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Armenia and the EU



During his visit to Brussels President Serzh Sargsyan met with the high officials of the EU including the EU president Herman Van Rompuy.

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HIGHLIGHT

Clinton answers
American
Armenians with
evasive phrases

In her written reply to the letter of protest presented by the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) U.S. State Secretary Hillary Clinton refrained from calling the Armenian Genocide ‘the business of historians’, however, at the same time she did not condemn it as a crime. Moreover, she did not officially acknowledge the genocide as she and President Obama had promised to do, Asbarez reports.

ANCA wrote to Hillary Clinton after her announcement on January 26, 2012, that she considers the genocide to be the business of historical debates.

The successful visit to Brussels

by David Petrosyan

The European direction of Armenia's foreign policy was not given priority yesterday and the working visit of President Serzh Sargsyan to Belgium on March 5-7 was only to confirm that choice.

It should be noted in this connection that most of the visit was dedicated not to Belgium itself, as was presented at first, but to the meetings held at NATO, the European Union Headquarters, and other offices of international organizations headquartered in Brussels.

Indeed, during his visit to Belgium the Armenian President met only with President of the Belgian Senate Sabine de Bethune, Vice President Armand De Decker, wrote an entry to the Golden Book of the Senate, after which the sides exchanged gifts.

On the first day of his visit President Sargsyan also met with representatives of Armenian organizations in Belgium. In particular, the president said at the meeting that in recent period Armenia made serious progress in its relations with the European Union

and is currently conducting negotiations on the Association Agreement on the one hand and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement and visa facilitation on the other, which will give impetus to the expansion of cooperation between the Republic of Armenia and the EU and the further development of their relations.

So during his working visit to Belgium, President Sargsyan met neither with the head of the government nor with the head of the state – the King Albert II.

The meetings at the NATO, the EU Headquarters, and offices of various international organizations were quite another matter. For instance, on March 6 Serzh Sargsyan met with Secretary General of NATO Anders Fogh Rasmussen and attended a session conducted in a NATO Council + Armenia, “28+1” format. At the meeting the president delivered a long speech, in which he touched upon the relations of Armenia and the NATO, the regional developments, the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, and the challenges facing Armenia. He

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President Serzh Sargsyan met with the President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy

On March 6 in Brussels, President Serzh Sargsyan met with the President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the President of Armenia and President of the European Council made a joint statement.



Remarks by Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, following the

meeting with Serzh Sargsyan, President of the Republic of Armenia

I am happy to welcome President Sargsyan to Brussels. Last time we saw each other was in Warsaw at the Eastern Partnership summit. And like last time,

we had a good discussion on a wide range of issues of the bilateral and regional agenda.

I would like to make three

short points:

First. As you know, the EU is, at its heart, a community of values. Ultimately, these values guide our policies, and these values are reflected in our approach to partners, in this case to Armenia as to the other countries in the Eastern Partnership.

I was therefore happy to welcome your, Mr President, commitment to reforms. We encourage Armenia to continue on the path of reforms. This provides the basis for the deepening and broadening of our bilateral relationship. It also shows your readiness to engage with the EU in an “EU-Armenian Partnership for reform”.

I was also happy to hear that you once again confirmed your intention to do all you can to ensure that the Parliamentary elections in May and the Presidential elections next year will be conducted in conformity with inter-

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Attempts to create alternative formats are detrimental to the negotiation process, Armenian President states

Armenian President stated in Brussels on March 7 that “the attempts to create alternative formats for NK talks and adoption of resolutions containing unbalanced formulations are only detrimental to the negotiation process”.

The President said this as a result of his meeting with the Chairman of the European Parliament Martin Schulz.

Serzh Sargsyan stressed that the Armenian side sees only peaceful solution to the problem within the framework of negotiations in the OSCE Minsk Group format.

After making the statement, answering the question on how the

Armenian President assesses the attempts of discussions and adoption of resolutions on the Nagorno Karabakh in the European Parliament, Serzh Sargsyan said:

“We are not concerned about this as it’s not the first time that the European Parliament has touched upon the Nagorno Karabakh issue. All the European structures supported the just demands of the Nagorno Karabakh people back in late 80s and early 90s. I am sure the European Parliament can’t be guided by various principles while adopting a resolution on one and the same issue. So, there is nothing to worry about”.



Serzh Sargsyan met with the representatives of the Armenian organizations of Belgium

President Serzh Sargsyan, who was in the Kingdom of Belgium on a working visit, in the evening of March 5 met with the representatives of the Armenian organizations of Belgium.

The President of Armenia stressed the importance of the meetings with the Armenian communities and stressed the indispensable role and import of Spyurk for the Republic of Armenia. “I am grateful that you prove that it is possible to be a Belgian and preserve and develop your Armenia identity,” President Serzh Sargsyan said during his meeting with the representatives of the Armenian community of Belgium. According to the President, in each country the Armenian community presents itself as a unique bridge between the given country and the motherland, and expressed wish for that bridge to be strong and reliable. “I sincerely wish that your children and their generations preserve their Armenian identity, bringing their contribution to the strengthening of the Armenian-Belgian friendship and our cooperation. All I said is true for all and each of us. We are strong with our bright individualities, but we are even stronger with our unity,” Serzh Sargsyan told the participants of the meeting.

In his introductory remarks and also in the Q&A session with the

representatives of the Armenian community he spoke in detail about our country’s relations with Belgium, EU and NATO and prospects of their development, Armenia-Diaspora relations, as well as about the issues of Armenia’s foreign and domestic agendas, and regional challenges. He also presented recent developments in the NK peace process, Armenia-Turkey relations and some other issues.

The President noted that in recent times, Armenia has registered considerable progress in its relations with EU and today on one hand we conduct negotiations around the Association Agreement and on the other – on the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement and visa facilitation which will become a serious impetus for the expansion of Armenia-EU cooperation and deepening of our relations.

Moments ago in Brussels, President Serzh Sargsyan and Secretary General of NATO Anders Fogh Rasmussen concluded their meeting. The Armenia-NATO Council session has already started its works. Today, the President of Armenia will also meet with the President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso and President of the European Council Herman van Rompuy. Today, President Sargsyan will also make a statement at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

Serzh Sargsyan meets with President of Belgian Senate

President Serzh Sargsyan, who is in the Kingdom of Belgium on a working visit, on March 5 in Brussels met with the President of the Belgian Senate Sabine de Bethune and members of the Senate and House of Representatives.

At the meeting, Serzh Sargsyan underscored that Armenia is interested in expanding and deepening relations with Belgium, which, according to the President, with its developed economy can become a good example for Armenia in its process of reformation. According to President Sargsyan, Armenia and Belgium are similar in their sizes and in Armenia Belgium is constantly viewed as an exemplary model.

The President of Armenia and President of the Belgian Senate stressed the importance of cooperation and consistent dialogue between the legislatures of the two countries.

The parties also spoke about the necessity to invigorate activities of the friendship groups formed in the

beginning of 2000 in the parliaments of Armenia and Belgium, which in their opinion will be excellent for the deepening of the Armenian-Belgian friendship and the utmost rapprochement between Armenia and the family of European nations.



President Serzh Sargsyan expressed gratitude to the Belgian parliamentarians and using the opportunity provided by the meeting

stressed once again that recognition by the Senate of Belgium of the Armenian Genocide was a great contribution to the process of its international recognition. The President has underlined that Armenia hails Belgium’s efforts in that direction.

Later, President Sargsyan held in Brussels a meeting with the representatives of the Armenian organizations of Belgium.

Armenian Diaspora all over the world represents an exceptional power – President Sargsyan

Armenian Diaspora all over the world represents an exceptional power, which can achieve enormous results, when acting together, said Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan in the framework of his working visit to Brussels, during the meeting with representatives of Armenian Diaspora of Belgium.

The president stressed, that Armenian Diaspora of Belgium is a bridge, which connects two states and helps to improve bilateral relations between Armenia and Belgium.

Representatives of Belgium Diocese of Armenian Apostolic

Church, head of Armenia-Belgium Chamber of Commerce Valeri Safaryan and other renowned Armenians from Brussels, Liege and Antwerp. The representatives of Armenian Diaspora expressed their concerns on Azerbaijani anti-Armenian propaganda and asked about Armenia’s reaction.

President Sargsyan noted that Armenia responds to that and stressed, that Armenia is in better position, as any lobbyist has to accept the fact that there are over 50 political prisoners in Azerbaijan and human rights have been severely violated there, which is also

mentioned in the reports of international organizations on Azerbaijan.

Another important topic that interested Armenians in Belgium was the fortune of Armenian-Turkish protocols. Serzh Sargsyan told the Armenian Diaspora that the protocols are currently in Turkish parliament.

Presently there are about 25,000 Armenians living in Belgium. The Armenian Diaspora emerged in Belgium in 1915, when Armenians, who suffered the Genocide in Turkey, left Turkey and immigrated all over the world.

Armenia, NATO’s position over settlement of Karabakh conflict coincides

Within the framework of the working visit to Brussels, President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan met with the NATO Secretary Gen-



eral Anders Fogh Rasmussen and discussed with him the process of peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. During the joint briefing President of Armenia stressed that Azerbaijan rejected any proposal directed toward con-

fidence building be it addressed to the promotion of regional cooperation or weakening the tension in the line of contact.

“Unfortunately, Azerbaijan is against withdrawal of snipers from the first line, it is against investigation of incidents. The bellicose statements have been voiced every moment. The leadership of Azerbaijan continues sowing hatred toward

Armenians,” Serzh Sargsyan said.

President of Armenia reminded the statement made by the president of Azerbaijan just few days ago. The latter stated that number one enemy of Azerbaijan is Diaspora Armenians. “This circumstance should receive international assessment,” he stated.

Serzh Sargsyan and Anders Fogh Rasmussen agreed that Nagorno Karabakh conflict should be solved in an exclusively peaceful way, through negotiations within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group. “We are convinced that the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is possible only in case the right of people to self-determination is respected and all the security guarantees be ensured. In conclusion I wish to reiterate Armenia’s readiness to continue mutually beneficial cooperation with the North-Atlantic Alliance,” President of Armenia stressed.

President Serzh Sargsyan met with the President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy

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national standards.

Second. There is good progress being made in the bilateral EU-Armenia relationship. The Association Agreement negotiations continue to progress at good pace. The EU side has been able to give the green light to launch negotiations on a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area.

And, a couple of days ago, negotiations were launched on Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements, as a first step towards visa liberalization.

And third. On the region and the challenges for a peaceful settle-

ment: It is well known that the EU wants to see progress on the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict which remains a high priority of the EU's foreign policy. Progress is crucially important.

In this regard, the EU reiterates its support for the Madrid principles and calls on Armenia and Azerbaijan to step up their efforts to reach agreement on those principles as a basis for peace. The increased tension along the Line of Contact, is a reason for concern, and underlines the importance of steps to implement the ceasefire and to adopt appropriate confidence building measures.

Military Union's support to president does not mean politicization of army – Armenian Minister of Justice

The recent statement made during the Armenian Yerkrpah Volunteer Union that during the upcoming presidential elections the union supports the incumbent President Serzh Sargsyan does not mean politicization of army, Armenia's Minister of Justice Hrair Tovmasyan told reporters.

According to him, if the Minister of Defense decides to support any political force, it would mean politicization of army. To the notion that the Minister of Defense Seyran Ohanyan is a member of the Yerkrpah Volunteer Union Tovmasyan said:



“The given general could be a member of the philatelists club and that club might support anyone but that does not mean the army is politicized.”

