

H.E. Prof. Armen Sarkissian: Armenia is the Example of a Country which Lives in the 21st Century



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US supports Armenian new government's efforts – John Bolton

Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received on October 25 US National Security Adviser John Bolton.

The acting Prime Minister attached importance to active Armenian-American dialogue and close cooperation.

Referring to the political developments in Armenia, he said: "The processes that followed the non-violent, velvet revolution of love and solidarity are based exceptionally on democratic values. Now we are working to create and reinforce a stable and institutional democratic country."

Pashinyan emphasized that Armenia is resolute to move forward along the path of democratic development.

John Bolton, in turn, conveyed warm greetings from US President Donald Trump. He noted that in this period of historic importance to Armenia, they attach importance to the development and deepening of Armenian-American relations.

Bolton congratulated Pashinyan on successfully leading the peaceful demarcating transition.

"The US supports the new government's efforts aimed at fighting corruption, ensuring transparency of the judicial system and improves the accountability of the government before people, which will lead to the reinforcement of the rule of law and regional stability," Bolton stated.



Forgiveness comes after recognition: Armenian President's message to Turkey's Erdogan

In the run up to the centennial of the armistice that put an end to World War First to be marked on November 11, 2018, Armenian President **Armen Sarkissian** urges world leaders to recognize or remember the Armenian genocide within that framework.

"I don't know how we can speak about the First World War without going back to the tragedy of the Armenian nation – the Armenian Genocide. The recognition or remembering by heads of state would be highly appreciated by the Armenian nation worldwide," President Sarkissian said in an interview with the Swiss Radio and Television Company.

"Recognition of the Armenian genocide is not recognition of



an individually taken tragedy of one nation. First of all it was the first genocide of the 20th century," he said.

"Because it was not prevented, because it was not recognized and condemned, it led to further

genocides in the 20th century," the Armenian President stated.

Asked what would be his message to Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Sarkissian said: *"First, I would tell him good morning Mr. President, I*

think we have an issue to discuss together. You are the President of Turkey and I am the President of Armenia. My family, my grandparents are from Erzurum, Van and Bitlis and there is a history behind my own family. Why not start talking about the relations between Turkey and Armenia? Why not speak about our individual stories?"

Armen Sarkissian said he would also speak to Erdogan about the future of their children and grandchildren.

Asked whether there could be forgiveness for Turkey, the President said that *"Christianity teaches that there is always an opportunity to forgive,"* but added that ***"forgiveness comes after recognition."***

U.S. Expects “decisive action” on Karabakh from Armenia



The United States hopes that Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan will take “decisive steps” to help resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict after his likely victory in Armenia’s upcoming parliamentary elections, President Donald Trump’s national security adviser said on October 25.

Visiting Yerevan as part of a regional tour, John Bolton also declared that Washington is ready to sell weapons to Yerevan in order to reduce “excessive foreign influence” on the South Caucasus state allied to Russia.

Bolton gave an exclusive interview to RFE/RL’s Armenian service after holding talks with Pashinyan. He said they discussed a “very wide range of subjects” and the unresolved Karabakh conflict in particular.

“We wanted to be of whatever assistance we could be behind the scenes, as well as one of the co-chairs of the Minsk Group, to see if we could help facilitate a solution between Armenia and Azerbaijan that would be mutually agreeable to both,” Bolton said. “And we recognized the obvious difficulties there. But we just felt that the prime minister was in an excellent position here in Armenia and would be after the elections to show leadership on that.”

Bolton emphasized this point at a separate news conference held in the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan. He noted that Pashinyan is widely expected to win the snap parliamentary elections expected in December.

“It is a fact that if the predictions come true he will have a very strong mandate,

and that is the most opportune moment to take strong action in a number of different respects. And if, as I appreciated what I learned in the meetings here today, ... the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh is the primary issue on the Armenian political agenda, there is no better time to try and take decisive action than right after that election,” said the top aide to Trump.

An Armenian government statement on Pashinyan’s meeting with Bolton said both men stressed the importance of “consistent” efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Karabakh dispute. They also agreed on the need for creating “the right atmosphere for the negotiation process,” the statement added without elaborating.

Bolton arrived in Yerevan from Baku where he discussed the conflict with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on Wednesday. He said in the Azerbaijani capital that Washington will continue to support a peaceful Karabakh settlement.

Speaking to RFE/RL’s Armenian service, Bolton said that a Karabakh peace would greatly help Armenia’s struggling economy as it would lead to open borders with Azerbaijan and Turkey. It is also “the surest way to reduce an excessive outside influence in Armenia,” he said in a clear reference to Russia, Armenia’s main political and military ally.

Commenting on potential security alternatives for Armenia, Bolton, who met Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow earlier this week, spoke of possible U.S. arms sales to Yerevan.

“We have restrictions Congress has imposed on the United States in terms of

[weapons] sales to Azerbaijan and Armenia because of the conflict, but there are exceptions to that,” Bolton explained.

“As I said to the prime minister, if it’s a question of buying Russian military equipment versus buying U.S. military equipment, we’d prefer the latter,” he said. “We think our equipment is better than the Russians’ anyway.

“So we want to look at that. And I think it increases Armenia’s options when it’s not entirely dependent on one major power.”

Relations with Iran, a key neighbor of Armenia, were also on the agenda of Bolton’s talks with Pashinyan. The U.S. national security adviser said he told Pashinyan that the Trump administration will enforce U.S. sanctions against Tehran “very vigorously” and that that the Armenian-Iranian border is “going to be a significant issue.”

“Obviously, we don’t want to cause damage to our friends in the process,” he said. “So I think conversation between the government of Armenia and the United States is going to be very important.”

Bolton has strongly supported Trump’s controversial decision to pull out of an international deal on Iran’s nuclear program and to re-impose the economic sanctions on the Islamic Republic earlier this year.

