, dating from the early 16th Century, is obscured by several layers of old, cracked varnish. However, cleaning and restoration is thought to be too risky because the painting is fragile.



ARMENIAN POETRY

Sona Van



NOBODY LOOKS THAT WAY

(a conversation with
Inna Lisnyanskaya's black and
white portrait with a cigarette)

*Black and white
as if from a dream
you are not looking at me
but always through me and into the
distance
into a far place-
nobody looks at someone like that
nobody but the century looking upon
a day
or time gazing into one's eyes*

*the deep grooves beneath your eyes
are irregular as if carved
on rocks along the seashore
but they evade scrutiny
Lord . . ! Is she also one of your
creations
or is she of water*

*wind
and time?*

*P.S. The mystical smoke
that rises as if from your fingers
touches your eyes and leaps up
enlightened
dissolving in eternity*

Armenian scientist makes an important
discovery within international group
of astrophysicists

An international team of researchers, with the participation of Institute of Astrophysics of Canarias (IAC), has discovered that the chemical structure of Earth-like planets can be very different from the bulk composition of Earth.

The statement of the IAC reads that the discovery was made by a team of scientists including Armenian astrophysicist Garik Israelian.

The statement reads that this may have a dramatic effect on the existence and formation of the biospheres and life on Earth-like planets.

"There could be billions of Earth-like planets in the Universe but a great majority of them may have a totally different

internal and atmospheric structure. Building planets in chemically non-solar environments (which are very common in the Universe) may lead to the formation of strange worlds, very different from the Earth! The amount of radioactive and some refractory elements (especially Si) may have drastic implications for planetary processes such as plate tectonics and volcanic activity", said Garik Israelian.

The full results of the research will be reported in the Astrophysical Journal Letters on March 1, 2012.

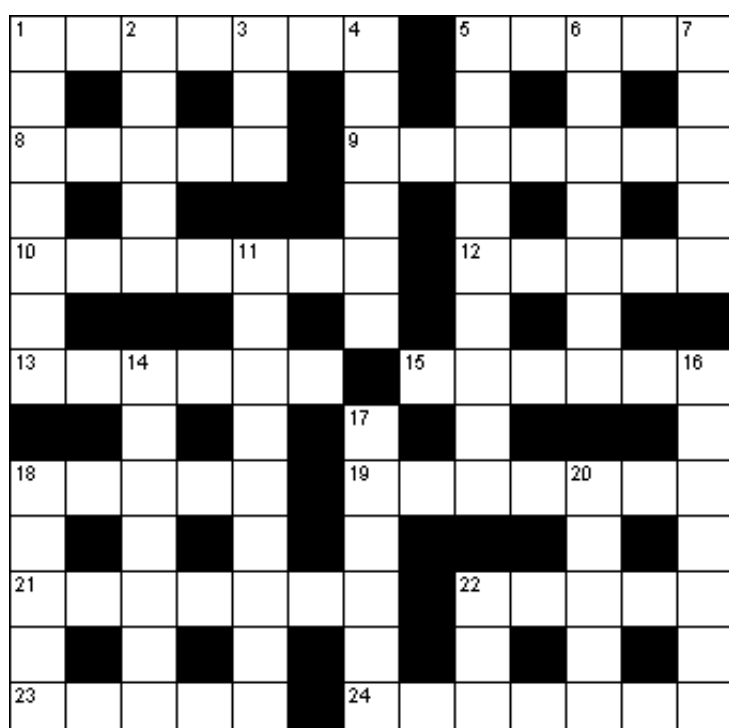
The members of the research team are: Garik Israelian and Jonay González Hernández (IAC), Elisa Delgado Mena



Brian May and Garik Israelian

and N. Santos (University of Porto, Portugal), and J. Carter-Bond and D. O'Brien (Planetary Science Institute, Tucson, Arizona).

CROSSWORD



Across

1. Entrust (7)
5. Small thin biscuit (5)
8. Dissonance (5)
9. Projecting upper floor (7)
10. The sheltered side (7)
12. Unvarnished (5)
13. Scheme (6)
15. Become visible (6)
18. Flowed back (5)
19. Athlete (7)
21. Hinged window blind (7)
22. Slight push (5)
23. Two or more contesting groups (5)
24. Striking (7)

Down

1. Tapers (7)
2. Inexperienced (5)
3. Frozen water (3)
4. Personify (6)
5. Decorative covering (9)
6. Photographic film (7)
7. Synthetic silklike fabric (5)
11. Short accounts of incidents (9)
14. Quashed (7)
16. Private place with peace and quiet (7)
17. Marine mammal (6)
18. Alleviates (5)
20. Emblem (5)
22. Nothing (3)

Answer of previous crossword



Zodiac Weekly Forecast

Aries (Mar. 20 - Apr. 19):



You may be backpedaling your way out of one or more relationships right now. What you fear is being smothered or overwhelmed. Your ruling planet, Mars, is retrograde. Be aware that the war is really internal. Perhaps you let yourself become closer than you really wanted.

Leo (July 21 - Aug. 22):



This week is about finding healing on either the physical or emotional levels. You may be the healer or the healee. If a friendship or a more significant relationship needs mending, now is the time to do so. The willingness to open your heart and mind to give and to receive is yours at this time.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22 - Dec. 20):



One or more of your family will assist if you have need of extra support at this time. You can see encouraging progress from your diet or exercise routine. You may be drawn to clean out and reorganize closets, drawers, or file cabinets. Perhaps this is due to a new improvement for your home.