Armenia's ruling party is dominant force in emigration, dire social condition – opposition MP

When preparing their proportional election lists, all the political forces make decisions in relation to the ruling coalition's Republican Party of Armenia (RPA), since the party in power is the dominant one in the political field, RPA MP Vardan Ayvazyan said during a press conference on Tuesday, March 6. He has added that everyone tries to compete with the winning force.

In his words, RPA's current task is to further consolidate its position and to receive the people's vote of confidence.

The press conference's other



speaker, opposition Heritage Party MP Armen Martirosyan, noted that they do not wait for the RPA's list for the upcoming parliamentary elections, and, when preparing their own proportional list, they will factor in the mood within the Heritage and among the society. He has agreed that RPA is dominant in terms of emigration, economic matters, and the dire social conditions, when there is 36-percent poverty in Armenia.

In response, Vardan Ayvazyan has stated that they are accountable for the good and the bad alike.



Yerkrpah Union declares its support to Serzh Sargsyan

By Haroutiun Khachatrian

The greeting speech of the Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan at the 9th Congress of Yerkrpah, i.e., the Union of the Karabakh war volunteers showed that this organization is still rather strong in Armenia and the President should take it into account in his pre-election strategy and his reform attempts.

Yerkrpah which means in Armenian «Country keeper» was created in 1992 by Vazgen Sargsyan, one of the founders of the Armenian army, which then, shortly after the breakdown of the Soviet Union, was not still formed. The organization united people who voluntarily came to Karabakh or borders of Armenia and fought there until regular armies of Armenia and the unrecognized Nagorno Karabakh Republic were formed.

Later, Yerkrpah became a powerful pro-governmental structure, one of few in the emerging state of Armenia. In 1999, the political wing of Yerkrpah including Vazgen Sargsyan himself left the Union and joined the Republican Party which became then the leading political force and has retained this status despite the fact that Vazgen Sargsyan, then the Prime Minister of Armenia, was killed on October 27 1999, as a result of a terrorist attack in the Armenian Parliament.

The remaining part of Yerkrpah has kept its previous slogans the main of which are: no concessions to Azerbaijan, no return of the “occupied territories”, and full support to the formation of the Armenian state, regardless of who governs it now. For the latter reason, Yerkrpah has supported all the three Presi-

dents of Armenia and upon resignation of a President it used to pass its support to the next one. No wonder that the current chairman of Yerkrpah, lieutenant general Manvel Sargsyan, (a former truck driver, no relations with either Vazgen Sargsyan or the current President Serzh Sargsyan) has in 2002-2008 combined his duties in the Union with those of the deputy of the Defense Minister.

Serzh Sargsyan, who was the leader of the Karabakh Army in early 1990s and was the Defense Minister of Armenia in 1993-95 and in 1999-2007, knew many of the Union members and was well aware of the strength and influence of the Yerkrpah Union holding its 9th Congress on February 18. No wonder that he addressed the Congress not with the greeting words suitable for a President, instead he used words which can approximately be translated as: “Folks, it's good to see you again.”

He was the only political person invited to the Congress and general Manvel Sargsyan said in his speech that his organization would back President Sargsyan. The latter in his speech repeated all militaristic slogans of the Yerkrpah, thus confirming its support to his policy and the policy of his political party, the Republican Party of Armenia, which is currently the leading force in the parliament, in the government and in the local communities of the country.

However, Serzh Sargsyan also said: “The country is changing by day... We have taken the course of Armenia's comprehensive modernization. Modernization will affect our political and legal structure, our industry, education and science. We

have to become a modern nation, which is competitive and is ready to face the challenges of the current times.” Thus, Serzh Sargsyan got a formal consent to his reforms of the 35,000-strong powerful Union of war volunteers, the reforms which are supported by the European Union under its programme of “Eastern Partnership.” Moreover, these reforms have already kicked off as Armenia has already started negotiations with the EU about visa facilitation and the country has the formal accordance with the EU about negotiating a Deep and Comprehensive Trade Agreement. At the same time, President Serzh Sargsyan could not but understand that a formal support of a Yerkrpah Congress would not guarantee full support of his reforms, especially as they lead to reconciliation with Azerbaijan, which is seen to the members of Yerkrpah the principal enemy of all Armenians in the world.

Moreover, the official propaganda of Yerevan aimed at formation of a national ideology is greatly similar to that of Yerkrpah, especially due to the fact that Azerbaijan and Turkey have succeeded in creating a hostile environment around Armenia. Anyway, it is obvious that Serzh Sargsyan, and his Republican Party will enjoy support of the influential organization, Yerkrpah, during the approaching parliamentary elections of May 6. Many analysts speculated that the Yerkrpah Congress was held especially before the congresses of political parties (they will be held in March as preparation of the May elections) to once again demonstrate support of Yerkrpah to Serzh Sargsyan.

Ex-Speaker confirmed as Sargsyan Campaign Manager

Former parliament speaker Hovik Abrahamian has formally taken over as election campaign manager of President Serzh Sargsyan's ruling Republican Party of Armenia (RPA).

Abrahamian announced his new role as he unexpectedly resigned as parliament speaker in November. He dismissed at the time media speculation that he was forced to quit because of being regarded as a potential backer of former President Robert Kocharian's possible bid to return to power.

That speculation only intensified in the following days when Mikael Minasian, Sargsyan's son-in-law and reputedly closest confidante, said that he will be “helping” Abrahamian manage the presidential party's campaign for the May parliamentary elections. Some opposition politicians and media commentators claimed that Minasian will in fact be keeping an eye on the ex-speaker. The RPA representatives denied this, however.

The RPA's Executive Body headed by Sargsyan formalized

Abrahamian's appointment to the new position at a meeting held late on Thursday. The meeting came two days before the party's pre-election congress.



According to Hovannes Sahakian, a senior RPA member, Sargsyan will deliver an extensive speech at the congress in which he will present his and his party's track record in office and plans for the future. The president will also touch upon the upcoming parliamentary elections, Sahakian told RFE/RL's Armenian service (Azatutyun.am) on Friday. He confirmed that the RPA's list of election candidates will not

be publicized during the congress.

The RPA representatives have only said until now that the list will be topped by Sargsyan. They also make no secret of the party's plans to retain control over the Armenian parliament as a result of the May 6 elections.

It also emerged on Friday that the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaksutyun) is the only opposition group whose leaders have been invited to attend the RPA conference.

Stepan Safarian, a leader of the opposition Zharangutyun (Heritage) party, deplored this fact. “With such a decision they show what kind of political culture they prefer,” Safarian told RFE/RL's Armenian service.

The more radical Armenian National Congress (ANC) seemed indifferent to the snub. “We don't care who the RPA invites to its gatherings,” said Levon Zurabian, the RPA's central office coordinator.

azatutyun.am

Azerbaijan is guilty of the deaths of Khojalu peaceful residents, NKR Foreign Ministry states in the UN

Upon the request of Armenia's Permanent Representative to UN Karen Nazaryan, an official statement of the NKR Foreign Ministry on Khojalu events in 1992 was disseminated as an official document of the UN General Assembly and Security Council.

The statement notes that "statements and assessments of some Azerbaijani senior officials, human rights advocates, journalists and residents of Khojalu fully deny Baku's false hypotheses".

"All the facts witness rather clearly that the Azerbaijani side is guilty of the deaths of Khojalu peaceful residents which committed a horrible crime against its own people due to political intrigues and for the sake of fight of coming to power.

Raffling "Khojalu" on a regular basis, official Baku tries to shift

the international community's attention from the mass murders of Armenians organized in Sumgait, Baku, Kirovabad, Khanlar and oth-



er regions of Azerbaijan as well as NKR border regions- in the village of Maragha in particular", the statement reads.

Azerbaijan fails to lead OSCE mission to its front-lines

In accordance with the earlier agreement with the authorities of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR), the OSCE Mission on Wednesday held a scheduled monitoring of the Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijani armed forces' contact-line near the village of Seysulan, in Mardakert region.

From the positions of the NKR Defense Army, the monitoring was held by Field Assistants Antal Herdich (Hungary) and Christo Christov (Bulgaria) of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office.

On the opposite side, the monitoring group was headed by the

OSCE Office Coordinator Peter Kee (Great Britain), and Field Assistants William Prior (Great Britain) and Marius Puodziunas (Lithuania) of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman in Office, NKR MFA informed Noyan Tapan.

No ceasefire violation was registered during the monitoring. But the Azerbaijani side did not lead the OSCE mission to its front-lines, and as a result it was conducted from a farther distance.

From the Karabakh side, the monitoring mission was accompanied by representatives of the NKR Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense.

Iranian parliamentary elections became "serious defeat" for Mahmud Ahmadinejad, Armenian expert thinks

Deputy Director of "Noravank" Fund Sevak Sarukhanyan said on March 6 that parliamentary elections in Iran became "serious defeat of Mahmud Ahmadinejad".

The expert recalled that the main fight was held between the adherents of Ahmadinejad and the spiritual leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, whose supporters won the elections, Mediamax reports.

Sevak Sarukhanyan paid atten-

tion to the fact that the President failed to back his younger sister Parvin Ahmadinejad, who has lost the elections.

"It means that Ahmadinejad won't be able to pass his presidential post to the representative of his team, which he wanted to do in recent years," the expert noted.

According to Sevak Sarukhanyan, the most likely candidate to the post of the President of Iran is the Mayor of Tehran, Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf. Sevak Sarukhanyan has said that the international approach towards Iran is likely to change if Ghalibaf becomes a President and the criticism against Tehran will decrease. At the same time, he has expressed the opinion that Iran will finally suspend its nuclear program.

Representatives Sherman, Dold and Pallone offer congressional statements marking Sumgait massacres

The bipartisan Congressional spotlight on Azerbaijan's pogroms and massacres against ethnic Armenian civilians in Sumgait, Kirovabad, and Baku continued to shine as Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA), Robert Dold (R-IL), and Congressional Armenian Caucus Co-Chair Frank Pallone (D-NJ) added their voices to those marking the anniversary of these tragic events, reported the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA).

Over the past month, ten Members of Congress have issued statements on the pogroms including Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA), the Co-Chairman of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, Rep. Howard Berman (D-CA), the Ranking Democrat of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and Representatives Judy Chu (D-CA), David Cicilline (D-RI), Anna Eshoo (D-CA), Gary Peters (D-MI) and Adam Schiff (D-CA).

"Friends of Armenia and human rights advocates from across America thank Congressmen Sherman, Dold, and Pallone for joining with their U.S. House colleagues in marking the Sumgait, Kirovabad, and Baku pogroms," said ANCA Executive Director Aram Hamparian. "We value their leadership in standing up to aggression - past and present - and in working toward a future of peace and justice for the citizens of Armenia, Nagorno Karabakh, and all the

countries of the Caucasus."

Rep. Sherman opened his remarks, noting that, "On the evening of February 27, 1988, Armenian civilians living in Sumgait, in Soviet



Azerbaijan, were violently targeted in a three-day rampage. Armenian civilians were hunted down and brutally assaulted. Some were raped, and some were burned alive at the hands of rioters." He went on to discuss the subsequent Azerbaijani attacks against Armenians in Kirovabad and Baku, and noted that remembering is not enough. "We need to do more--we need to demonstrate to Azerbaijan that the United States is committed to peace and to the protection of Artsakh from coercion," stated Rep. Sherman, who went on to urge that "we must urge Azerbaijan to cease all threats and acts of coercion against the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh." He also went on to call on the Administration to "remove all barriers to broad-based U.S.-Nagorno Karabakh govern-

mental and civil society communication, travel, and cooperation."