Like the other world powers that signed it -- France, Germany, Britain, Russia and China -- Armenia continues to support the 2015 deal. Yerevan has made clear that it will press ahead with joint economic projects with Tehran.

Bolton also noted that a large community of Armenian-American citizens in the U.S. makes Armenia’s “prospects for closer economic cooperation” with the U.S. private sector “very real” and “much better for the long term than government-to-government assistance.”

“I think this is a time to be optimistic that Armenia can emerge more on the world stage,” Bolton said, stressing that the Trump administration “considers the South Caucasus a very important area strategically” and that improving relations with Armenia is “a very high priority.”

Harry Tamrazian

Our President's Visit to Switzerland Promotes Strongly the RA Bigger Attractiveness for the World Financial Centers

On 22-25 October President of the Republic of Armenia His Excellency Professor Armen V. Sarkissian was on a working visit in Switzerland.

To say that His Excellency's visit was saturated would mean saying **NOTHING !**

Judge yourself: below... (Normally The Highlights gives only infos or the essential extracts of the speeches delivered but this time we have done a kind of exception 'cause of their being all-encompassing)

President participated at the opening of the World Investment Forum in Geneva

President Armen Sarkissian within his working visit to the Swiss Confederation, in Geneva, at the UN headquarters participated at the official opening of the World Investment Forum 2018 organized biannually by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The 10th conference this year is titled "Investments for Sustainable Development".



Before the opening of the Forum, the President of Armenia had a brief meeting with the President of the Swiss Confederation Alain Berset whom he met with also recently, in the framework of the 17th Summit of Francophonie held in Yerevan.

Present at the opening of the Forum were high-level officials from Switzerland and international organizations, members of the UNCTAD, representatives of the world business community, investors. President Alain Berset welcomed the participants of the World Investment Forum 2018.

The World Investment Forum is one of the leading and prestigious international forums in the areas of investments and sustainable development, a high-level platform where new global challenges of globalization and institutionalization in the area of investments in modern times are discussed as well as avenues to overcome them.

This year, the Forum has brought together over 4000 representatives from 160 countries, including multiple pan national corporations, influential investment

funds, leaders of major companies.

The opening of the Forum was succeeded by the UN Investment Encouragement award ceremony which was attended by President Sarkissian.

Awards were handed to the companies which have demonstrated excellent results in the UN proclaimed sustainable development goals, particularly, in fighting poverty, providing quality education and healthcare, and in the implementation of the programs to fight climate change. President Armen Sarkissian handed award to the Indian Invest India company.

Later, the President of Armenia visited the Armenian pavilion at the Invest-



ment Village of the World Investment Forum. At the pavilion, along with our country's investment climate, attractiveness and competitive advantages presented are also Armenia's tourism opportunities and particularities.

The President familiarized with the materials exhibited in the pavilion and conversed with the visitors.

President made a statement at the World Investment Forum and invited to make investments in the New Armenia, the Armenia of the 21st century

President Armen Sarkissian within his working visit in Switzerland made a statement at the Global Leaders' Summit held in the framework of the Forum.

The President of Armenia in his statement noted in particular that our country for centuries has been at the crossroads of civilizations, religions, interests and trade and has had an important role in the cooperation of the nations.

Speaking about the prospects of Armenia's economic development and investment opportunities, President Sarkissian noted that years ago, the fourth industrial or digital revolution took place in Armenia, and today one can state definitely that Armenia has the best IT sector on the territory of the former Soviet Union.

A number of major companies from the Silicon Valley and Europe have their representatives in Armenia.

Next, in his remarks he spoke about attracting investments:

"Why should someone think about investing in a country like Armenia, a small country of only 3.5 million people? I would like to remind that the reality is that it's a small state but a global nation. There are 4-5 times more Armenians living abroad. There are as many Armenians living in Russia as in Armenia. There are as many Armenians living in our capital city as in Los Angeles, or in France, or in the Middle East. So there is huge population, it's a small state but a global nation which in the 21st century is a great advantage. In the 21st century, when the world is becoming smaller and smaller, interconnected and interactive, having a global network, which not many states and nations of the world have, is an advantage.

The second is that we are a state that has very good relations – cultural, economic, political, and we signed in November 2017 the Agreement with the European Union. At the same time, Armenia is a part of the Eurasian Economic Union. Factually, Armenia is the only state that economically bridges Eurasia and Europe. And we would like to continue in the same way.

The third factor is the one I've mentioned already: We are a global nation. And that global nation in the 21st century is fully involved with the country, involved in a way that even during the revolution, which was not a revolution of the classical style – with political party, organization, demonstration – it was something of the 21st century.

Participants were not only the citizens of RA, but also Armenians who live in Argentina, France, United Kingdom, Beirut and Madrid. The whole Armenian nation, which makes around 12-15 million, was engaged in the process of political change. That same people can and will be engaged in the industrial revolution and Armenia's economic development.

The fourth reason that I would like to emphasize is the importance of education. It was known during the Soviet era that Armenia had a very high level of education. It's not an

accident that along with very good universities, along with research centers for physics, chemistry, and biology, in Armenia, in Yerevan there is a world-famous center of astrophysics. That tradition continues now, and we are proud to say that we have fantastic educational centers in Armenia and even export new educational ideas and topics to the West. Just a couple of weeks ago, in Paris the TUMO center was opened which provides extra-school and digital education. This is the avant-garde of the 21st century, the way you teach children to become IT experts. Education matters.

And then, of course, stability of the economy. Last year, Armenia showed around 7.5 percent of growth. We had a revolution this year, but we are going to show more or less the same result. So, nothing changed. There was a big political change but the economy has remained stable.

Armenia has probably the best financial and banking sector on the territory of the former

young not for its years or age but for its young spirit which means also participation in the industrial revolution."