Taurus (Apr. 20 - May 19):



You and your child or a lover may not be seeing eye to eye at this time. It may be best to find other things to do for distraction than spend much time together. This is not a time for open quarreling. It will only create resentment that follows you around for too long.

Virgo (Aug. 22 - Sep. 22):



This looks like a week in which you really want to say your piece, but you have a sense that would be a bad idea. Agreed. Mars continues to retrograde in Virgo. If someone "attacks" you, then you may safely defend yourself. But if you want to snipe at anyone, you'd best keep it to yourself for now.

Capricorn (Dec. 21 - Jan. 19):



You may be subject to accident at the beginning of this week. Use care with machinery and cars. You are in a somber frame of mind. Decisions in front of you have long term consequences, so you do not want to make mistakes. Aspects favor teaching, writing, communications.

Gemini (May 20 - June 20):



Irritability and a tendency to short temper may be your companions this week. Beware the temptation to obsess over minor issues. Take especially good care of your body at this time. You are in a physically low cycle and subject to accident or minor injuries with tools, or vehicles.

Libra (Sep. 23 - Oct. 22):



Necessary expenses (those not of the "fun" type) may develop this week. If not that, you could be just having a little blue mood. It is one of those times when we operate better in solitude. This is an existential dilemma that everyone encounters now and then. It will pass quickly.

Aquarius (Jan. 20 - Feb. 17):



Equipment failures early in the week may cause an accident. Use caution. You may feel aggressive or prone to pick fights. The advice is: Don't. Even if you are in the right, you will lose if you attack another now. If someone attacks you, you may defend yourself readily.

Cancer (June 21 - July 21):



You may feel out of sorts this week. Your feelings are in conflict with your ideal self and your values. You want to put your best foot forward, but circumstances do not feel quite right. If the conflict is deep, it is usually best to wait and not yield to whatever pressure is around you. You will sort it all out soon.

Scorpio (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21):



Your significant other may be acting like a horse's patootie right now, but you don't have to follow suit and play in the same court. Neither of you is being served by sharp words and irritable behavior. "Prove it if you love me" is a game left over from the cave people. Leave it alone.

Pisces (Feb. 18 - Mar. 19):



Short trips, writing, education, and connections with powerful friends are favored during this week. Everyone wants to know what you think. Be really conscious of your words and tone of voice. You may accidentally offend someone.

HUMOR

Sleeping on the job

Things To Say If You Get Caught Sleeping At Your Desk

15. "They told me at the blood bank this might happen."
14. "This is just a 15 minute power-nap like they raved about in the last time management course you sent me to."
13. "Whew! Guess I left the top off the liquid paper"
12. "I wasn't sleeping! I was meditating on the mission statement and envisioning a new paradigm!"
11. "This is one of the seven habits of highly effective people!"
10. "I was testing the keyboard for drool resistance"
9. "Actually I'm doing a "Stress Level Elimination Exercise Plan" (SLEEP) I learned it at the last mandatory seminar you made me attend."
8. "I was doing a highly specific Yoga exercise to relieve work related stress."
7. "Darn! Why did you interrupt me? I had almost figured out a solution to our biggest problem."
6. "The coffee machine is broken...."
5. "Someone must've put decaf in the wrong pot."
4. "Boy, that cold medicine I took last night just won't wear off!"
3. "Ah, the unique and unpredictable circadian rhythms of the workaholic!"
2. "I wasn't sleeping, I was trying to pick up contact lens without hands."

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WHAT? WHEN? WHERE?
Enjoy your leisure

Spendiarian National Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet
February 29, at 7 p.m.

Anush
A. Tigranian
Opera in 3 acts
Conductor:
Karen Durgaryan

Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall
March 2, at 7 p.m.

APO
Soloist: Jikmu Lee, violin
/South Korea/
Conductor: Alfredo Sorichetti /Italy/
Program:
Mozart: "Don Giovanni"
Overture
Alban Berg: Violin Concerto
Mendelssohn: Symphony No. 4 /"Italian"/
March 3, at 7 p.m.
Barekamutyun Troupe
Barekamutyun Armenian State Dance Troupe
Art Director: People's Artist of Armenia Norayr Mehrabyan.
Dedicated to International Women's Day.

Ulikhanian Club
February 27, at 9 p.m.
Vakhtang Harutyunyan

Solo Concert

Cafesjian Center for the Arts
February 29, at 8 p.m.
Classical Concert
Treasures of the World Music

Hamazgayin Theatre
February 28, at 7 p.m.
Call of Spirit
Jubilee Concert

Tumanian Yerevan State Puppet Theatre
February 28, at 7 p.m.
Flight Over The City
Author: Anush Aslibekyan
Director/Producer:
Narine Grigoryan
February 29, at 7 p.m.
Cherchez la femme
Premiere
By Aldo Nikolai
Lead roles by Varuzhan Manukyan, Tamara Petrosyan, Narek Duryan
Staging, music and adaptation by Narek Duryan
Producer:
Kristine Hovhannisyan
March 4, at 7:30 p.m.
C'est la vie
Comedy
Lead role: Narek Duryan

Quote of the week

Enjoy when you can, and endure when you must.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe



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Editor-in-Chief of the Weekly:
Haroutiun Khachatrian
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