Rep. Pallone, in his statement, noted that "The need for the government of Azerbaijan to fully recognize the Sumgait pogroms is not only in the interest of historical accuracy but also necessary to ensure a peaceful future. The just recognition of these crimes is the first step towards an enduring and peaceful resolution of the regional conflict. Stability in the region is needed now more than ever. The specter of violence indeed still looms and many Armenian lives continue to be subject to threats by the Azerbaijani government. Cease-fire violations by Azerbaijani armed forces at the contact line with the Nagorno Karabakh Republic have shown this to be true." Rep. Pallone then noted that "President Aliyev recently announced that Azerbaijan is buying up modern weaponry to occupy the Nagorno Karabakh Republic," and went on to "condemn all intimidations and acts of aggression against the Armenian people."

Rep. Dold, for his part, cited the importance that we "do not forget the anniversary of the tragic pogroms against Armenians living in Soviet Azerbaijan." He went on to note that "as we remember those who lost their lives in Sumgait, we must continue to guard against all discrimination, oppression, and targeted violence against ethnic groups around the world."

Sarkozy and Hollande reiterate pledges to reintroduce Genocide Bill

While meeting with representatives of the French-Armenian community at the Elysee Palace on Wednesday, French President President Nicolas Sarkozy confirmed that he would present a new draft of a law criminalizing the denial of the Armenian Genocide, reported journalist Jean Eckian.

"Mr. Sarkozy is aware of the sensitivities we have as French-Armenians over this matter," Armenian National Committee of France chairman Mourad Papazian told the Hurriyet Daily News yesterday, before attending the meeting.

The French Constitutional Council ruled as unconstitutional a bill that criminalizes the denial of the Armenian Genocide and was

approved by both houses of the French legislature. Sarkozy and his main opponent Socialist candidate Francois Hollande both pledged to re-introduce a similar bill after the elections.

"Both Sarkozy and his front-runner rival Francois Hollande are in agreement over the draft proposal [to criminalize] denial of the genocide," said Papazian. "Moreover, as Armenians we are going to continue waging our righteous struggle and pick it up where it was left once again," Papazian said.

"[Sarkozy] maintained his stance regarding the Armenian Genocide till the end. He called on Turkey to recognize the Genocide and paved the way for Parliament

to vote on the law," said Papazian.

"We do not possess Turkey's material capabilities. All we have is our just cause and our struggle in that vein. We are going to continue waging our struggle until Turkey recognizes the genocide. Both Mr. Sarkozy and Mr. Hollande will continue lending their support to our righteous struggle," said Papazian.

"Of course, a new draft proposal will come about, but we are now entering the process of elections. We are going to pick up our righteous struggle where we left off [after the elections]," said Garo Yalick, adviser to Valerie Boyer, the French parliament member who authored the original bill.

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- **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 repair, euro doors and windows, open balcony, permanent hot and cold water, concrete cover, beech parquetry, h 3 m, closed attic. Price 120000 USD
- **2348. Abovyan Street, 4/2,** 177.8 sq/m, euro repaired, conreted, laminate furniture in the bedroom, cupboards in the kitchen, tiled, Baxi system, Price: 175000 USD preliminary
- **2395. North Avenue.** 130 sq.m., newly built, h-3 m, a view to Abovyan street. Price: 1 sq.m.-1600 USD
- **2540 Deghatan Street, 8/7,** 137.5sq.m 4 rooms, newly capitally repaired, euro windows and doors, furnished kitchen, 3 bathrooms, laundry,1 open storage balcony, water, gas, Baxi heating system, 2AC, 2 satellites, Jacuzzi, alarm system, service fee - 5000 AMD. Price: 275.000 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. Hanrapetutyany 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. Kasyan street.** 170sq.m., working fashion saloon, large windows, facade-15m, 1room+foye, h=2.80 m, cellar 30 sq.m. Price 500000 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 cols 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: 1sq.m. 10000USD

- **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

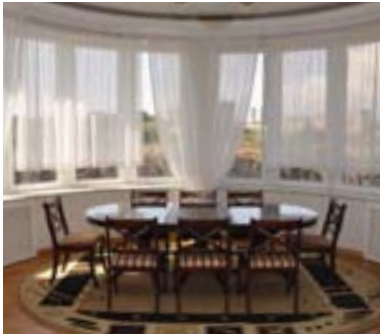
- **2725. Nork-Marash, building -** 733.25sqm, land-620sqm, semi-basement +2floors, euro repaired, semi-basement is sport room, sauna, summer room, pool, fireplace, 1st floor- sitting room, 1 bedroom, cabinet, kitchen, lavatory, 2nd floor - 4 bedrooms, permanent hot and cold water, gas, Spanish tiles, 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 Ayggestan 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: 90000 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. Comercial 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,** 16 storied 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 /, 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. Amirtyan str. /City center/,** 2 rooms, AC, washing machine, TV, refrigerator, satellite, bed sheets, utensil, all the conveniences. Price: 600 USD , 60 USD per day
- **2138. Al. Mnukyan str., 5/4,** 2 rooms, 65sq, 1t. Euro repaired, euro doors, euro windows, furniture, technique, water, gas, baxi. Price: 600 USD , 20.000 AMD per day

3 ROOMS AND MORE

- **1137. Moskovyan str., 6/1,** 2 bedrooms, lavatory, normal state, furnished, technique, DVD, AC, permanent hot and cold water. Price 1100USD, possible daily rent.
- **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.
- **1874 Amiryan str. 14/5 floor** 120 sqm, capitally repaired, 2 bathrooms, 2 AC, heating system, parking, looking at the boulevard Price: 2000USD
- **12 Northern Ave. 5/5,6 floor** 450sqm 8 rooms., capitally and euro repaired, furnished, equipped, AC, 3 bathrooms, Price: 1500USD, 300 USD per day
- **13 Orbeli Str. 5/5 floor** 100sqm 3rooms, capitally and euro repaired, newly furnished, equipped,heating system, AC Price: 700 USD, 70USD per day
- **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,** 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, sattelite, 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.
- **1780. Amiryan Str., Gri Ar, 13,** 82 sq.m, 3 rooms, newly built, euro repaire, furnished, equipped, heating system, AC, loggia balcony Price:1500 USD service fee included

PRIVATE HOUSES

- **1094. Noy block,** 2 storied building - 400sqm, garden, permanent hot and cold water, furniture, technique, 1 lavatory, gas. Price 2000USD
- **1095. Ayggestan,** 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, capitally 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-160-sqm, 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, beautiful view, 150 sq.m. 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. Ayggestan,** 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. Djrvej, 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. Ayggestan dstrict.** 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 Marash 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 250sqm, 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, firmished, 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, fireplace, view to town, walled. Price: Negotiable
- **211 Aygedzor,** 2 floors, 3 bedrooms, permanent water, capitally repaired, Price:1300-1500 USD

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
- **1525. Hanrapetutyany 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
- **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: 2300USD
- **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 - 40USD
- **1462. Teryan street,** 3 stored, capital repaired, AC, capital repaired, parking, 800sq. Price: 10.000USD
- **1757. Mashtoc av. Hin Erevancu,** 2 floors, 250sq, 90 sq and 110 sq salons, absolutely repaired., garden, pool, garage for 3 cars, partly is also available, 520sq.m. Price: 4mln
- **1733. Amiryan /sale is also possible,** 2repaired, door from behind, Showcard, 114sq.m. Price: 640.000AMD
- **1722. Amiryan,** repaired, security system, heating and conditioning, 95sq.m. Price: 1sq - 7000AMD

The RA DM Seyran Ohanyan: "Vazgen Sargsyan was managing all the Army's and the State's challenges in the excellent way"



By **Gourgen James Khazhakian**
Chief correspondent

In early 90s your correspondent asked Vazgen Sargsyan, the first RA Defense Minister: "Vazgen, after all, when you will 'grant' me an interview?". "Gourgen, wait a bit – until the war end...". The war ended, we won, but Vazgen was again "in the battle" – this time for the strengthening of the Army, then – the State... And then Oct. 27, 1999, one of the most tragic days in the modern history of Armenia has come: Vazgen Sargsyan, Karen Demirchyan and others were assassinated at the Armenian Parliament...

On March 5 we marked the 53th birthday of Armenia's first Defense Minister and a former Prime Minister, Vazgen Sargsyan, National Hero of both Armenia and Artsakh, who was tragically shot to death in October 1999 during a terrorist attack at the National Assembly. We believe it's proper to remind The Highlights readers (especially non-Armenian ones) a brief description of the way of an outstanding military and statesman.

Vazgen Z. Sargsyan was born in Ararat region of Armenia in 1959. In 1979, he graduated from the Armenian State Institute of Physical Culture. An amateur writer, Sargsyan then moved into literary life. From 1986 to 1989 he headed the publicism department of the *Garun* (Spring) literary monthly in Yerevan. But, as an our colleague has written, "the Armenian national ferment of the late 1980s saw him abandon this role as he flung himself headlong

into political life". That was a time of an unprecedented consolidation of the Nation - the years of Karabakh Movement, which, according to the first President of already de-facto independent Poland **Lech Walesa**, "became an alarm for the entire Europe". Sargsyan was the RA Defense Minister in 1992-1993. From 1993-1995 he was a State Minister in charge of defense. In 1995, during the re-structuring of government ministries, he once again became Defense Minister. In these various capacities, he laid the groundwork for building Armenia's Army, a cause of his all, - unfortunately, short, but the brightest life, -from the very first guerilla groups to the regular regiments armed with contemporary weaponry. Vazgen Sargsyan enjoyed love and respect from his comrades-in-arms, from a soldier to a general, who called him **Sparapet** (Commander-in-Chief). For his outstanding contribution to the VICTORY in the Battle for Artsakh (Karabakh), Sargsyan was awarded the title "The Hero of Artsakh". He was appointed Prime Minister on June 11 by the RA second President **Robert Kocharyan**. Sargsyan was

killed, however, along with the-then the Parliament Speaker and the Republic's former Communist leader **Karen Demirchyan** and several other MPs and members of the RA Govt. when gunmen, headed by journalist **Nayiri Hunanyan**, took over the Par-

rablur (The Three Hills) military cemetery. So on March 5, number of events dedicated to the 53rd birthday of the National Hero Vazgen Sargsyan was started from a ceremony at the Yerablur Pantheon.

The RA Defense Minister **Seyran Ohanyan**

accompanied by the senior staff of the Armed Forces as well as public reps visited Yerablur Pantheon to pay tribute to the memory of Vazgen Sargsyan where they laid the wreathes to the tomb of Sargsyan, as well as General **Andranik** (Ozanyan, - a legendary Commander of the Western Armenians in the first decades of the 20th century) and the heroes of the Battle for Artsakh (Karabakh). In his words on his Commander and comrade-in-arms Vazgen Sargsyan the RA DM said that "if Vazgen is alive today, the Army would be more united". Every time, and especially on March 5, the Sparapet's birthday, coming to Yerablur, to the graves of our guys who sacrificed their lives in the name of our Homeland's Freedom, we are re-thinking and re-evaluating the way we have passed, as it was V. Sargsyan, who was at the cradle of the Armenian Army. "We commemo-

rate and pay tribute to the memory of the **FALLEN HEROES**", Minister Ohanyan said and added that Vazgen Sargsyan of the blessed memory was managing all the tasks put before both the Army and the State in the excellent way. Right there, at the Yerablur panteon of the **FALLEN HEROES**, students of the Military College named after Vazgen Sargsyan demonstrated their martial numbers, and Yerevan school students were singing patriotic songs. After that the chief militaries forwarded to the Vazgen Sargsyan street, where the bust of the Sparapet has been erected. There were also other commemorative events which held at the administrative compound of the Defense Ministry, -with participation of the members of Sargsyan family, - Sparapet's mother Mrs **Greta Sargsyan**, father Mr **Zaven Sargsyan**, younger brother **Armen Sargsyan**, others, as well as at the RA Defense Ministry's Military Institute after V. Sargsyan, and at the military unit after Sparapet V.Sargsyan.