At the conclusion of this speech, the President invited to make investments in the New Armenia, the Armenia of the 21st century.

Armen Sarkissian at the Crans Montana Forum: Armenia is the example of a country which lives in the 21st century

"Thus, as the President of a small country, I am trying at the same time to be the leader of a global nation..."



President Armen Sarkissian participated at the annual session of the *"Homeland and Global Security"* conference of the Crans Montana Forum in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Crans Montana Forum is cooperating with the UN, UNESCO, EU, NATO, EC and other international institutions and aims to encourage international cooperation.

Four events are organized annually in the framework of the Forum which brings together key players from over 100 countries to discuss in an informal setting important social, economic, and security issues.

Discussion topics of the annual session of the Conference, which this year is titled *"Homeland and Global Security"*, are current issues of international relations and risks, healthcare, cybersecurity and information administration.

At the session, President Armen Sarkissian made a statement in which he spoke in particular about the importance of finding new ways to address new global security risks.

"Today, we are standing at the crossroad of the history of civilizations," President of Armenia said. **"It's a crossroad where the old paradigms, old ways of looking at human society, or classical ways of handling global risks are not effective enough. I call all this a new era, the era of quantum risks, quantum security and quantum politics.**

It doesn't mean that I like to apply laws of quantum mechanics to human societies. No, it simply shows that the old ways of handling the world, security, global risks probably will not be effective any longer; so we have to look for new, creative solutions."

According to President Sarkissian, **"To understand historically future 50 or 100 years, we need to look 50 or 100 years back to understand where we are heading. Mathematically it means in order to continue with the line of development of history, we need to have a historic line, and then we should continue and make prediction on where we are heading to.**

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Soviet Union. There are European, Lebanese, Cypriot, Greek, Iranian banks; international banking system which is again very stable.

Armenia is economically and financially stable country. When you look at the sectors - mining, agriculture, or tourism, the new government is looking for sustainable and clean mining, natural agriculture. We are striving to increase the number of tourists for several times.

To conclude and to present the Armenia of the 21st century, I need to say that our country is not only new, has a new government, and leadership, and ideas but is also new in its spirit. I would call this not only the Velvet Revolution but the Armenian style revolution. As for its development, I will call it the Young Armenia,

Armenian food industry presented at SIAL Paris international expo

With the support of Business Armenia, eleven Armenian companies present the potential of Armenian food industry at SIAL Paris international exhibition held in Paris on October 21-25 – one of the largest expos of the industry.

This year the expo features over 7,000 food and beverage producer companies from 106 countries. Armenian Ambassador to France Ms. Hasmik Tolmajyan visited the Armenian pavilion on the opening day.

The Armenian pavilion offers organic honey, canned fruit and vegetables, pasta, processed meat products, beer, compote, mineral water, tea, sugar-free canned fruits and jams to the international large and medium distributors.

“This is a promising and an accurate marketing step. Our country has been actively working towards export to the Russian market in recent years, but introducing the Armenian production to the European market, meeting the requirements and standards of European distributors will support not only while reaching export agreements but will also greatly contribute to the development of Armenian product quality and marketing”- stated Mr. Markus Azadian, the head of the event department of Business Armenia.

Exports contracts have already been signed during the exhibition. The



distributors of SIAL Paris 2018 are very much interested in Armenian organic honey, jams, dried fruits, teas, and sugar-free canned fruits.

Armenian tax chief denies “systemic” corruption

Corruption among Armenian tax inspectors is not widespread anymore, the head of the State Revenue Committee (SRC), Davit Ananyan, insisted on October 25 following the arrest of three such officials facing extortion charges.

Armenia’s Special Investigative Service (SIS) reported earlier in the day that they stand accused of forcing, through “unfounded” claims, an entrepreneur to pay them 1 million drams (\$2,100) in bribes.

An SIS statement said police arrested the three SRC officials on Monday immediately after one of them was caught red-handed accepting the kickback in his office. All of them were subsequently



charged with bribery and extortion and remanded in pre-trial custody, said the statement.

The suspects hold senior posi-

tions in an SRC unit dealing with small businesses. Investigators have publicized only their initials.

“We are waging a relentless fight

against corruption,” Ananyan said, commenting on the arrests. “I continue to insist that there is no systemic corruption [within the SRC,] but we do fight against sporadic [corruption] cases. We are grateful for being helped in that endeavor.”

“I am sure that the bulk of the [SRC] staff works in line with the new [political] realities,” he told reporters.

Corruption within the Armenian tax and customs services making up the SRC has for decades been a serious problem. Ananyan pledged to tackle it when Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan appointed him to run the government agency in May.

Minister of economic development and investments meets with World Bank Country Manager for Armenia



Acting minister of economic development and investments Tigran Khachatryan on October 25 met with Country Manager of the World Bank for Armenia Sylvie Bossoutrot, the ministry told Armenpress.

Sylvie Bossoutrot congratulated Tigran Khachatryan on appointment and wished him success in this responsible work.

In his turn the acting minister

thanked Sylvie Bossoutrot and stated that he has always cooperated with the World Bank with pleasure.

During the meeting the sides discussed the developments over new cooperation framework with Armenia. They also discussed the activities aimed at improving Armenia’s position in the World Bank’s Doing Business report, the expectations from the report.

Armenia awarded for quality of online information portals



Armenia, Iraq, Lesotho and Montenegro have received Global Enterprise Registration (GER.co) awards for the quality of online information portals that provide detailed, up-to-date information on creating a business, during UNCTAD's World Investment Forum in Geneva, Switzerland.

Armenia, Iraq, Lesotho and Montenegro are among 134 countries listed on GER.co that have information portals describ-

ing the business creation process step-by-step, from the user's point of view, showing all the necessary contacts, forms, costs and other requirements for each step. They gained a maximum rating on GER.co by making their business creation process entirely transparent.