On March 7 at the RA Defense Ministry they were celebrating Intl. Women's Day (marked on March 8) aimed at honoring, first of all, Ladies in military service and freedom fighters (*azatamartiks*), relatives of the Heroes of Armenia and Artsakh as well as the mothers having three and more sons serving in the Armenian Army. During the event many of them were awarded medals and other signs of appreciation. Sparapet's mother Mrs Greta Sargsyan was awarded the RA DM "The Coat of Arms" Medal.



liament building. Posthumously Vazgen Sargsyan was awarded the title "The National Hero of Armenia". Sargsyan's body rests in the Ye-

Several Aspects of Neonatology in Armenia:

Huge Impetus by VivaCell-MTS/BirthLink Effort to Decrease Infant Mortality in Armenia

Combined report

What is neonatology?

Neonatology is a branch of pediatry dealing with the first four weeks of a newborn baby's life. According to neonatologist Dr **Arshak Jerjeryan** "it has been proven that the first 28 days of a person's life are the most complicated and decisive for his/her whole life". And Dr **Hrant Kalenteryan**, Chief Neonatologist of the RA says that "Right treatment of a sick newborn baby within first days pre-determines the person's subsequent health". According to him, such treatment is essential in preventing disability in the future. Unfortunately, today more than four million babies in the world die annually in their first year of life. Not only a staggering 98% of those deaths occur in developing countries, but 65% of those lethalitys fall on the first month of life, and two-thirds of such lethalitys occur within the first week (and the half - in the first 24 hours!). Worldwide the lion's share of infant mortality falls in the "new-born babies" category. Such indices are the lowest in Sweden and Japan, which might be seen as evidence of the advanced level of neonatology in those two countries.

Speaking of Armenia, newborn babies death rate is four times that of the US or the UK, as the WHO statistics indicate. Such a state of affairs is not totally unexpected even for a layman, because the 1988 earthquake, blockade and war through which Armenians had to live in the dark and cold 1990s simply could not fail to affect quality of our life in general and its most fragile part, newborn babies first days of life in particular. Therefore formulating of a national strategy on neonatology has become an imperative

necessity. According to Dr Kalenteryan, in 2011 the Yerevan State Medical University named after Mkhitar Heratsi received government funding (the so-called "state order") for clinical studies (training) 18 specialists in neonatology; the course of the studies lasts three years, which is required for preparing neonatologists. He stressed that no other specialization was allocated government funds for so many doctors to be prepared.

At the same time the Yerevan Institute of Reproductive Health, Perinatology, Obstetrics and Gynaecology is carrying out the retraining course for those doctors who are already practicing neonatology. Dr Arshak Jerjeryan, who is the Institute's Deputy Director says that due to the involvement of the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR, USA) neonatologists from Marzes, or provinces, are also enrolled in the re-training course.

With all due respect to all organizations and individuals who have contributed to the advancement of this noble and strategically important cause - as healthy babies are THE ARMENIAN NATION'S FUTURE, we simply cannot ignore the role of VivaCell-MTS, Armenia's leading mobile operator, as the driving force/hugest contributor of the change for the better.

Thus, back in 2008 VivaCell-MTS joined the initiative of the

BirthLink, a UK-based NGO headed by **Kathy Mellor**, to improve the neonatal care in Armenia. Why did they do it?

We believe it best to quote **Ralph Yirikian**, the VivaCell-MTS General Manager (from his opening speech at the "Improving Neonatal Care in Armenia" conference held last June in Yerevan) who said: "...VivaCell-MTS realized that this is an issue

equipment).

But even today the figures our readers can see below seem truly impressive: Starting from 2008, thanks to the financial support of VivaCell-MTS about 300 million AMD have been spent by BirthLink on purchasing and installing the special equipment; the first phase of the Project included equipping 11 hospitals in Yerevan.



where we could not just watch and immediate action is needed... Today we are glad to see that there are tangible outcomes attained due to cooperation between VivaCell-MTS and BirthLink...". And - "... As the saying goes, one cannot reverse a thrown arrow, a wounding word and wasted time. There is nothing more frustrating than interrupted life of a newborn baby".

Mr Yirikian was probably right saying it is too early to speak about the overall long-term outcome of the Project which is still being implemented, and, as the General Manager of VivaCell-MTS assures us, will be implemented until all the maternity wards in Armenia have necessary equipment (and qualified staff trained to use that



other places.

The equipment already supplied includes ultrasound systems, intensive care cots, non-invasive respiratory systems, radiant warmers, reanimators, patient vital sign monitors, heated mattresses, pulse oximeters. As we mentioned above, hands-on training for the staff of all those centers was conducted by foreign experts. Such a huge investment and a dedicated effort have paid off: if 10 years ago in Armenia there was only one hospital intensive care unit for the newborn babies for 18 patients, today there are seven such units with total capacity of 110 beds, says Dr Kalenteryan. He adds that only one such unit, at the Muratsan Medical Complex in Yerevan, has registered a 32% de-

crease of infant mortality risk. The average rate of infant mortality risk has been reduced by 25-30% at those medical institutions where VivaCell-MTS/BirthLink Neonatal Care Project was implemented. However, according to the Chief Neonatologist of Armenia, the infant mortality rate in the country in general in the last two years shows the trend to increase. However, according to Dr Kalenteryan, a decrease of newborn babies mortality risk is the trend observed at present, although mortality risk of newborn babies with weight at birth from 0.5 to 1 kilo is still high. While in the so-called developed countries it averages 70 to 80 %, in Armenia it is still 98 %. Dr Hrant Kalenteryan points out that for such tiny babies to survive, very expensive medication is needed, as well as extremely sophisticated equipment. It is abundantly clear that neonatology is one of the most expensive parts of the health service worldwide.

Having duly praised the efforts of the mobile communication provider for their selfless contribution we must leave no doubt that VivaCell-MTS cannot solve the problem single-handed.

Ralph Yirikian in his statements pointed out that one of their most important goals, as a corporate citizen, is to encourage the Armenian business community to follow VivaCell-MTS example. Speaking about the results achieved by the Neonatology Project in Armenia so far, Ralph Yirikian said: "We are happy that this massive social investment has proven to be justified. This is another long-term investment in the better future of our Nation - we believe the major mission of the business is..."

Well, may God lead the businesses the right way!

Congress Hotel hosts charity exhibition of handicrafts made by Armenian women

by Marianna Martynova

The first spring flowers have appeared, and there are a lot of people with attractively arranged bouquets of snowdrops in the streets. Spring is in the air, you can feel the approach of spring holidays, so ev-



everyone wants something new and beautiful to give and also (to be quite frank) to receive as a gift.

All these wishes could be easily fulfilled if you attended the annual exhibition organized by Armenian Young Women's Association. This time it was the Congress Hotel that hosted the traditional spring exhibition. Although it lasted only one day, the visitors will carry with them the joy and happy impressions created by the event.

Two similar exhibitions took place almost simultaneously. Both were intended to bring happiness to young women, mothers, sisters, wives, and sweethearts, put them in good spirits, and help representatives of the sterner sex to choose an appropriate gift.

Yet in the opinion of those who visited both exhibitions, there was a certain difference between them.

Among the participants of Expo Beauty 2012 held at the Moscow House were mostly famous companies such as Mary Kay, FredericM, also shop-salons such as Nane curtain salon, Matisse art salon, various floral salons (Magnolia, Uma, Demira, etc.), TOSP knitwear shop whose handmade garments are manufactured in factories, as well as wedding salons. All of them displayed beautiful items of high quality, which are manufactured by groups of people and are available in the shops or

imported into Armenia from other countries.

The exhibition organized by Armenian Young Women's Association featured mostly handmade articles of women working at home. Some (unfortunately, not all) of the displayed items can be

because among those present were the people who created those works of art, each putting her heart and soul into them, perhaps because the hall was full of sunshine and good music was playing, and perhaps because all the exhibitors sat at their tables not separated from each other by any partition walls of pavilions.

The exhibition was surprisingly multifarious. The visitors had the opportunity to buy sweets, jam, dried fruit, cosmetics, bijouterie, embroidered tablecloths and napkins, skincare products (including medicinal, antifungal, and anti-burn ones), knitted items, bags, key rings, leather goods, paintings, and pictures made of beads.

And of course, there were a lot of flowers at the exhibition: decorative flowers for clothes, scented flowers, flowers of beads, knitted flowers, and artificial flowers in pots used for decoration of the interior.

In our article about the exhibition, the table of Orran benevolent non-governmental organization, which aims to help children from vulnerable families, deserves special mention. The visitors had the opportunity to see, handle, and buy various items made by children such as wickerwork, knitted,

them an opportunity to show their works to the general public and to earn some money in order to solve some of their problems on their own.

The second goal is that the Association hopes to raise money to be used later for implementation

throughout Armenia. The aim of this program is to provide patriotic education to Armenian girls and arouse a feeling of pride in the homeland.

A number of programs are related to healthcare and sports.

Armenian Young Women's As-



of concrete programs. We already know what programs this money will be spent on: it will be spent to make women's cultural life more active.

Could you inform us about these programs?

- It is a program of economic development. We try to unite wom-

sociation has established a social enterprise unifying women. It so happened that we were trying to help women who had lost their jobs. We assisted them by providing equipment and helping them to acquire the necessary skills. Gradually, they formed a social group, which later became an enterprise. Today they can solve various problems and, more importantly, they have income-earning opportunities.

No doubt it is vital to have an income-earning opportunity. Yet Armenian Young Women's Association has done much more for Armenian women. Thanks to its activities, these women experienced the joys of creativity and the pleasure of hearing grateful comments of customers, which gave them a feeling of satisfaction from being able to please other people, and finally, they enjoyed the luxury of communication with like-minded people, customers, and sometimes also with journalists, thanks to which they found new friends, fans, and customers.

The one-day festival of beauty is over. Having sold some of their works, the participants of the exhibition will return to their creative activity, Armenian Young Women's Association will start new projects, while the visitors will be able to pamper their friends with wonderful souvenirs from the exhibition.



fact that Matisse Art Salon is not a brand-name shop of one manufacturer. It is an art salon, that is to say, an exhibition that is open every day, a place in the city where you can not only admire the items on display at the Congress Hotel, but also buy them.

The air was pervaded by a feeling of fellowship, warmth, cordial welcome, and comfort – perhaps

embroidered items, and articles carved out of wood. In terms of their beauty and quality, the works made by children were not inferior to those created by craftsmen, and but for the inscription "Orran", nobody would have found out that the authors of those works were children aged 7-15. Two nice chickens on their wooden stands caught my eye. It turned out that one of the exhibition participants gave the funny items to the children so as to support and encourage them.

We also had a talk with Ms Lilit Asatryan, President of Armenian Young Women's Association (AYWA).