Judges said "the Republic of Armenia has made impressive progress in the field of government, featuring prominently in international rankings for the quality of its public service and ease of doing business. The government of Armenia, in cooperation with the Armenia Business Council, has taken an additional step by publishing its business registration procedure online."

"GER's objective is not to give countries good or bad marks but to promote the exchange of good practices and offer criteria to assess the quality of business registration websites," UNCTAD's director of investment and enterprise James Zhan said at the 24 October awards ceremony.

To meet this goal, Mr. Zhan announced he was launching a campaign to invite all countries in the world to put their business creation requirements online by the year 2020 and to list them on GER.co. He also thanked the United States of America for its generous support of this project.

HayPost issues new postcard dedicated to International Philatelic Exhibition

A special two-sided postcard, dedicated to the International Philatelic Exhibition has been cancelled by "HayPost" CJSC with a special postmark in the premises of Yerevan History Museum within the framework of the International Philatelic Exhibition dedicated to the 2800th anniversary of Yerevan arranged by the Union of Philatelists of the Republic of Armenia.

The print run of the two-side postcard is 500 pcs. The author of the postcard's design is the designer of "HayPost" CJSC David Dovlatyan.

The postcard depicts a fragment of a



panoramic view of night Yerevan at the background of Mount Ararat, "Zvartnots" airport, the aerial view of the Republic Square and a photo taken from the stairs of Cascade.

The souvenir sheet was cancelled by the Acting Deputy Minister of Transport, Communication and Information Technologies Armen Arzumanyan, the Director of the Yerevan History Museum Armine Sargsyan, the Chairman of "HayPost" Juan Pablo Gechidjian, the President of the Union of Philatelists of the Republic of Armenia Hovik Musayelyan.

Our President's Visit to Switzerland Promotes Strongly the RA Bigger Attractiveness for the World Financial Centers

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To simplify, let me take four activities of humans: science, technologies, human body, and human society.

It is obvious for everybody for the last two hundred years we have had tremendous achievements in the area of science. And I am speaking from Isaak Newton, Maxwell to the great scientists of the 20th century, like Albert Einstein, one of the founders of quantum mechanics and so on. Their discoveries are related to new technologies, new industrial revolution and changes within human society.

The second is the thing we call industrial revolution. It is very important to understand that whatever we call industrial revolution is in reality not revolutions but evolutions. And that evolutionary curve, which at the very beginning was slower, at the end of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st century dramatically went up.



At the initial period, 100 years was required to introduce big difference in simple people's life. Another change started 50 years ago, and next was the fourth industrial revolution which actually was not a revolution. In 25-30 years, we saw that our lives have changed so much that we called it a revolution but in reality it was a recognition of a fast evolution.

The fourth element of our activities is the human being. I would like to bring this example: only some weeks ago, the Nobel Prize was awarded to two scientists – one from the US, the other from Japan for their wonderful discovery on cancer treatment. That discovery is the result of many scientists' 50 years long research, they found a way on how our immune system should recognize cancer and fight it. It will have a tremendous impact on human lives. In due time, it will have its tremendous impact also on the fourth line, on which I would like to speak briefly – the human society.

If we step back, we will see that science and industrial revolution had tremendous influence. It allowed to move from feudalism to capitalism which at that time was the driving force behind

the growth. But at the same time, simultaneously started a process which was dealing with social justice, equality. We call that process socialism. The world started to divide between capitalism and socialism or communism which existed in parallel until recently.

A new phenomenon, which is on the rise today and which is more related to social justice and equality, is civil society. Individual voices of citizens now matter. Because of that the entire world is becoming more and more quantum. Individual voices can have a great influence on politics.

Let's get back to our new society of the 21st century. Allow me to bring an example from my own country. I am coming from a country where after two weeks after I had assumed the office, a revolution took place. We had a critical mass of people who were against corruption, injustice, etc. People's patience reached a critical point. For me, that process was similar to a ther-

ing, the more manageable all that, the smaller risks will be."

The President of Armenia H.E. Professor Armen V. Sarkissian noted that the 21st century is a century of global security, stability, new policies, quantum stance of our societies, as well as a new century of risks and security which will begin in 2020: "We are standing at the gates of a new world, and we need to change our mentality, our approaches regarding the system of values," President Armen Sarkissian said. "For me, Armenia is the example of a country which lives in the 21st century because we reflect current tendencies existing in the world. We are a small country but a global nation. As many Armenians live in Russia as in Armenia. Yerevan – one of most ancient cities of the world, which is 2800 years old, has Armenian population which equals that in Los Angeles. In a number of areas, such as information technologies, banking system, Armenia is among the leaders the world.



monuclear reaction. The idea is that a person or a group or a political party with great energy and purpose created a reaction of changes – revolution."

In his statement, the President referred also to terrorism and the fight against it: "Terrorism is a global risk, - President Armen Sarkissian noted. "Can we send troops all over the world to stop terrorism? The answer is no. I think we need to change the environment. We need to find new ways to fight terrorism. New ways to fight against epidemics because it's not a classical epidemic. Today it may start in Hong Kong, the next victim is in Argentina and not in the neighboring China because we live in a globalized world.

This is also a new period of globalization because globalization will not stop. Today, it's moving even faster but along with that we are witnessing the rise of civil society.

We need to find new ways to deal with global security, we ways to handle global risks, and we need to have new ideas to move the country forward to make it stable and predictable because these two factors and risks are interconnected. The better we understand where we are head-

Thus, as the President of a small country, I am trying at the same time to be the leader of a global nation," President Sarkissian concluded.

President anticipates active participation of the international financial institutions to the implementation of different programs in our country: UNCTAD

President Armen Sarkissian on October 24, in Geneva met with the Secretary General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Mukhisa Kituyi.