- This exhibition was organized by Armenian Young Women's Association. It is a non-governmental organization that aims to enhance the role of women in our country. This trade exhibition was dedicated to the Month of Women and held for a charitable purpose. When organizing it, we pursued two goals:

First, to support female manufacturers (many of them are from various regions of Armenia), give

en working in various spheres of small and medium-sized business so that they can cooperate, exchange experience, advise each other on business matters, and (why not?) also to derive inspiration from each other's achievements.

The next program is the movement "Country of Girls" that should unite girls aged 13-18





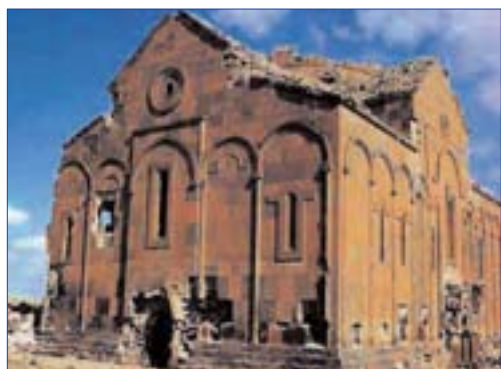
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The newly-opened Kaissa chess school


organizes paid training courses for
schoolchildren and announces admission.

The courses start on March 15.
Applications will be accepted starting February 1, 2012.

Famous grandmasters will teach children in the school.

Tigran L. Petrosian, Olympic champion
Zaven Andriasian, world champion (under-20)
Elina Daniellian, the only Armenian female grandmaster
Gevorg Harutyunian
Tigran Nalbandian, Olympic champion, coach

Yerevan, Nor Nork 2nd Micro-District,
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Armenian PM discusses with the metallurgists the prospects of canceling customs duties during the export to the EU

The Prime Minister was happy to note the stable growth of volumes of production, export, salary as well as taxes paid to the state budget the company's press service reports.

The Prime Minister held a meeting with participation of representatives of government and heads of the metallurgic enterprises of the republic in the plant.

The meeting focused on the problems and prospects of developing the metallurgic sector as well as a broad scope of issues related to the negotiations between Armenia and EU on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area due to start soon as a result of which the domestic production will be exempted from customs duties while being exported to the EU market.

"We have all the grounds to hope that successful negotiations and signing of the agreement with the EU which is of utmost importance

to Armenia will make ARMENAL production competitive on this major market", stated Tigran Sargsyan.



Beyond Fukushima

By Yukiya Amano

VIENNA – Nuclear power has become safer since the devastating accident one year ago at Fukushima, Japan. It will become safer still in the coming years, provided that governments, plant operators, and regulators do not drop their guard.

The accident at Fukushima resulted from an earthquake and tsunami of unprecedented severity. But, as the Japanese authorities have acknowledged, human and organizational failings played an important part, too.

For example, Japan's nuclear regulatory authority was not sufficiently independent, and oversight of the plant operator, TEPCO, was weak. At the Fukushima site, the backup power supply, essential for maintaining vital safety functions such as cooling the reactors and spent fuel rods, was not properly protected. Training to respond to severe accidents was inadequate. There was a lack of integrated emergency-response capability at the site and nationally.

Human and organizational failings are not unique to Japan. Fukushima was a wake-up call for all countries that use nuclear power. It prompted serious soul-searching and recognition that safety can never be taken for granted anywhere. Key causes of the accident have been identified.

Indeed, governments, regulators, and plant operators around the world have begun learning the right lessons. A robust international nuclear safety action plan is being implemented. As a result, the likelihood of another disaster on the scale of Fukushima has been reduced.

What, exactly, has changed? Perhaps most importantly, the worst-case assumptions for safety planning have been radically revised. At Fukushima, the reactors withstood a magnitude 9.0 earthquake – far more powerful than they were designed to tolerate. But the plant

was not designed to withstand the 14-meter-high tsunami waves that swept over its protective sea wall less than an hour later.

In the aftermath of Fukushima, defenses against multiple severe natural disasters, including earthquakes and tsunamis, are being strengthened at nuclear facilities all over the world. Measures are being taken to improve preparedness for prolonged power outages, protect backup power sources, and ensure the availability of water for cooling even under severe accident conditions.

Global nuclear safety standards are being reviewed. National and international emergency-response capabilities are being upgraded. Plant operators and national regulators are being scrutinized more critically. Countries are opening their plants to more – and more thorough – international safety reviews.

Despite the accident, global use of nuclear power looks set to grow steadily in the next 20 years, although at a slower rate than previously forecast. The reasons for this have not changed: rising demand for energy, alongside concerns about climate change, volatile fossil-fuel prices, and the security of energy supplies. It will be difficult for the world to achieve the twin goals of ensuring sustainable energy supplies and curbing greenhouse gases unless nuclear power remains an important part of the global energy mix.

The International Atomic Energy Agency expects at least 90 additional nuclear-power reactors to join the 437 now in operation globally by 2030. Although some countries abandoned or scaled back their nuclear energy plans after Fukushima, major users of nuclear power, such as China, India, and Russia, are going forward with ambitious expansion plans. Many other countries, mainly in the developing world, are considering introducing nuclear power.

Nuclear safety is of the utmost importance to both established users and newcomers. It matters to countries that have decided to phase out nuclear power, because their plants will continue to operate for decades and will need to be decommissioned, with nuclear waste stored safely. And it matters to countries that are firmly opposed to nuclear power, as many of them have neighbors with nuclear-power plants.

Countries planning new nuclear-power programs must recognize that achieving their goals is a challenging, long-term undertaking. They need to invest considerable time and money in training scientists and engineers, establishing genuinely independent, well-funded regulators, and putting in place the necessary technical infrastructure. Some countries still have shortcomings in this regard.

Nonetheless, contrary to popular perception, nuclear power has a good overall safety record. New reactors being built today incorporate significantly enhanced safety features, both active and passive, compared to the Fukushima generation of reactors. But, in order to regain and maintain public confidence, governments, regulators, and operators must be transparent about the benefits and risks of nuclear power – and honest when things go wrong.

The fact that an accident such as Fukushima was possible in Japan, one of the world's most advanced industrial countries, is a reminder that, when it comes to nuclear safety, nothing can be taken for granted. Complacency can be deadly. The safety improvements seen in the past 12 months can only be a start. We must not slip back into a "business as usual" approach as Fukushima recedes from memory.

Yukiya Amano is Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

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Now, Armenia is stronger, you have more cautious, prudent, fiscal economic policy – EBRD official

Armenian PM Tigran Sargsyan received Olivier Descamps, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) Managing Director for Turkey, Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

"Our relations are gradually expanding. We have examined EBRD's new strategy with Armenia. Our specialists give a high evaluation to that document. So, we are satisfied with the bilateral cooperation," the PM noted, the Government Press Service informed Noyan Tapan.

In his turn, Olivier Descamps stated that the EBRD-approved investment programs in Armenia reflect the steps taken to improve the investment climate in the country.

"I regularly visit Armenia over the course of the past fourteen years, and I can say that considerable changes are taking place in the

country. Now, you are stronger, and you have a more cautious, prudent fiscal economic policy," Olivier



Descamps said.

The interlocutors also discussed Armenia's tax and customs reforms, improvement of the business climate, and development of small and medium-size business.

They also reflected on the Government's export-oriented industrial policy strategy, and the likely cooperation with EBRD along these lines.

RUSAL to invest \$6 million in Armenal plant

The world's largest aluminum producer RUSAL will invest \$6 million in the modernization of foil producer Rusal Armenal in 2012-2014, Interfax reports.

The company will allocate money to increase production to 33,600 tonnes of aluminum foil per year, reads the press release.

Armenal was founded in Yerevan in May 2000, using the facilities of the Kanaker aluminum plant. It is one of the largest industrial enterprises in Armenia and the only foil producer in the Caucasus and Central Asia. It got integrated into RUSAL in 2000 is a part of the Packaging Division.

Armenian students get familiar with pension system

The USAID funded Pension and Labor Market (PALM) Project, the Pension System Awareness Center Foundation, NASDAQ OMX/Armenia and the State Social Security Service have initialed series of lectures at the leading Universities of Armenia.

The first lecture was held in the library hall of Khachatur Abovyan Armenian State Pedagogical University. Presenter – Mr. Vardan Aramyan, Armenian Deputy Minister of Finance.

Pension issues are of a key importance for policy makers throughout the world and many countries, which still struggle under the financial burden of current Pay-As-You-Go systems based on intergenerational solidarity, consider possible solutions and explore opportunities to shift to multi-pillar pension systems.

Today, through this reforms we aim to address those issues that the mentioned countries have now and which is a threat for us in the near future if not to step in reforming the current PAYG system. Moreover, the proposed reform will bring about a new culture and thinking among the society by creating incentives to perform better in the labour market and it is pretty much understandable: everyone should think of his/her own future and make savings while working and the Government,

in its turn, will have to provide the required environment for this. For another hand, the primary responsibility of the Government is to address poverty reduction and other social issues. This was the summary of the key points presented by Mr. Aramyan.

Also he explained that the persons born in and after 1974 are due to cumulate their pensions as of 2014. By the way, the Deputy Minister himself is to be a participant of the new funded scheme and by his own example, he developed a case for a future pensioner of funded scheme by thus, making the presentation more entertaining and the arguments more convincing.

The next lecture will be delivered by Mr. Aharon Chilingaryan, Board Member of the Central Bank of Armenia, in the Armenian State University of Economics on March 13th. This activity is targeted to more than 1000 students and lecturers of the leading Armenian Universities.

Within this program, an essay contest 'My vision of economic development within the context of pension reforms in Armenia' has been announced for the undergraduate and postgraduate students. It is also designed to raise the interest and enhance the knowledge on pensions among University students. Best essays will be awarded – the winner will get iPad 2.

Prof. Ara Avetisyan, Doctor of Physico-Mathematical Sciences, Corresponding Member of the RA National Academy of Sciences:

"We must do our best to restore Polytechnic's good name both in Armenia and abroad"

Interview of The Noyan Tapan Highlights with the Rector of the State Engineering University of Armenia (SEUA, "Polytechnic") Ara Avetisyan



**By Gourgen
James Khazhakian**
Chief correspondent

- The early 1990s saw, for some reason, a sharp decline in the number of applicants to the Engineering University. When I was a student, the Polytechnic were graduating some 5,000-5,500 engineers a year, and despite the opinion that this number was unfounded, later there was a sharp decline in the number of graduates...

- In order to see the roots of this situation, one can make an obvious observation: in the Soviet time there was giant-scale industrial production, with virtually all industrial enterprises operating actively, although I can't say whether it was founded or not. Both workshops and their administrative structures functioned at full scale. These structures were mostly manned with graduates of the Yerevan Polytechnical Institute named after K.Marx (predecessor of the current SEUA) as there was a need for engineering thought and activity. I often recall how in the 1990s the giant plants stopped functioning - suddenly or gradually - and being out of job, many engineers had to engage in various activities in order to take care their families needs. Naturally, this formed a basis for a certain approach in society, which would result in a social attitude of uncertainty about engineering education and its future prospects, and in an immediate aspiration to acquire a profession of a lawyer or an economist considered in-demand careers under the conditions of a free market economy, while this circumstance would - naturally and unfortunately - result in a widespread opinion in society that polytechnic education had no future. For that reason the number of applicants to the Polytechnic University and other technical institutions of higher education declined sharply and so did the quality of education.

The quality of education fell also for the reason that Armenian secondary schools began to function only four-six months a year due to the cold and the lack of fuel, and under such conditions coaching became popular, with most secondary school leavers - as I have already mentioned - preferring to become lawyers or economists. To solve the problem of such a decline in the number of applicants, it was decided to simplify the admission requirements (to the detriment of polytechnic education): applicants were no longer required to take an examination in physics, instead, they were to submit a document attesting their school mark in physics, so in order to be admitted to the Polytechnic University, applicants were required to take a math examination only, and there was a long list of specialties allowing admission simply by receiving a satisfactory mark. It is not hard to imagine the consequences of such a policy: applicants with no or little knowledge of physics will lack engineering skills and knowledge at the time of their graduation however hard they try to become proficient in professional subjects taught at the University.

Fortunately, some development rates and certain trends of growth can be observed today. The reason is the same: various branches of economy, most notably advanced nanotechnology and information technology, are gradually beginning to develop, and for that reason we now have admission on a competitive basis for students of these professions. However, there are still specialties that attract

few applicants.

There has also been a revival of interest in specialties related to mineralogy and metallurgy in recent years for the same reason: mineralogy, mining industry, as well as metallurgy closely related to those two branches have started to develop in the country, which means that cadres are needed so there is already a demand for these professions...

- Power engineering, too, seems to be developing...

- Power engineering and electrical engineering are in a similar state. We have already signed agreements with the South Caucasian Railway (of Russia, which is responsible for trust management of Armenia's railway - G.Kh.), including agreements on preparing specialists for them and on re-training courses for their current personnel.

Yes, there was an explainable decline in the number of students with respect to almost all professions, but the decline was followed by a gradual growth. At this recovery stage we should be careful so as not to ignore new substantial courses and specialties and we should train students who will be able to keep pace with the times. For that reason, the role of engineering education and the university management is to expand this horizon.

- Taking into account the fact that the information technology sector is also in process of recovery, could you please tell us a bit about the links of SEUA with foreign partners?

- Modern economy requires high-quality services and capacities, and the objective of an institution of higher education is to train highly skilled specialists. From this point of view international cooperation becomes a vital problem because if we attach importance to production and economy of high quality and view them at the state level, then in case of having respective economic development or directions, we should train cadres armed with respective knowledge, and in this respect information technology, radio electronics, and precision instrument making industry are a striking example as they open up opportunities for extensive economic cooperation. We should ensure higher education in line with international standards, which will allow equipping our own production with the appropriate personnel. Ten years ago we started cooperating with Synopsys Armenia and Leda Systems companies; this cooperation has expanded over time, and now we present annual reports on the development in production and educational spheres. We have begun to receive bids from the Union of Information Technology Enterprises (UITE), and our cooperation is becoming more and more diverse. Microsoft IT Academy currently operates at Polytechnic; the furnishing of its second Big Hall is underway. These training courses enabled to make Microsoft programs accessible to the Polytechnic University. The laboratories of Cisco company at our University are decorated by its Armenian partner Unicomp CJSC (Founding Director - long-time member of the IT Development Support Council (ITDSC) under the RA PM Armen Baldryan), -to organize the Company's training courses. The whole network system of SEUA was installed and has been serviced by Arminco company. To note, we have a joint network with the National Academy of Sciences.

More than 300 mines are currently operated in Armenia, but our

cooperation with mining enterprises has so far been limited to Kajaran Copper and Molybdenum Plant. We have started cooperation in communications technology sector, and we will soon have partners in chemical technology too. We are going to sign an agreement on cooperation with National Instruments. The first pilot stage provided a basis for developing the main programs for the next years; it will be launched this year. After participating in DigiTec annual exhibitions, we realized that the samples made by students of our University deserve to be exhibited once again at a separate exhibition, so the same devices were again displayed during a three-day exhibition held in the main building of the University last November.



- A few days ago I met by chance an Egyptian who told me that he was writing a Ph.D. thesis on power engineering here in Armenia. Please tell us about the organization of educational process for students/postgraduate students from abroad. How satisfied are they with education quality?

- The Polytechnic has wide experience in educating foreign students, and this experience is related to the Soviet higher education school and technology. For that reason the majority of foreign students were previously from neighboring Middle East countries, as well as - in the past decades - from China and India. In the period of Armenia's independence the number of students from China and India has somewhat declined, but the inflow from Middle East states is continuing.

Despite its shortcomings, nevertheless our engineering education has a great appeal for foreign students. This year, however, the number of applicants equaled one third of the expected number due to the internal political developments in Middle East countries. It was quite strange that about 20 young people arrived from India and Nepal out of a hundred that we had expected based on the preliminary agreements.

Interestingly, in the past four-five years students from Syria, Iran, Egypt, and India have become more actively engaged in scientific research. They defend Ph.D. theses in various fields and upon earning their Ph.D. degrees, they either return to homeland or find a job in Armenia. An analysis of this year's results shows that we should organize (in cooperation with other universities) the preparation for education of representatives of beneficiary countries and we should take a definite profit-making approach, which implies creating the opportunity for technologies and production facilities in Armenia as well as for the University's new laboratory capacities to be presented effectively. This year we introduced a score of the foreign language exam to be added as a non-competitive but computational score for admission. Engineering education cannot be ambitious if the student (subsequently - the graduate) is not fluent in foreign

languages.

Students can get information about economies of foreign states with advanced technology from various sources such as reference-books, professional literature and websites, but in order to do it, they need to have a good knowledge of foreign languages (including Russian), which will allow future engineers to do well at the University and later to retain their knowledge when working abroad. This circumstance is also of importance for successful organization of foreign citizens' education as it will promote their communication and help organize joint training. I think we still have much work to do, but interestingly, more and more representatives of Armenian communities in various countries have in

recent years expressed a desire to receive engineering education at our University, and this tendency is growing slowly but surely. These are mostly people from Eastern Europe and the Balkan states, which can be explained by the fact that economic ties have been established with these countries, and now people have more confidence in our educational system.

- To all appearances, another important factor is that in Armenia education is more affordable than in other countries, in terms of educational fees...

- No doubt, an important factor in the post-Soviet period, under conditions of a market economy is that our vocational education is provided at lower prices.

- Are SEUA graduates competitive in the foreign market?

- Naturally, it is necessary to have a highly skilled workforce in order to get a good result. Like other spheres, engineering education has lost a considerable number of its laboratory experts and professional and teaching staff over the years, but today we invite professors and lab experts from various countries to cooperate with us. They gradually become involved in the educational process and get status, which strengthens their ties with their colleagues. We have also reached agreements with foreign institutions of higher education, based on which our post-graduate students and those involved in master's programs have an opportunity to study abroad. Besides, our professors make academic trips to different countries of Europe to deliver lectures and work in laboratories there.

- Could you please speak at greater length about cooperation of your University with leading foreign universities?

- The Norwegian University of Science and Technology has founded two scholarships (master's and post-graduate), one scholarship is related to electronics branch, and the other has to do with hydraulic and alternative energy structures. We believe that one scholarship will be awarded to the State Architectural Engineering University (founded on a base of a relevant Faculty of the fmr Polytechnical Institute - G.Kh.), and our University will manage to win the other related to electronics and electrical engineering.

In 2011 four students of our University took six-month courses in Poland, Germany, and Austria. Under this program, our students underwent retraining at the invitation of various universities. I would like to note that we in cooperation with University of Koblenz (Austria) are implementing a joint program on general reforms and improvement of education quality. We had an interesting meeting

recently. The Moscow Institute of Steel and Alloys (the so-called MI-SIS) hosted the meeting, which was organized with the support of UNESCO for the purpose of developing a common strategy of technological universities in CIS and Eastern Europe. In the near future we will sign an agreement on common education and research in atomic energy. A conference with the participation of foreign experts who made reports on radiation safety and nuclear disaster prevention took place in Armenia last November. Shortly afterwards, a conference on information security was held in Yerevan. It brought together representatives of a number of famous information security centers, including the world-famous computer security company Kaspersky Lab whose representatives made a memorable report. Our University currently implements four grant programs sponsored by foreign funds.

- How can the University attract foreign investors?

- We can attract foreign investors by offering to prepare -based on their own orders - highly skilled scientific-technological cadres and to carry out engineering development work at a low cost price. It is in fact a continuous process, and many of our foreign colleagues have already made sure of its efficiency based on the results of the programs we have implemented. We should be able to sign contracts, which are advantageous from the legal and economic points of view. Thanks to the efficiency of the work we have done, we can already pretend to such programs of partnership.

- Do you have anything else to add?

- I would like to say that in the past decades the Polytechnic had a good reputation for its scientific and engineering potential, and now this reputation needs to be "awakened". We are very much aware that both the content and level of orders have changed and that the venerable age of some members of the professional and teaching staff will not allow them to be actively engaged in this process. We understand that we will inevitably have some losses during the process of that awakening as our lecturers above a certain age, alas, will no longer be useful. Yet the mentioned reputation is a great capital and we should think about the awakening of the teaching staff and creating certain conditions for our activities...

- No doubt, many graduates of the Polytechnic working at present in giants of Silicon Valley, the U.S., - and I know it from my own experience- wish to assist the Homeland in some way - some are motivated by emotions, others by practical considerations...

- We have made a step in this direction at the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of Armenia.

A few years ago we elected people of Armenian descent, renowned in other countries in the fields of science and technology, as Corresponding Members of NAS, thus trying to restore or establish ties, through which they can be useful to us. I would like to add that the Polytechnic initiated a program, under which both local and foreign experts in technology will deliver lectures for our students, and we will see its efficiency in the future. We founded a Union of Polytechnic Graduates. It carries out activities in the United States too, and of course, we are cooperating with them.

*Ara Avetisyan's foto
by Davit Khazhakian*

Harut Sassounian: Constitutional Council's Scandalous Rejection of French Genocide Bill



By Harut Sassounian
Publisher, The California Courier

Armenians in France and throughout the world reacted with utter indignation against the Constitutional Council's scandalous decision rejecting the Genocide denial bill.

The National Assembly and Senate recently adopted a bill that would set a penalty of a year in jail and \$60,000 fine for anyone denying the genocides recognized by the French government. France officially recognizes the Jewish Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide.

Even though the bill did not specifically mention the Armenian Genocide, the Turkish government did everything short of declaring war against France to undermine its adoption, thereby identifying itself as the perpetrator of one of the two genocides. After failing to block the adoption of the bill by the

two chambers of the French legislature, Turkey and Azerbaijan, its junior partner in the crime of genocide denial, left no stone unturned to have the law declared unconstitutional.

Turkey applied all kinds of pressure on French legislators to collect the necessary 60 or more signatures needed to appeal the adopted bill to the Constitutional Council. Ironically, while the Turkish government was announcing a boycott of French companies, a Turkish group was hiring a high-powered French lobbying firm to assist in the hunt for signatures. Azerbaijan joined in this sinister lobbying effort by inviting six French Senators to Baku to collect their rewards for having signed the appeal! By hook or crook, the Turkish authorities and their French surrogates succeeded in enticing 142 of over 900 members of the French legislature to file an appeal with the Constitutional Council on January 31, 2012.

Clearly, this was an unacceptable intrusion into France's domestic affairs. Rather than allowing the Turkish Ambassador to pressure

members of the legislature to sign the appeal to the Constitutional Council, France should have expelled him for violating his diplomatic mandate! Turkey should not be permitted to dictate French laws!