The President of Armenia stressed the importance of the UNCTAD's assistance to the economy of our country.

Noting that in different areas of economy, such as information technologies, education, and agriculture Armenia possesses great potential and ambitious programs, President Sarkissian said that our country anticipates active participation of the inter-



national financial institutions to the implementation of various programs.

The Secretary General of UNCTAD in his turn hailed Armenia's growing participation in different programs.

At the meeting, the parties discussed Armenia's investment policies, external debt management, and issues related to the deepening of cooperation.

Armen Sarkissian: Today's Armenia is moving and will continue to move in the right direction

Meeting with the reps of the Swiss-Armenian community...

President Armen Sarkissian in Geneva met with the representatives of the Swiss-Armenian community.

His Excellency noted that we have entered a new phase of the implementation of national goals in the general picture of the global economic, especially, industrial and technological very rapid changes.

Stressing the importance of uniting pan-national potential around all-Armenian agenda, the President said, **"We have an important advantage: Our small country in reality represents aspirations of a huge nation, its objectives and interests. Your children and grandchildren should be proud to be Armenians and belong to a brilliant nation which in this life has a huge mission and goal."**

"People are our true power and wealth," the President of Armenia said and added, **"Today's Armenia, which is a new and young Armenia, is moving and I hope will be moving in the right direction, towards freedom, human dignity. The time has come for every Armenian to be involved in our country's daily work, each on his or her place, contributing within one's abilities to the implementation of the patriotic programs and advancement of Fatherland."**

At the meeting, discussed was also the issue of strengthening the Armenia-Spyurk ties, advancing them in a new fashion, as well as the issues of the preservation of the Armenian national identity and opportunities of a more active engagement of our compatriots living abroad in the life of Armenia.

President Armen Sarkissian met with the Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia Aram I in Geneva

In Geneva President Armen Sarkissian met with His Holiness, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia Aram I.

President Sarkissian once again congratulated him on the 50th anniversary of his spiritual mission, wished him health and long years of service.

"For fifty years, you have been serving devotedly our Apostolic Church, our Fatherland and the entire Armenian nation," the President said and expressed confidence that Aram I has yet many things to accomplish because Armenia, Artsakh and Spyurk need his active work not only in Antelias, different centers of the Armenian Apostolic Church but also in the framework of diplomatic and political resolution of the Armenian issues.

The President expressed confidence that just as 50 years ago, today too and in the future, Catholicos Aram I will serve the Church, Fatherland, and our nation with the same vigor, spirit and youthful agility.

Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia expressed thanks for the wishes and noted that Fatherland, national, cultural values, the Armenian Cause have always been the pivots of his fifty years long service. In his turn, Aram I hailed services rendered by the President to Fatherland. **"President of Armenia, prime minister, those who serve Fatherland are, in a certain way, apostles, those who have a sense**

of duty." His Holiness said Armenia must be on the first place for any member of the clergy. **"I assure you that I will continue to serve Armenia and the Armenian people with the same dedication and a greater vigor,"** Catholicos Aram I said.

The President and the Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia spoke about the role of the Apostolic Church, defining it as one of the axles of the national identity.

"I agree that if we have a number of vital axles of national identity and statehood, the first among them is the Armenian Apostolic Church which for over 700 years substituted statehood, preserved our national identity, united the people, helped to preserve the language, culture, live with hope and to make that hope a mission to have our own independent statehood and state," President Sarkissian said. As you said, those in the state service and members of the clergy are apostles, people who have a mission and that mission has different objectives. We have accomplished one of them – on the small part of our historical Armenia we established statehood, and not one but two; however, our mission doesn't stop there. Missions are huge, thus it is extremely important that the people are filled with respect for our two states – Armenia and Artsakh and also feel pride for their national identity and appreciate the mission which the state and our people have, and appreciate the role of the Apostolic Church which is our national pivot."

According to Catholicos Aram I, in the absence of statehood, the Church was our spiritual Fatherland, and State-Church relations and cooperation have always been close. **"Naturally, each of them has different functions, however, in the end they cross at one point. That point is the nation, Fatherland. Thus, I believe that in Armenia and in Spyurk cooperation with the Church should be unconditional and comprehensive. Fatherland belongs to us all, and we own to the empowerment of Fatherland"**.

President Armen Sarkissian once again thanked His Holiness for his devotion.

Notably, during his stay in Switzerland, President of the RA H.E. Professor Armen V. Sarkissian hold meetings with the leadership of the world known international companies...

President Sarkissian proposed to hold one of the upcoming meetings of Horasis in Armenia

In Geneva, President Armen Sarkissian met with Frank-Jürgen Richer - a German entrepreneur, founding director of the Horasis Center which is operating in Switzerland.

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Horasis is an independence analytical center which organizes meetings and proposes strategic solutions for the challenges which our world and corporations are facing today.

Among participants of the Horasis events are well-known public figures, including heads of state and government, presidents of international corporations.

Frank-Jürgen Richter offered the President of Armenia to become a special speaker at the annual of Horasis gathering which will take place next year, in Portugal. President Sarkissian, in his turn, proposed Horasis to look into the possibility of conducting one of the upcoming meetings in Armenia.

The parties stressed also the importance of cooperation with the Armenian analytical centers as well as implementation of joint programs in the area of education.

Armen Sarkissian: Armenia could become a very important hub between the EU and EAEU member states

In Geneva President Armen Sarkissian had a meeting with the leadership of the largest venture company from Singapore Vertex Venture Holdings, Swiss Sustainable Finance company from Switzerland, renowned German Siemens company which is a member of the Siemens Financial Services group.

The purpose of the meeting was to present to foreign partners Armenia's investment field, prospects of cooperation in different areas.

Discussed were issues related to a productive cooperation with the mentioned companies. The parties also spoke about introducing their experience in our country as well as opportunities to implement projects with the Armenian companies.