The Constitutional Council is a hodge-podge of 11 retired individuals of various backgrounds. It includes two French Presidents, two judges, three legislators, and four government officials. A major controversy erupted when a French newspaper revealed that several members of the Council, including its Chairman, had serious conflict of interest problems in reaching a fair decision. Some had made prejudicial statements on this issue while serving in the legislature, others have business ties with Turkey, and most shockingly, one of them, Hubert Haenel, is a member of the Bosphorus Institute -- a French-Turkish "think tank" that lobbied against the genocide denial bill!

Under such scandalous conditions, most Council members should have disqualified them-

selves from sitting in judgement on this issue. After these embarrassing disclosures, two Council members withdrew from deliberating on the genocide bill, and former Pres. Jacques Chirac was reportedly too ill to attend the session.

The Constitutional Council's eight remaining members ruled on February 28, 2012 that the bill penalizing genocide denial approved by the Parliament and Senate was unconstitutional because it violated French laws on freedom of speech!

This was a shocking decision for two reasons: 1) Several members of the Constitutional Council violated the law themselves by sitting in judgment on an issue in which they had a clear bias or conflict of interest; and 2) They ruled the genocide denial bill to be unconstitutional supposedly because it restricted free speech, while leaving intact another law that penalized denial of the Holocaust. The Council members failed to explain why penalizing denial of the Armenian Genocide was a restriction on freedom of expression

while penalizing denial of the Jewish Holocaust was not! All genocide victims merit equal protection under the law. There should be no double standards!

Unlike the United States, France has several laws that restrict freedom of expression. Why is that when it comes to punishing deniers of the Armenian Genocide, the Council members all of a sudden become staunch defenders of free speech?

French Armenians should take up all legal and political measures to reverse the Council's unfair and illegal decision. They could file a lawsuit with the European Court of Human Rights against the Constitutional Council as well as introduce a new bill in the French legislature.

Since the two leading French Presidential candidates have pledged to bring up this bill again after the upcoming elections, this issue will not go away until a law is adopted penalizing Armenian Genocide denial. Turkey must not be allowed to export its denialist policies to European shores!

The successful visit to Brussels

from page 1

also spoke about issues related to the ongoing reforms in Armenia and their results. At the meeting Rasmussen thanked Sargsyan for Armenia's contribution to NATO operations in Afghanistan, noting: "NATO and Armenia have a lot of common political priorities and interests in the sphere of security. We have been building our dialogue and cooperation for many years. Our relations make a contribution to regional security and Euro-Atlantic security... Let me underline that the South Caucasian region is of importance to the Alliance and Armenia is an important partner for NATO".

Serzh Sargsyan's speech was followed by speeches of representatives of Great Britain, the United States, France, and over a dozen NATO member states, who appreciated highly Armenia-NATO relations, the results of the policy implemented in Armenia, and the obligations that official Yerevan has assumed and successfully fulfilled as a partner state. The participants discussed the prospect of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement, in which the current process within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group based on the principles of non-use of force or threat of force, self-determination of nations, and territorial integrity is considered as one that has no alternative.

A few words about other meetings and routes held in Brussels:

- the speech delivered at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation;
- the meeting with President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso. During the briefing in Brussels, when responding to the question about Armenia's

expectations from the policy of the European Union based on the principle of more (help, integration) for more (democratic reforms), the President said that if the pace of reforms will be faster than was expected, Armenia expects addition-



al resources, which, in turn, will further accelerate the reforms. For its part, the European Commission intends to develop relations with Armenia under the Eastern Partnership Project and is prepared to start negotiations on the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement. Barroso also noted that "additional funds will be available from 2012";

- the meeting with President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy, during which the sides particularly noted that the EU position on Armenia is in keeping with the position of official Yerevan, it definitely reflects progress in the relations regarding all the issues on the agenda. Interestingly, it was stated at the meeting that the people of Nagorno Karabakh make

part of the European family and are a bearer of the same values. Armenia has always stressed the necessity of direct contacts with the Nagorno Karabakh authorities. The meeting participants also touched upon the issue of the upcoming

"flesh and blood". It seems reasonable to suppose that the main aim of the visit was to get political support from all the above mentioned structures ahead of the parliamentary elections. The assurances that the upcoming elections would be held in line with Armenia's international obligations were voiced at each meeting. In response, the EU and NATO -- also loudly and clearly -- demonstrated their total political support for the incumbent president of Armenia.

Thus the visit of President Serzh Sargsyan to Brussels should be considered entirely successful in terms of getting political support ahead of the parliamentary elections in Armenia as well as strengthening the relations between Armenia and the European Union and between Armenia and NATO.

But the question is: how will

Moscow react to this successful visit, let alone such unambiguous political support? The circumstance that the Russian political elite views the post-Soviet countries as a zone of its traditional geopolitical influence and interests is almost an axiom. Moscow's attention to the South Caucasian region grew further after Georgia withdrew from its sphere of influence.

In our opinion, one should not expect a hasty, public, and let alone a jealous-negative reaction of Moscow to the political support that Serzh Sargsyan has obtained in Brussels. The circumstance that the process of "changing the guard" in power is about to start in Russia should also be taken into account. Nevertheless, it does not mean that no corrections to Moscow's policy on Armenia will be made.



Armenia officially refuses participating in Eurovision 2012

Armenia will not participate in the 2012 Eurovision Song Contest to be held in Baku this May.

The Armenian Public Television officially informed the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) of their withdrawal from the 2012 Eurovision Song Contest on Wednesday, the Eurovision website reports.

"We are truly disappointed by the broadcaster's decision to withdraw from this year's Eurovision

Song Contest," said the Contest Executive Supervisor Jon Ola Sand on behalf of the EBU.

"Despite the efforts of the EBU and the Host Broadcaster to ensure a smooth participation for the Armenian delegation in this year's Contest, circumstances beyond our control lead to this unfortunate decision."

Consequently, only 42 countries will be represented in Baku.

International Crisis Group advises Azerbaijan to stop war talks

Azerbaijan should agree on withdrawing snipers from the contact line and establish mechanisms to investigate incidents, Director of the International Crisis Group Sabine Freizer said in the interview with Turan Agency.

Besides, all the conflicting sides, including Nagorno-Karabakh, should agree on granting the

OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs more power. In the meantime, Azerbaijan should stop displaying warlike attitude on the frontline.

"There will be no easy war," Freizer said adding launching military actions will darken the South Caucasus in the eyes of the West from the point of becoming an alternative transit zone.

Fragments of goddess Anahit's statue to be temporarily exhibited in Armenia

Fragments of goddess Anahit's statue will be temporarily brought from the British Museum and exhibited in Armenia.

The agreement on organization of temporary exhibition of the fragments of the statue was reached as a result of the meeting of the Armenian Minister of Education and Science Armen Ashotyan and British Ambassador to Armenia Catherine Jane Leach.

On March 7 representatives of the Armenian Youth Foundation held a demonstration in front of the building of British Embassy in Armenia demanding to return the fragments of the statue of goddess Anahit.

Talking to journalists, Catherine Jane Leach said that the exhibition of the fragments of the statue in Armenia "will become a good step toward strengthening relations between the two countries".

At the same time, she hesitated to answer the question how real is

to meet the demand of the activists on transferring the fragments of the goddess's statue on a permanent basis as the British Museum is an in-

dependent structure and she can't be responsible for its actions and decisions.

Catherine Jane Leach assured that she will hand over the demand



of the participants of the demonstration to the British Museum.

In his turn, Armen Ashotyan noted that the temporary exhibition is the first result of this initiative but the Armenian side isn't going to stop there. "We will strive for final return of the fragments of the statue to Armenia", said the Minister.

Feinstein, Brown and Kirk Introduce Return of Churches Bill in Senate

Senators Scott Brown (R-MA), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Mark Kirk (R-IL) introduced a bipartisan measure, today, calling upon the Secretary of State to press Turkey to return stolen Christian church properties and allow full freedom of faith for religious minorities, reported the Armenian National Committee of America.

Spearheaded by Senator Brown, who holds a seat on the Armed Services Committee, Senator Feinstein, who serves as Chairwoman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, and Senator Kirk, who serves on the Appropriations Committee, the measure most notably calls upon Turkey to return all confiscated Christian church properties, including "churches and other places of worship, monasteries, schools, hospitals, monuments, relics, holy sites, and other religious properties, including movable properties, such as artwork, manuscripts, vestments, vessels, and other artifacts."

It also directly addresses Turkey's obstruction of religious education, appointments, and succe-

sion within the Greek and Armenian churches by calling for the Turkish government to "allow the rightful church and lay owners of Christian church properties, without hindrance or restriction, to organize



and administer prayer services, religious education, clerical training, appointments, and succession, religious gatherings, social services, including ministry to the needs of the poor and infirm, and other religious activities." More broadly, the resolution calls upon the government of Turkey to honor its international obligations to end all forms of religious persecution and to protect the rights and religious freedoms of

Christians.

"We join with friends of Armenia and believers in religious liberty across our entire country in thanking Senators Brown, Feinstein and Kirk for their leadership in seeking the



rightful return by Turkey of stolen Christian church properties," said Aram Hamparian, Executive Director of the ANCA. "In introducing the Return of Churches resolution in the Senate, they are building on the overwhelming bipartisan adoption of this religious freedom measure by the House, and increasing pressure on the Administration to reaffirm – in words, actions and results – our nation's fundamental commitment

to religious rights and freedom of faith. We look forward to working with both Senators and with each of their colleagues in support of the timely adoption of this resolution."

An identical measure, intro-

duced last June in the U.S. House by Representatives by Ed Royce (R-CA), a senior member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and Howard Berman (D-CA), the Ranking Democrat on this panel, was adopted overwhelming in Committee in July, and then approved by the full House with a voice vote in mid-December of 2011. Both the House and Senate measures reflect the strength of a growing movement

to highlight, confront, and eventually reverse decades of official Turkish policy of destroying Christian church properties, desecrating holy sites, discriminating against Christian communities, and denying the right of Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Pontians, Arameans (Syriacs), and others to practice their faith in freedom.

The Return of Churches resolution is consistent with many other resolutions adopted by the U.S. Congress over the past several decades defending religious freedom and protecting sacred sites and places of worship, as well as with the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 and America's longstanding leadership in supporting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The territory of present-day Turkey, home to many of the most important centers of early Christianity – most notably Nicaea, Ephesus, Chalcedon, and Constantinople – contains, to this day, a rich legacy of Christian heritage, including thousands of religious sites and properties.

APARTMENT FOR RENT

A comfortable, western style apartment in the center of the city. The second floor of the nice private house with a separate entrance from the street. The apartment has a dining room, two bedrooms, a kitchen, a bathroom and two balconies. It has a heating system, permanent cold and hot water, TV satellite, air conditioning system and other facilities. A nice view to Mount Ararat. The house has a nice garden.

Price for a long term: 1000 -1100 USD monthly including gas, heating, electricity and water.
for a short term 60-80 USD daily.

Address: 3 Aygedzor Street, Yerevan.

For more information call (37410). 278-709, mob. 093. 229 570



DID YOU KNOW?



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

Coke and Pepsi alter recipe to avoid cancer warning

Coca-Cola and Pepsi are changing the recipes for their drinks to avoid being legally obliged to put a cancer warning label on the bottle.

The new recipe for caramel colouring in the drinks has less 4-methylimidazole (4-MEI) - a chemical which California has added to its list of carcinogens.

The change to the recipe has already been introduced in California but will be rolled out across the US.

Coca-Cola says there is no health risk to justify the change.

‘No risk’

Spokeswoman Diana Garza-Ciarlante told the Associated Press news agency they wanted to ensure their products “would not be subject to the requirement of a scientifically unfounded warning”.