In particular, the agreement was reached to visit Armenia and hold discussions on cooperation with the RA government.

The President of Armenia introduced the most rapidly developing and promis-

including Swiss banks. Its activities are aimed at "clean economy" and development of clean industry which is an essential issue for Armenia.

With the Siemens Financial Services company discussed was a wide range of issues pertaining to the cooperation in the energy, industry, infrastructure areas. It was particularly noted that Armenia, as a member of the EAEU could become a bridge to the Eurasian markets.

President Sarkissian: We should be able to build a stable and predictable state

President Armen Sarkissian and Mrs. *Nouneh Sarkissian* visited the headquarters of Franck Muller company and met with the President of the company, the well-known Armenian-Swiss entrepreneur and benefactor Vartan Sirmakes. Accompanied by Mr. Sirmakes, President Sarkissian toured various divisions of Franck Muller, visited the exhibition and event center, familiarized with the ambitious development programs of the Company.

The President highly praised Vartan Sirmakes's contribution to Armenia's development, particularly his programs implemented in Armenia and Artsakh.

The Armenian-Swiss businessman in his turn noted that his sons and himself are ready to deepen their participation to the development of Armenia and Artsakh through various programs.

Noting that during his visits abroad, he sees it as his duty to constantly speak and tell about Armenia, President Sarkissian viewed as a paramount task making

Armenia an attractive country for investors. **"We should be able to build a stable and predictable state where long-term programs can be designed and implemented successfully,"** the President of Armenia underscored. He also stressed the importance of Diaspora young generation's strong ties with Fatherland and their involvement in Armenia's development programs.

And the last but not he least, NOT AT ALL!

The Highlights just has got a RE-



ing areas of the Armenian economy. President Sarkissian noted that Armenia, as a member of the EAEU, could become a very important hub between the EU and EAEU member states, considering that all prerequisites are in place.

The Vertex Venture Holdings is a world venture fund company which is focused on venture investments in the areas of information technology and healthcare.

The Swiss Sustainable Finance unites 110 member and partner organizations,

ALLY TERRIFIC news: upon invitation from the UK Royal Family Mr President and Mrs Nouneh Sarkissian participated in the festive events dedicated to the 70th birthday of Prince Charles.

So we The Highlights that is the oldest (since 1993) English language media leaflet in Armenia cordially congratulate His Royal Highness who is a good friend to Armenia and in particular the City of Yerevan on the occasion of his glorious jubilee.

Former ruling party set to run in snap elections

Former President Serzh Sargsyan's Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) gave more indications on October 26 that it will participate in early parliamentary elections expected in December.

A senior HHK figure, Vahram Baghdasaryan, said the party will hold a conference "in the coming days" to finally decide whether to enter the parliamentary race.

"Our aim is to form a parliament befitting a parliamentary republic," he told reporters. "We are entering the [new] National Assembly to show and restore our face. We will be a radical-constructive opposition



force."

Baghdasaryan said the conference will also decide who will top the list of the HHK's candidates in case of its participation in the elections. He declined to specify whether Sargsyan

would be the party's top candidate.

Sargsyan, who ruled Armenia from 2008-2018, has made very few public appearances and statements since mass protests led by Nikol Pashinyan, the country's current prime

minister, forced him to resign in April.

According to some media reports, the HHK's electoral list will likely be headed by former Defense Minister Vigen Sargsyan, a U.S.-educated protégé of the ex-president.

The HHK won Armenia's last parliamentary elections held in April 2017. Observers believe that it is now too unpopular to make a strong showing in December. Some of them say that it would fail to win any parliament seats.

Earlier this month, the HHK leadership tried unsuccessfully to delay the snap polls until next May or June.

Pashinyan certain Electoral Code amendments create more favorable conditions for political forces

Acting Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan says he is convinced that the adoption of the Electoral Code amendments bill is the right thing to do for recovering the political arena and making the elections more favorable.

Pashinyan told reporters on October 27 that after the October 21 local self-governance elections, as well as after the Yerevan City Council elections, it became clear for everyone that the problem isn't in the Electoral Code.

"For us, it doesn't matter which electoral code we will head for elections, but I believe that with these changes we are making the conditions for the political forces more favorable, including for the opposition, in order for them to be able to measure their power through a more political electoral process," the acting PM said.

Pashinyan stressed that if Republicans were saying that the Venice Commission will oppose, they got convinced that the commission doesn't oppose it, thus let Republicans say that they are against it.

Pashinyan said that Republicans are heading the wrong path, and if they will continue maintaining this conduct the electoral process will unavoidably go within the logic of revolution-counter revolution, because with these messages



they are showing that the idea of returning to power is still alive inside of them. This, according to Pashinyan, is well beyond a fantasy genre.

"This atmosphere is working more against them, therefore it is in their interest that the electoral process goes entirely in the proportional electoral procedure," Pashinyan said.

Asked about the ARF's complaint about not accepting their recommendations

over the electoral code amendments, Pashinyan said: "I believe the working group has given complete answers to these questions: the recommendations that were feasible were accepted, those that were not, were not accepted, and in case of the open proportional list we will have tens of kilometers or meters long ballots, where every single voting can last 15-20 minutes, and this means to fail the electoral process".

The New York Times: Met's Armenia show is one for the ages

The Metropolitan Museum of Art gives the blockbuster treatment to Armenia, the oldest Christian country in the world, author Jason Farago writes in an article published by The New York Times.

They were mostly young people who came out in the streets of Armenia this past spring, waving balloons of red, orange and blue. They were fed up with their ineffectual government, and on their smartphones they watched the progress of an opposition leader, the former journalist Nikol Pashinyan, as he walked in protest across central Armenia. When he arrived in Yerevan, the capital of this former Soviet republic, the crowds sang, shouted and swore to go on strike. Less than six weeks later, Mr. Pashinyan was named interim prime minister of Armenia, ushered into office on the shoulders of the extraordinary, nonviolent “velvet revolution.”

Armenia is a country with so much history it can overwhelm you. This spring we learned its future might be as eventful as its past, which makes it a timely moment for “Armenia!,” the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s eye-opening appraisal of the art,



manuscripts, textiles and religious artifacts of a nation that is still adding surprising chapters to its dramatic history.

Mr. Pashinyan attended the opening last month. There was no sign, alas, of Kim Kardashian, our most famous Armenian-American, but His Holiness Karekin II, the catholicos (or supreme patriarch) of the Armenian church, was

also spotted in the galleries; the country was the first to make Christianity its official religion, and this exhibition, packed with weighty stone crosses and richly illuminated gospels, is a testament to the centrality of the church to Armenian cultural identity. No museum has ever mounted such a large exhibition of Armenian art, and most of the 140 objects here come

from museum collections and churches in Armenia and rarely travel.

“Armenia!” has been organized by Helen C. Evans, the Met’s curator of Byzantine art, and focuses specifically on the art and history of the country’s medieval period. It is not, despite the exclamation point in its title, an exhibition that favors razzle-dazzle. In fact, “Armenia!” is a rather bookish sort of blockbuster, concentrating heavily on illuminated manuscripts, and presented in low lighting to protect the gospels and romances on view. There is some ecclesiastical flash, in the form of bejeweled crucifixes and gold-plated censers, but this is primarily an exhibition of book illustration, unlike any other medieval manuscript show you’re likely to see.

Armenia had a long middle age, extending from the early fourth century, when St. Gregory the Illuminator converted the king, Tiridates III, to Christianity — an event commemorated at the opening of this show by a stela of porous stone, carved with portraits of the two men — until the late 16th century, when printed books made their first appearance. This mountainous region was a crossroads of influences from east and west, but Armenian art scrambles simple understandings of “Europe” and “Asia,” exhibiting a stylistic cosmopolitanism even as it used Christian identity to define itself within the world of Islam.

Armenian book artists were not anonymous; they signed their names, had their own styles, and took risks. One volume here, flamboyantly illuminated by Sargis Pidzak in 1331, is open to a picture of a priest praying before St. Matthew in a field of gold leaf, while initial letters of the Gospels dance with the angels. (Note the pointy black hood worn by the kneeling priest: this distinctly Armenian clerical garb is still worn today.) A Bible from the



later medieval period, illuminated by an artist named Hakob, depicts God as a ruddy-faced, goggle-eyed young man, as if in awe at his own creation. In a 16th-century manuscript relating the life of Alexander the Great, done in Rome by an Armenian bishop called Zak'ariay of Gnunik', the Macedonian king's ship is swallowed by an enormous brown crab, hooking the sails with its pincers as its mouth gapes open.

The Bibles and ritual books here are testament to a relatively literate medieval society, one with its own Christian identity, and one that used (and still uses) its own involute alphabet, developed in 405 by the cleric and scholar now known as St. Mesrop Mashtots'. This new alphabet, with its arcing capital letters, was the key to the conversion of Armenian society into a Christian society, since religious services could now be conducted in the vernacular. A densely lettered, unspaced sheet of parchment here, whose translation of the Book of Corinthians could date from as early as the fifth century, is one of more than a dozen objects on loan to the Met from the Matenadaran Mesrop Mashtots' Institute.

There's more than manuscripts. Beautifully woven vestments and altar frontals affirm that Armenian believers saw as much beauty in services as in the scriptoria. Reliquaries in the form of St. Gregory's right arm were popular, and one silver, gem-studded specimen here is said to contain the remains of his last known male descendant. Gold earrings with dangling pendants shaped like crescent moons and birds, dating to the 11th century, are a rare example of secular material here, and their filigreed panels reflect the influence of neighboring Iran.

Perhaps the most distinctive artworks of the Armenian Middle Ages are the khachkars, or cross-stones, found across the



Southern Caucasus. These slabs of tuff, basalt or dolomite are carved with highly decorative crosses, and their elaborate patterns suggest the influence of Islamic culture even as they attest to an unshakable Christian faith.

Medieval Armenia was not a centralized polity, and frequent foreign incursions — from the seventh century, when overlords practicing the new religion of Islam invaded greater Armenia; to the 13th century, when Mongol warriors raided the east of Anatolia; to the invasions of the Ottomans and Safavids in the later medieval era — were a constant threat. What kept it all together was their own autocephalous church, not answerable to Rome or Constantinople. Rival kings and rich merchant families competed to deck out the most lavish cathedrals, and in the later medieval period scriptoria popped up in monasteries

across greater Armenia, down into Crimea, and even as far as Italy, the source of several manuscripts here.

By the end of the 17th century, when Armenian power had flourished along new trade routes, an Italian aristocrat living in Constantinople received a gift: a panoramic map of the world of Armenian influence. Known as the Tabula Chorographica Armenica, this 12-foot painted map includes nearly 800 sites of Armenian Christian worship, stretching past the Caucasus to Jerusalem and Iran. In one corner the bearded St. Gregory destroys idols in an Ottoman town, while laymen and clergy, painted in a style more Persian than European (softer features, finer lines), chat amiably outside Etchmiadzin Cathedral, the Armenian equivalent of the Vatican. The peaks of Mount Ararat, the landing place, according to the Bible, of Noah's ark, are breasts of solid green.

This boggling showstopper of a map was not meant for navigation, and the elite merchants who gazed on it would have appreciated its expression of the depth of Armenian trade routes in the new early modern age. To modern eyes at the Met, it has other overtones: its breadth recalls the extent of the contemporary Armenian diaspora, and its numerous churches in Ottoman territory portend the genocide to come during World War I.