The chemical has been linked to cancer in mice and rats, according to one study, but there is no evidence that it poses

a health risk to humans, said the American Beverage Association, which represents the wider industry.



The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) claims a person would need to drink more than 1,000 cans of Coke or Pepsi a day to take in the same dose of the

chemical that was given to the animals in the lab test.

Coca-Cola and PepsiCo account for nearly 90% of the US fizzy drink market, according to one industry tracker, Beverage Digest.

The companies say changing their recipes across the whole of the US, not just in California, makes the drinks more efficient to manufacture.

In a statement Coca-Cola added that the manufacturing process across Europe would not change.

It said that apart from California “not one single regulatory agency around the world considers the exposure of the public to 4-MEI as present in caramels as an issue”.

Spider silk spun into violin strings

The strings are said to have a “soft and profound timbre” relative to traditional gut or steel strings.

That may arise from the way the strings are twisted, resulting in a “packing structure” that leaves practically no space between any of the strands.

Shigeyoshi Osaki of Japan’s Nara Medical University has been interested in the mechanical properties of spider silk for a number of years.

In particular, he has studied the “dragline” silk that spiders dangle from, quantifying its strength in a 2007 paper in Polymer Journal.

Dr Osaki has perfected methods of obtaining large quantities of this dragline silk from captive-bred spiders and has now turned his attention to the applications of the remarkable material.

“Bowed string instruments such as the violin have been the subject of many scientific studies,” he writes.

“However, not all of the details have been clarified, as most players have been

interested in the violin body rather than the properties of the bow or strings.”

Dr Osaki used 300 female Nephila maculata spiders - one of the species of “golden orb-weavers” renowned for their complex webs - to provide the dragline silk.



For each string, Dr Osaki twisted between 3,000 and 5,000 individual strands of silk in one direction to form a bundle. The strings were then prepared from three of these bundles twisted together in the opposite direction.

He then set about measuring their tensile strength - a critical factor for violinists

wishing to avoid breaking a string in the midst of a concerto.

The spider-silk strings withstood less tension before breaking than a traditional but rarely used gut string, but more than an aluminium-coated, nylon-core string.

A closer study using an electron microscope showed that, while the strings themselves were perfectly round, in cross-section the strands had been compressed into a range of different shapes that all fit snugly together, leaving no space between them.

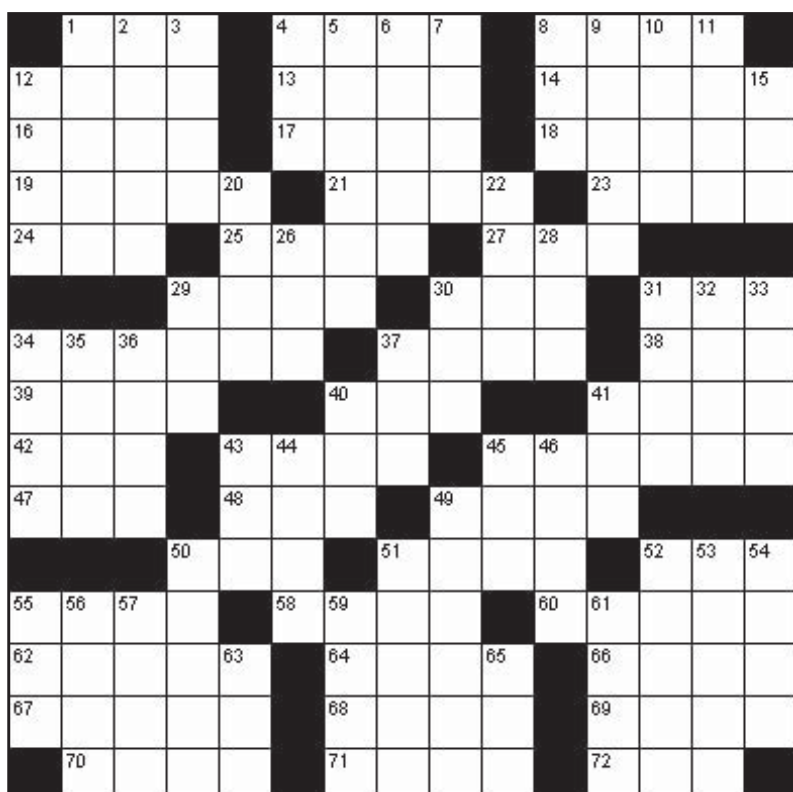
Dr Osaki suggests that it is this feature of the strings that lends them their strength and, crucially, their unique tone.

“Several professional violinists reported that spider strings... generated a preferable timbre, being able to create a new music,” he wrote.

“The violin strings are a novel practical use for spider silk as a kind of high value-added product, and offer a distinctive type of timbre for both violin players and music lovers worldwide.”

ARMENIAN POETRY

CROSSWORD



Across

- Box on a pole handle for carrying bricks
- Regret
- Heap
- Male title
- Wading bird
- Unwavering
- Single
- Chromatic color
- Jump
- Understand
- Do business
- Egyptian cobra
- Powdery starch
- Fodder
- Voice part
- Expiate
- Seaweed
- Tusked swine
- Marine colonial polyp
- Stride
- Redact
- Fringe benefit
- Fruit filled pastry
- Decimal base
- Closed

Down

- Mayhem
- Open
- Impression in a surface
- Health spring
- Permissible difference
- Large body of water
- Cogwheel
- Amateur radio operator
- Circumstance
- Customary observance or practice
- Challenge
- Couch
- Indicate assent
- Catch sight of
- Ale
- Belonging to him
- Appendage on the bracts of grasses
- Deplete
- Enemy
- Elaborate song
- Precious metal
- Comply
- In addition
- Cut of meat
- Had on
- Public transport
- Relieve from
- Liveliness and energy
- Anger
- Cattle reared for meat
- Division of 6
- Fine grained mineral
- Account book
- Echo
- Greek letter
- Positively charged electrode
- Blot
- Larboard
- Pouch
- At the peak
- Bloodshed
- Compass direction
- Assist
- Moose
- Pertinent

Answer of previous crossword



Zodiac Weekly Forecast

Aries (Mar. 20 - Apr. 19):



This is a powerful time to consider your spiritual purposes. It is all too easy for the maya, the things of the world, to overwhelm every waking minute, leaving no time for the higher goals. If you notice fatigue, disappointment, or depression at this time, stop. Be still and listen for the Voice deep within your soul.

Taurus (Apr. 20 - May 19):



At last! The Sun shines through and there is a breakthrough of the clouds in your life. You may become the leader in a project that will be good for many. Love life appears or perhaps it improves and you are enjoying your roles in life. This is a time in which you may realize that your struggles have been worth the effort.

Gemini (May 20 - June 20):



Information has been flying your way thick and fast. A surprise concerning a friend or a family member might have you reeling. This is a good week to let yourself be quiet while you absorb the changes that have come your way. If you feel edgy, transfer that energy to physical exercise.

Cancer (June 21 - July 21):



You may feel trapped in a conflict over whether to tend to the needs of your community or stay home and tend to your personal business. Do the best you can to achieve a modified response. It is likely that if you answer the call to make a choice you will feel slightly resentful because you cannot do both.

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.

Virgo (Aug. 22 - Sep. 22):



Take every precaution not to abuse your body during this period. Drugs or alcohol could have peculiar side effects that you don't understand. You are in a low physical cycle and will be unable to push yourself as hard as normal on any physical task. If you are affected emotionally, try not to worry about it.

Libra (Sep. 23 - Oct. 22):



The area of shared resources is propitious during this whole month. Those resources may include money, time, debt owed to you, or property value. Examples: partner's income, stock or bond values, tax returns, or anything else that you share with another. Opportunities to share intimately with another promote life energy.

Scorpio (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21):



The next couple of weeks are especially good for discussing important subjects with partners. You each are in a cooperative frame of mind and communications flow well. You can give and receive mutual help at this time and improve the overall energy in the relationship.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22 - Dec. 20):



An opportunity is coming any day now to increase your income via a work opportunity. It is possible that if you agree to do some small thing in good spirits, the work will become a project that grows to your benefit. If you are already employed, you likely will get approval for a job that has been pending.

Capricorn (Dec. 21 - Jan. 19):



Venus moves into the sector of life related to children, recreation, and romance. The goddess of love is happy in this territory and often brings new energy and light wherever she goes. Success comes to those who have been working on a project that will contribute to the Greater Good.

Aquarius (Jan. 20 - Feb. 17):



This is an unusually quiet week with no new planetary action. It is quite possible that you stepped away from one of your ongoing projects in Feb. Letting go of that energy drain was good for you and the fatigue may just be catching up to you on your calendar. Take a break, even if only this week.

Pisces (Feb. 18 - Mar. 19):



You may be caught in a conflict that seems inexplicable to you. The Other is angry over an event from the past. If you value the relationship you probably should listen. Don't get defensive. Meanwhile the realm of teaching, communication, and social life is favored.

Cafesjian Center for the Arts

Music Cascade

The concerts start at 8 p.m.

Date Band
14.03.12 Evening of Vache Sharafyan's music
Artur Avanesov - piano
Levon Arakelyan - cello
Armen Torosyan - viola
Tigran Matevosyan - violin

Admission: 2,000 AMD
Tel.: 567262, 541932



WHAT? WHEN? WHERE?
Enjoy your leisure

A. Spendaryan National Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet

March 16 at 7 p.m.

Carmen

Official opening of 2012

Francophonie month in Armenia.

Bizet, Opera

/concert performance/

Conductor:

Karen Durgaryan

Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall

March 16 at 7 p.m.

Solist: Andreas Froelich, piano (Germany)

Conductor:

Eduard Topchjan

Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 13

Haydn: Piano Concerto No. 4

Symphony -

to be announced later

Komitas Chamber Music House

March 14 at 7 p.m.

National Chamber Orchestra of Armenia

Program:
W. A. Mozart: Three Divertimenti for String Quartet (KV 136-138)

Arnold Schoenberg: Waltzes for String Orchestra set No.9

Eduard Hayrapetyan: Chamber Music

Malkhas Jazz Club

March 12 at 9 p.m.

Artoisis group and Shushan Petrosyan

March 13, at 9 p.m.

Jazz Trio and singer Aghvan

March 14 at 9 p.m.

A Series of quintet: Saxophone, guitar, instrumental program

March 15 at 9 p.m.

Time report

March 16 at 9 p.m.

Concert Group

March 17 at 9 p.m.

Latino-American Jazz

March 18 at 9 p.m.

Impression Band

Club 12

March 12 at 9:30 p.m.

Dorians

March 15 at 9:30 p.m.

Greek Party

March 16 at 9 :30 p.m.

Retro disco party

March 17 at 9:30 p.m.

Latino party from Fiesta Caliente

HUMOR

Food quotes and quips

"The most remarkable thing about my mother is that for 30 years she served the family nothing but left-overs. The original meal has never been found."

Sam Levinson

"This recipe is certainly silly. It says to separate two eggs, but it doesn't say how far to separate them."

Gracie Allen

"I've been on a constant diet for the last two decades. I've lost a total of 789 pounds. By all accounts, I should be hanging from a charm bracelet."

Erma Bombeck

"I told my doctor I get very tired when I go on a diet, so he gave me pep pills. Know what happened? I ate faster."

Joe E. Lewis

"Watermelon -- it's a good fruit. You eat, you drink, you wash your face."

Enrico Caruso

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Quote of the week

Things that matter most must never be at the mercy of things that matter least.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe



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