Armenians, as this great show attests, have long been at the mercy of outside forces, and the beauty of this show is tinged with conquest and subjection. But the young revolutionaries who marched and sang in Yerevan this spring — such a rare gleam of hope in this global age of authoritarianism — knew that the manuscript of Armenian history is still being written.



OSCE media freedom representative encourages Armenian authorities to bolster media freedom

Concluding a two-day visit to Yerevan yesterday, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Harlem Désir, welcomed the commitment of the Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to strengthen freedom of the media, and encouraged the authorities to undertake additional initiatives.

During his visit to Yerevan, in addition to meeting the Acting Prime Minister, Désir met with Acting Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, and Acting Justice Minister Artak Zeynalyan to discuss challenges to, and the promotion of, media freedom and other areas where the OSCE Representative may offer legal expertise and assistance.

"I welcome the commitment expressed by the authorities to strengthen media freedom as a cornerstone of democracy. This is especially important in the context of the country's current political developments," said Désir. "I encourage the government to vigorously promote a safe and enabling environment for journalists, and to consider steps to strengthen media pluralism, independence of the public broadcaster, transparency of media ownership and access to information."

The Representative called on the authorities to prioritize the safety of journalists and to act against any threats and intimidation media workers may face. He underlined the importance of measures to further facilitate public access to information. In the meetings, Désir discussed the need for reforms that would guarantee the independence and accountability of public service media and of the National Commission on Television and Radio. He further stressed the necessity of ensuring that the transition



from analogue to digital broadcasting will contribute to media pluralism.

The Representative also discussed the challenge of "fake news" and freedom of the media with the Acting Prime Minister.

"Armenia is a very important partner in the promotion of media freedom in the OSCE region. After the elections it will be important to see strong political will from the future government to protect and advance media freedom in the country," said Désir. "My Office stands ready to work with all stakeholders and contribute with expert advice and recommendations in line with OSCE media freedom commitments and international standards."

Désir also met with representatives of media and

civil society organizations, including the Yerevan Press Club, the Media Initiatives Centre, the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression, the Freedom of Information Center, the Public Journalism Club, the Armenian Service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, the MediaMax News Agency, the Eurasia Partnership Foundation, the Regional Studies Center, EVN Report, CivilNet and Hetq. These meetings offered the Representative the opportunity to hear a diversity of professional viewpoints on the media freedom situation in the country. In separate meetings, the Representative also met with the Deputy Human Rights Defender, Artyom Sedrakyan and the Director of Public TV of Armenia, Margarita Grigoryan.

Still no clarity on new head of CSTO

Armenia said on Wednesday that it is still discussing with Russia and other ex-Soviet allies the thorny issue of who should replace Yuri Khachaturov, a retired Armenian army general, as head of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

The new Armenian government moved to replace Khachaturov in July after he was charged in connection with the 2008 post-election violence in Yerevan.

The Russian Foreign Ministry denounced Khachaturov prosecution as politically motivated and said Yerevan must formally "recall" him before trying to name his replacement. A Kremlin official told Russian media that the Armenian authorities' decision dealt a "colossal blow to the image of the whole organization."

Russia and two other CSTO member states, Kazakhstan and



Belarus, are reportedly reluctant to agree to the appointment of another Armenian as secretary general of the Russian-led defense bloc. The issue will be high on the agenda of the next CSTO summit ex-

pected later this year.

"Consultations with relevant CSTO bodies are still going on," said Anna Naghdalyan, the spokeswoman for the Armenian Foreign Ministry. "The consultations are

aimed at finding consensus-based solutions within the framework of the CSTO statutes as well as clarifying those statutes."

Naghdalyan argued that the statutes do not set explicit rules for changing CSTO secretary generals.

"The results of the consultations will be made public when they are submitted to the [CSTO's decision-making] Collective Security Council for approval," she told a news conference.

The CSTO member states agreed in 2015 that their representatives will take turns to run the organization on a rotating basis. They appointed Khachaturov as secretary general in April 2017 after almost two years of delay reportedly resulting from Kazakhstan's and Belarus's reluctance to have an Armenian hold the position because of their warm ties with Azerbaijan.

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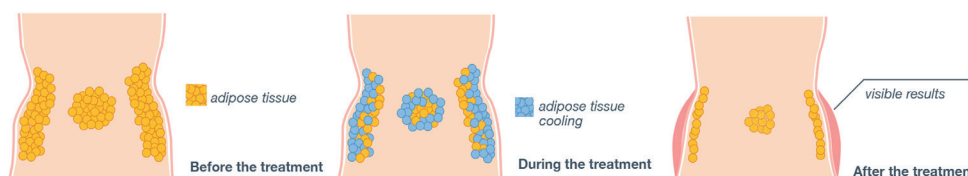
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The publisher: NT Holding LTD
Լրատվական գործունեություն իրականացնող՝
ՆՏ Հոլդինգ ՍՊԸ

Ծավալը՝ 2.25 մամուլ, տպաքանակը՝ 1500
Circulation: 1500 print copies and
15600 copies by e-mail list in PDF format

Weekly Newspaper, Since May 4, 1993

President of the NT Media Holding:
TIGRAN HARUTYUNYAN
Editor-in-Chief of the Media Holding:
GAYANEH ARAKELIAN
Director of the weekly:
MARINA HARUTYUNYAN
Chief Correspondent: **GOURGEN KHAZHAKIAN**
Proofreader: **SUSANNA MKRTCHIAN**
Layout: **DIANA GRIGORYAN**
Համարի թող. պատ.՝ Մ.Հարությունյան

ISSN 1829-0604

Գրանցման վկայականի համարը՝
03U898368, տրված՝ 11.01.2013թ.
Registration certificate and the date:
273.110.00512, 15.12.1995

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